

Committee/Meeting: Cabinet	Date: October 2012	Classification: Unrestricted	Report No: (CAB 039/123)
Report of: Corporate Director Children, Schools and Families Originating officer(s) Layla Richards, Strategy, Policy and Performance Manager		Title: Children and Families Plan 2012-15 Wards Affected: All	

Lead Member	Cabinet Lead Member Children, Schools and Families
Community Plan Theme	A Prosperous Community
Strategic Priority	2.1: improve educational aspiration and attainment 2.2: support more people into work 2.3: manage the impact of welfare reform on local residents 4.1: reduce health inequalities and promote healthy lifestyles 4.4: keep vulnerable children and families safer, minimising harm and neglect 5.1: reduce inequalities

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report accompanies the Children and Families Plan 2012-15, which has been developed through the Children and Families Partnership (formerly Trust) and replaces the previous, statutory Children and Young People's Plans (CYPPs).
- 1.2 The Children and Families Partnership Board considered the Plan at its meeting on 13 September 2012 and recommends the appended version for adoption by all partners.

2. **DECISIONS REQUIRED**

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:-

- 2.1 Approve the Children and Families Plan in Appendix 1 for the next three years, 2012-15

3. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 3.1 There was a statutory duty on local authorities and their partners, under the previous government to have a CYPP. While this is no longer the case partners in the Children and Families Partnership have valued the joint planning processes afforded by the last two CYPPs and have been developing a new plan over the past 12 months, focused on support to children and their families. The new plan focuses on improving outcomes for the borough's most vulnerable children and families and provides an effective way of planning, as a Partnership, how we will intervene at an early stage to tackle problems faced by each vulnerable group at tier 2 of the Family Wellbeing Model.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 As it is no longer a statutory requirement to have such a plan an alternative course of action would be to not have a Partnership Children and Families Plan. This, however, could be detrimental to services and the way in which partners work together at a time when arguably partnership working is even more important to address a range of social and economic issues.
- 4.2 The Plan could focus on different priorities, but the proposed content of the Plan is recommended by the Partnership after for reasons summarised in the body of the report. The holistic approach of the plan is particularly important in a climate in which significant social risks present themselves as a result of the changes associated with the government's welfare reforms. These reforms have the potential to create a whole range of additional demands on children and adult services in the borough and the approach to the new plan provides a way of meeting the needs of the most vulnerable and trying to ensure that resources are allocated accordingly.

5. BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The borough has previously had two CYPPs, between 2006-2009 and 2009-2012. Both plans were structured around the Every Child Matters (ECM) themes and articulated how the local authority and its partners would work together to keep children safe and healthy, support them to enjoy, achieve well at school, secure economic wellbeing and make a positive contribution to society.
- 5.2 The new plan still aspires to achieve the ECM outcomes for all children, but has adopted a more focused approach than in previous years to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and families. The plan therefore doesn't intend to capture everything that partners will do to support children and families in Tower Hamlets – it instead focuses on the value added by partnership working with single agency plans still addressing routine and day-to-day activity.
- 5.3 The Children and Families Plan has been developed over the past 12 months, in consultation with a range of partners on the Children and Families

Partnership, and has been informed by a robust evidence base including PESTLE (political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental) analysis, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) factsheets, national research, emerging government policy and local research and local service mapping. Consultation has also been undertaken with Elected Members, the Annual Parent Conference and Youth Forum. Representatives from the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) have also been given the opportunity to scrutinise the safeguarding elements of the plan.

6. APPROACH TO THE PLAN

- 6.1 The plan follows a life course approach looking at the needs of children and their parents/carers and families at different stages of their lives. The plan is divided up by the following four life course blocks:

Maternity and Early Years: a focus on this age group recognises the significance of the maternity and early years on a child's development and responds to recent high profile national reviews, including those undertaken by Frank Field, Michael Marmot and Graham Allen all of which highlight evidence that intervention at this stage can have the greatest impact on a child and family's life. Eileen Munro's review into child protection also highlighted the particular challenges in safeguarding babies, with timeliness of response having a different value at this age with the early years being critical for brain development and attachment, and their particular vulnerability for maltreatment when they are growing up in families affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence and mental ill health. Alongside this there is substantive evidence of children under five being most at risk of death or serious injury as a consequence of child protection issues. Furthermore, this section of the plan allows a focus on local performance at the Early Years Foundation Stage, which although improving is below national performance. Greater partnership working in relation to the early years offer for disadvantaged two year olds and Health Visitors Call for Action are also areas for attention within this block.

Childhood and Young People: separate life course blocks in the plan, but a focus on each recognises the different needs faced by children and their families at different ages. For example, young carers' needs vary with age and a different partnership response is required to meet them at primary and secondary age. Safeguarding risks also vary at each life course stage and the focus on safeguarding by age will allow the Partnership to safeguard children for that particular age – for example, we know that risk factors facing teenagers are particularly varied and complex and need a particular response. Transition is a cross-cutting theme within the plan but within this block there is a particular focus on key pressure points, including the transition of children from primary to secondary school and transition in and out of social care. The differences in volumes of tier three cases at different ages for Children's Social Care and the Youth Offending Team and differing levels of attainment at different key stages are also a focus in these sections of the plan.

Preparing for Adulthood: this section places significant emphasis on improving the outcomes for young people with additional needs as they make their way from children's to adult services. This includes a focus on young people with a disability or special educational need, young offenders and young people leaving care, all of whom we know to be more disadvantaged and face more difficulties than their peers in achieving independence. We want to build on effective partnership working to support all vulnerable groups as they make the transition to adulthood. This section is also about preparing all young people for the world beyond education and training and into employment, a particular challenge locally.

- 6.2 Cross-cutting themes have also been identified, each of which will be addressed within the life course approach. Early Help and Responsive Universal Services is an overarching principle with four cross-cutting themes around:
- Promoting positive health and emotional wellbeing
 - Supporting positive family relationships
 - Prevention from harm
 - Managing effective transition between services
- 6.3 The plan sets out areas of work for the next three years under each of these headings for each of the life course blocks.
- 6.4 Alongside the development of the new plan the governance arrangements for the Children and Families Partnership are also changing to ensure delivery of priorities and further streamlining of groups and numbers of meetings. The new arrangements will be in place from September 2012 with new Commissioning and Groups for Maternity, Early Years & Childhood and Young People & Preparing for Adulthood to be accountable to the Children and Families Partnership Board for the delivery of the outcomes in their relevant sections of the plan.
- 6.5 Final sign off of the plan rests with the Children and Families Partnership Board and is due to take place at their meeting on 13 September 2012.

7. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

- 7.1 This report informs the Cabinet about the activities and priorities for the three-year Children and Families Plan. There are no financial implications arising from this report as the activities outlined here are ones which would be funded from resources available to Children Schools & Families and to partner organisations.

8. CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL SERVICES)

- 8.1 When the Children Act 2004 was enacted, it empowered the Secretary of State to make regulations requiring each children's services authority to prepare and publish a Children and Young People's Plan ("CYPP"). The Secretary of State made the Children and Young People's Plan (England)

Regulations 2005 which imposed an obligation on each authority (other than four-star authorities) to prepare and publish a CYPP by 1 April 2006 and then at intervals determined by the duration of the adopted plan. The Council's Constitution reflected this requirement, even though Tower Hamlets was a four star authority at relevant times.

- 8.2 In 2010, the Children Act 2004 was amended to instead provide for regulations to be made placing the responsibility on the Children's Trust Board to prepare and publish a Children and Young People's Plan ("CYPP"). The Secretary of State made the Children's Trust Board (Children and Young People's Plan) (England) Regulations 2010 to impose this obligation on Children's Trust Boards. Through these measures, the obligation to prepare a CYPP was effectively removed from the Council. The expectation was that when the CYPP 2009 – 2012 ceased on 1 April 2012, it would be replaced by a new CYPP developed by the Children's Trust Board. However, the 2010 Regulations were subsequently revoked, effectively removing any requirement for there to be a CYPP at all. As a consequence, the local partnerships are free to publish their own strategic plans as they see fit and there is no prescription as to format, matters to be dealt with, timing or who to consult.
- 8.3 Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 continues to require the Council to make arrangements to promote co-operation with its partners and other appropriate persons to improve the well-being of children in Tower Hamlets. In this context, well-being extends to physical and mental health and emotional well-being; protection from harm and neglect; education, training and recreation; the contribution by children and young people to society; and social and economic well-being. When making arrangements, the Council must have regard to the importance of parents and other persons caring for children in improving the well-being of children.
- 8.4 Absent any obligation to prepare a CYPP, it is consistent with the Council's duty under section 10 of the Children Act 2004 and the proper discharge of its other statutory functions in respect of children and young people to work through the Children and Families Partnership Board to prepare a plan of how relevant partners propose to work together to achieve their shared vision for children and young people. The existence of such a plan is contemplated within the Tower Hamlets Community Plan, which contains the Council's sustainable community strategy for the purposes of section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000. Having developed the plan, it is appropriate for the Executive to agree the plan and commit to delivering it, within the Council's permitted range of action.
- 8.5 Before agreeing the Children and Families Plan, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don't. Section 9 of the report, appendix 2 and the Plan itself present information relevant to this consideration.

9. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 The Children and Families Plan 2012-15 is targeted at meeting the need of our most vulnerable children and families. The focus is on addressing gaps in support for groups such as young carers, teenage parents and their children, children in need or with a child protection plan, underachieving children at school and young people being bullied. The plan, with a focus on vulnerable groups, therefore addresses issues of inequality and promotes community cohesion in the borough.

10. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

10.1 There are no SAGE implications.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Early intervention is an overarching principle of the new plan and if done effectively ought to reduce future risks in relation to vulnerable children and families. The holistic approach of the plan is particularly important in a climate in which significant social risks present themselves as a result of the changes associated with the government's welfare reforms. These reforms have the potential to create a whole range of additional demands on children and adult services in the borough and the approach to the new plan provides a way of meeting the needs of the most vulnerable and trying to ensure that resources are allocated accordingly. The plan also seeks to ensure a coordinated approach to commissioning and decommissioning across partner agencies.

12. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Supporting the needs of young offenders and reducing young offending in the borough are strands within the young people section of the plan and will contribute to crime and disorder reduction in the borough.

13. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

13.1 The plan has been developed in partnership with other agencies in the Children and Families Partnership and will result in better joint planning and commissioning across partners therefore improving efficiency and making more effective use of joint resources.

14. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Children and Families Plan 2012-15
Appendix 2 – Equality analysis

Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report

Brief description of “background papers”	Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection.
None	N/A