

PRIORITIES TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' views on the draft Children and Young People's Plan produced by Essex County Council which will come into effect in April next year.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Children and Young People's Plan is a strategic plan outlining key priorities for all agencies supporting children and young people in Essex. A draft has been produced by the County Council and is now out for consultation. A copy of the Plan is attached as Appendix 1. Responses are requested by 4th November 2005.
- 2.2 The key priorities set out in the draft are based on the key themes of the "Every Child Matters" agenda.
- Being Healthy
 - Staying Safe
 - Enjoying and Achieving
 - Making a Positive Contribution
 - Achieving Economic Well-being

3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Under the heading of "Being Healthy" the draft wants to target issues such as obesity, reducing teenage pregnancies, reducing alcohol and drug misuse.
- 3.2 The "Staying Safe" priority will focus on safeguarding children and young people who go missing; who live in families where there is domestic violence and alcohol misuse or drug taking. It also looks at ways to safeguard children who live with private foster carers, reduce the number of children injured or killed in road traffic accidents and reducing the number of children who become victims of crime etc.
- 3.3 The "Enjoy and Achieve" section focuses on ways children can get the right basic skills to enable them to get the most out of education and training. Reducing the number of underperforming schools, raising

education achievements of children who have been looked after for at least 12 months and meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities in mainstream schools and making specialist provision for pupils with significant need are key themes.

- 3.4 The draft outlines that efforts will concentrate on helping young people develop positive relationships. Helping 14-17 year olds to get off the cycle of entrenched/harmful behaviour, raising their aspirations, and the promotion of young peoples' access to leisure, culture, recreational and community activities are highlighted.
- 3.5 In Achieving Economic Wellbeing, the draft wishes to concentrate on increasing the percentage of young people aged 16-19 participating in education, employment and training and increasing the training of young people in employment. Efforts will also be directed to increasing the percentage of young people leaving care who are shown to be in accommodation that meets their need.
- 3.6 In addition to the above, the draft recognises that another important element is supporting parents in their activities at key stages in a child's life.

4 OFFICER COMMENTS

- 4.1 The Children and Young Person's agenda is a growing area of this Council's activities – from Crime and Disorder through to Leisure and Housing. Anti Social Behaviour amongst young people is high on the local public agenda and it is clear from the draft that the strategy will attempt to respond to many of the issues raised – from education and training through to positive contributions through to Parenting.
- 4.2 As the strategy is developed and finalised, it is apparent that this Council will have an important role to play in delivering those areas which fall within its responsibility. In terms of the resourcing for some of the key areas, the Local Area Agreement (LAA) initiative currently being negotiated for Essex will play a key role, with one of the four main funding strands being centred around Children and Young People. It will be important for the District Council to continue to contribute to the LAA process to ensure that it can take full advantage of the funding streams that might be on offer to deliver those areas within its responsibilities.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Committee notes the content of the evolving Children and Young Persons' Strategy.

Paul Warren
Chief Executive

Background Papers:

None

For further information please contact Paul Warren on:-

Tel:- 01702 318199
E-Mail:- paul.warren@rochford.gov.uk