

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Children's Services Partnership Forum</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>09 March 2015</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Pinaki Ghoshal – Executive Director of Children's Services</b>		
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the function and work of the Children's Services Partnership Forum.
- 1.2 Brighton & Hove: The Connected City, our sustainable community strategy, sets Children & Young People as a strategic priority for the city. This sets out the vision that all have the absolute best start in life and enjoy a stable, healthy childhood, a good education, fun new experiences and the confidence, ability and opportunity to obtain meaningful employment
- 1.3 This is further reflected in the Council's Corporate Plan where we set out our ambition to provide high quality education, keeping children & young people safe, helping them access social and cultural opportunities and being a good corporate parent by created the best opportunities for children in care.
- 1.4 This work is further clarified in the Children's Services Directorate Plan 2014-2017, which has an annual update detailing the range of actions undertaken over the last year to support our city vision.
- 1.5 The City Council is to publish its Participation and Engagement Strategy this spring. The use of this approach with the City's children and young people is fundamental to achieving this vision.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the Committee note and support the ongoing work of the Partnership Forum.

**3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Following the refresh of the city's Sustainable Community Strategy, it was decided to create a new overarching partnership forum to focus on all elements of children's services across the city.
- 3.2 The partnership forum has been designed to be discursive rather than decision orientated. It does not hold any budget or resource, rather it connects organisations and services together to consider how we can collectively deliver real results for children, young people and their families.
- 3.3 It creates a space where people that work in all areas of services to children and young people can come together and start talking about how their work could be better designed and delivered to meet need in the city.

- 3.4 A membership list was drawn together from existing partnership arrangements and includes the city council, health providers, Police, probation, schools and colleagues, Community and voluntary sector organisations and parent representatives.
- 3.5 The inaugural meeting was held in June 2014, was well attended and very positively received. A report detailing that event is given as Appendix 1.
- 3.6 Attendees at the June event gave many suggestions on what future partnership forum meetings could explore in more detail. Many asked for more time on Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health. This was the theme of our subsequent meeting in December 2014, a detailed report given as Appendix 2.
- 3.7 Suggestions were also shared on how the voice of children and young people could be heard through the forum itself. It was decided that Brighton & Hove Youth Council would be approached and a session was held in February 2014. The young people heard about the work of the forum and fed back that they would like to be involved more fully in future sessions. They also had the opportunity to discuss and input their own ideas on the topics discussed at the wider meeting.
- 3.8 The partnership forum has committed to meet bi-annually and work through a series of suggested topics.
- 3.9 Members are clear that it is their responsibility to reflect on messages heard at events and take forward the thinking and further conversations back in their 'home' organisations or to continue discussions with partners.

#### **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 In light of our vision for children and young people in the city and our commitment to providing space for their voice to be heard through all we do, we need a mechanisation for bringing professionals and young people together. They can then hear about recent developments, talk through issues, start to formulate solutions and contribute to strategic thinking across the city.
- 4.2 This partnership forum provides the opportunity for that activity and is working well.

#### **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 In the creation of the Partnership Forum partners were consulted on their views via Brighton & Hove Connected, our strategic partnership.
- 5.2 There is now an established mechanism within the partnership forum for consulting and engaging with children & young people in the city.
- 5.3 Membership of the partnership forum is always subject to review to allow for a wide and representative membership.
- 5.4 Feedback is collected at each event to ensure the partnership forum remains useful and effective.

#### **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 In conclusion, the two partnership forum events held so far have been well received and all parties want to build on this, see the work continue and develop over the coming years.

#### **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The cost of Partnership Forum meetings can be met from within existing resources.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Louise Hoten*

*Date: 06/02/15*

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 *The function and work of the Children's Services Partnership Forum should assist the city in fulfilling statutory duties to promote the well being of children pursuant to the Children Act 1989 and 2004.*

*Lawyer Consulted: Natasha Watson*

*Date: 27/02/15*

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 The Partnership Forum seeks to better understand experiences of our vulnerable children & young people, including those of protected characteristics, and to provide solutions to issues raised. Any work that city organisations or groups take forward as a result of conversations at the partnership forum would be subject to the usual policies and practices around equalities, including the public sector equality duty for due regard and the need for equalities impact assessments.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 Through an effective partnership forum we can reduce potential duplication in service delivery and promote health and happiness in the city.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.5 None

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. Report from June 14 Children's Services Partnership Forum
2. Draft Report from December 2014 Children's Services Partnership Forum

