

Report to:	Cabinet	Date of Meeting:	9 January 2020
Subject:	Early Help Strategy		
Report of:	Head of Communities	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member - Children, Schools and Safeguarding		
Is this a Key Decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To update the Cabinet on the progress made towards the establishment of a Sefton Early Help Strategy. The paper also asks the Cabinet to note and approve the final version of the strategy.

Recommendation(s):

That the Cabinet be requested to approve the Early Help Strategy.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To ensure the Cabinet is fully informed of the progress towards finalising the Early Help Strategy.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)
None identified

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

This document represents the strategic approach that is to be adopted and as such there are no revenue costs identified. It is expected that the delivery of the strategy will be within the existing revenue budget for the service

(B) Capital Costs

There are no capital requirements arising from this strategy

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):

There are no resource implications identified within the Strategy. Any specific requirements or additional resource implications will be identified as detailed proposals are developed for the delivery of priorities and these will be the subject of member approval as defined within the Councils Financial Procedure Rules

Legal Implications:
None identified
Equality Implications:
None identified

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

<p>Protect the most vulnerable: Through the intervention by the Council and its partners at the most critical moment when young people and parents/carers require our support to prevent further reliance on public sector in the future. The delivery of services which are based on the needs of the most vulnerable in society</p>
<p>Facilitate confident and resilient communities: It is essential that we develop and strengthen approaches to support young people and families.</p>
<p>Commission, broker and provide core services: A range of services are provided to support young people and families.</p>
<p>Place – leadership and influencer: Leadership is essential and identifying locations to support families in communities is a key part of our core purpose.</p>
<p>Drivers of change and reform: The strategy acknowledges that agencies will be addressing their own distinct needs and meeting a range of key performance indicators against a variety of policy drivers and aims to provide an umbrella framework of key principles that can be applied across all agendas.</p>
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:
Greater income for social investment:
Cleaner Greener

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD5900/19) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD4084/19) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Consultation has been held with partners including police, health , voluntary sector , schools through the Early help Partnership Board. Further consultation was held with the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

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Appendices:

Appendix 1: Early Help Strategy document

Appendix 2: Strategy on a Page

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following the publication in July 2018, of revised statutory guidance; “Working Together to Safeguard Children: guidance to inter-agency working’ to safeguard and promote the welfare of children” the Council looked to produce with its partners an Early Help Strategy. On the 13th March 2019, the Health and Wellbeing Board received a paper to present an initial draft of an Early Help Strategy and outline the next steps in producing a final version.
- 1.2 Subsequent to the Board, partners met on 20 March 2019 to discuss the detail of the new Early Help Strategy and an initial draft version was presented to the group. The outcome of this meeting was that the strategy needed further work in the form of a more detailed narrative. Partners provided feedback resulting in the Strategy being further updated.
- 1.3 The Early Help Partnership Group has now been re-established and held their first meeting on 3 July 2019. The partnership group agreed further changes to the Early Help Strategy and changes to the strategy on a page. A final draft Early Help Strategy has now been completed with an accompanying ‘Strategy on a page’. These can be viewed at appendix one and two.
- 1.4 In August 2019 a final draft iteration of the Strategy was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 1.5 The final version of the strategy was signed off by the Early Help Partnership Group at their next meeting, on the 24th September 2019.

2. Background

- 2.1 Early help means taking action to support a child, young person or their family early on when a problem emerges. It can be required at any stage in a child's life from pre-birth through to adulthood and applies to any problem or need that the family cannot deal with or meet on their own.
- 2.2 We have long established the essential need for agencies to work together to meet our communities needs and deliver a strategic approach that ensures right help, right person, right time.
- 2.3 The Strategy aims to ensure Sefton is a good place for children and young people to live and grow up, receive immunisations, have access to a wide range of physical activity opportunities and enjoy overall improving health. The JSNA (which can be viewed here [https://www.sefton.gov.uk/your-council/plans-policies/business-intelligence,-insight,-performance/joint-strategic-needs-assessment-\(jsna\).aspx](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/your-council/plans-policies/business-intelligence,-insight,-performance/joint-strategic-needs-assessment-(jsna).aspx)) highlights areas we need to improve on as obesity rates, alcohol related hospital admissions in under 18's, the higher smoking rates in pregnancy and lower than average breast feeding rates. The number of looked after children in Sefton is rising and was reported as 544 at the last count.

3. Summary of the Strategy

- 3.1 The Early Help Strategy describes the vision, principles and partnership commitments required to deliver as follows;

3.1.1 **Vision** - Our ambition is that all children, young people and families in Sefton will be heard, healthy and happy, and aspire to be the best they can be. In Sefton we believe that every child should have the opportunity to reach their full potential. We believe that children should grow and achieve within their own families and communities, when it is in their best interests and it is safe for them to do so. By working together, we will develop flexible services which are responsive to children and families' needs.

3.1.2 **Principles** - The principles we will adopt will be based upon the following:

- A system wide approach, with joint, pooled resources and pathways operating across organisational boundaries
- An outcome focussed, system wide approach delivering long term sustainable solutions for individuals and families to secure resilience and independence
- A shift from acute provision to an increase in prevention and early help activity
- Evidence based services that are built around customer need
- Locality based delivery

3.1.3 **Partnership Commitments** - As a partnership, we will:

- Understand those families where children may be at risk of not reaching their full potential and share concerns
- Build a relationship with the family as early as possible, and work with

them to create a family environment that provides children with the best life chances and prevent problems from arising or escalating

- Reduce the number of children and their families requiring support from specialist services.

4. The scope of the strategy

- 4.1 Effective early help requires a whole family approach and encompasses all stakeholders working with children and families. This includes Health, Police, Education, Children's Social Care, Local Authority Early Help, Voluntary and Community organisations and the wider public.
- 4.2 The strategy acknowledges that agencies will be addressing their own distinct needs and meeting a range of key performance indicators against a variety of policy drivers and aims to provide an umbrella framework of key principles that can be applied across all agendas.
- 4.3 Engagement with the strategy by all sectors will require some cultural and operational changes but by doing so, and actively working together to deliver outcomes, we believe that we will positively change the relationship between the community and the public sector in ways which build and strengthen community resilience.
- 4.4 We are still at the beginning of this journey and the strategy is aspirational, but we are building on solid foundations established through the success of existing early intervention work.”
- 4.5 This extract is particularly pertinent as all the agencies listed will need to commit to the strategy for it to be successful. Each service should place as much importance on this strategy, and the accompanying action plan, as they would to their own internal strategies and policies. For real change to be achieved the vision and principles should become embedded within each organisation and their culture. This is challenging due to every agency having competing priorities, but the strategy cannot fully realise lasting improved outcomes without this commitment.
- 4.6 The Strategy will work alongside and align with the Children and Young Peoples Plan and Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Strategy will be effective immediately.

5 Conclusion.

- 5.1 The strategy has been through an extensive process of development and co-production. The Early Help Partnership Group are confident of the quality of the document and the positive impact it will help to bring about for our Children, Young People and Families.
- 5.2 A partnership approach will be crucial to ensuring the success and implementation of this Integrated Early Help Strategy. This document has been developed in consultation with the following key partners:

- North West Boroughs
- DWP Job Centre Plus
- Light for life
- Merseycare
- Merseyside Police
- Parenting 2000
- Probation
- Registered Social Landlords
- Education
- SWACA
- VENUS
- Young Carers
- CVS & other voluntary sector organisations