

Children, Young People and Families Plan Scrutiny Meeting

2 October 2023, 6pm

Present:

Councillors Flanagan, C Mitchell, Bamborough, Cooper, S Brookes and Fenlon

Co-opted Members: Jo Snape and Gemma Clayton

In attendance:

Councillor Galley, Scrutiny Lead Member

Councillor Jim Hobson, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Joanne Stewart, Head of Early Help

Kara Haskayne, Head of Service, Safeguarding Children and Strategic Partnerships

Vicky Gent, Director of Children's Services

Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager

Ms Vicky Gent, Director of Children's Services advised that the Children, Young People and Families Plan was a necessary plan that would span the whole partnership. It had been co-produced with as many stakeholders as possible and the aim was to achieve a simple plan that clearly set out areas of focus.

Ms Kara Haskayne, Head of Service, Safeguarding Children and Strategic Partnerships provided a presentation on the work done to date to understand the complex picture in Blackpool and the specific needs of residents. She also highlighted the co-production work undertaken including the Children's Art Competition which would provide the artwork for the Plan.

The vision had been set as 'We want our Town to be a place where children and their families thrive, feel healthy, happy, safe and have opportunities to be ambitious about their future' with a consensus amongst co-production partners that this was the correct vision.

The co-production work had informed the partnership group in the identification of the priorities of the Plan as:

Priority 1: Children and young people have the 'Best Start in Life' – the first 1001 days of a child's life are crucial for their development, physical and mental health.

Priority 2: Children, young people and their families are supported to be healthy (emotionally, mentally and physically).

Priority 3: Children and young people have access to the best quality education to prepare them for adult life and employment.

Priority 4: Children and young people feel safe, supported and are able to cope with life's ups and downs.

Each of the priorities had been further explored with a series of sub-priorities identified under each heading. The importance of ensuring this Plan linked strategically to the other plans and strategies was highlighted with it important to ensure the new plan brought together areas such as the Literacy Strategy, Healthy Weight Strategy and Youth Justice Improvement Plan amongst many others.

With reference to measuring success and impact, it was noted that a number of areas for improvement had been identified such as reducing wait time for specialised mental health services and increasing the number of parents supported by the family hubs and a dataset would be developed in order to keep track of progress. The data would be regularly reviewed through partnership meetings. The Plan was expected to be completed and approved by the Executive by the end of the Year with a launch date to be set for January 2024.

A number of questions were raised relating to elective home education, young people not in employment, education or training, the importance of healthy modelling by social workers to children and young people they support and the support being received from other Council services.

It was noted that any further comments on the Plan could be emailed directly to Kara Haskayne following the meeting for incorporation during the co-production process. It was considered that progress on the Plan would be reported to scrutiny on an annual basis with deep-dives into specific subjects to be developed on an ad-hoc basis.

The meeting concluded with the importance of whole Council buy-in and Ms Gent highlighted the good support being received by Children's Services.