

**CABINET MEETING – 18 JULY 2012**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I**

**Title of Report:**

AS SOON AS POSSIBLE: EARLY INTERVENTION AND LOCALITY SERVICES IN SUNDERLAND

**Author(s):**

Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee and Chief Executive

**Purpose of Report:**

To set out the recommendations of the Children, Young People & Learning Scrutiny Committee following the Committee's review of Early Intervention and Locality Services in Sunderland.

**Description of Decision:**

The Cabinet is requested to consider the Children, Young People & Learning Scrutiny Committee's Policy Review Final Report and endorse the recommendations contained within the report (attached as Appendix A).

To assist the Cabinet in its consideration of the draft recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee, attached as Appendix B is the proposed Action Plan for the implementation of these recommendations which has been prepared in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder.

**Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework?      \*Yes/No**

**If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework**

**Suggested reason(s) for Decision:**

The Committee has investigated preventative and early intervention services for children, young people and their families in Sunderland, looking at the policy context, the early intervention offer, the common assessment framework and locality based services.

The recommendations aim to support, progress and raise awareness to early intervention and locality based services in Sunderland.

**Impact analysed:**

Equality  Privacy  Sustainability  Crime & Disorder

**Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:**

The Scrutiny Committee has gathered detailed evidence and arrived at conclusions and recommendations which are intended to enhance and develop the early intervention offer and processes in Sunderland. There are no alternatives to be considered.

**Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution?      Yes/No**

**Is it included in the Forward Plan?      Yes/No**

**Scrutiny Committee:**



**REPORT OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: AS SOON AS POSSIBLE: EARLY INTERVENTION AND LOCALITY SERVICES IN SUNDERLAND – POLICY REVIEW FINAL REPORT**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To set out the recommendations of the Children, Young People & Learning Scrutiny Committee following the Committee's review of Early Intervention and Locality Services in Sunderland.

**2. Description of Decision (Recommendations)**

- 2.1 The Cabinet is requested to consider the Children, Young People & Learning Scrutiny Committee's Policy Review Final Report and endorse the recommendations contained within the report (attached as Appendix A). Where there are any recommendations which have financial implications, these will be outlined in the Service Directorate's response.
- 2.2 To assist the Cabinet in its consideration of the draft recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee, attached as Appendix B is the proposed Action Plan for the implementation of these recommendations which has been prepared in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 The Annual Scrutiny Conference was held at the Crowtree Leisure Centre on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2011. During the Scrutiny Café sessions a number of viable policy reviews were formulated for discussion by Members of the Committee. At a meeting of the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2011, following discussions regarding the Work Programme, the Committee agreed to focus on early intervention and locality services.
- 3.2 The Marmot review highlighted that giving every child the best start in life was crucial to reducing health inequalities across the life course and it made action in this area its top priority. Early action is the key, 'later interventions, although important are considerably less effective if they have not had good early foundations'.

**4. Key Points Arising from the Review**

- 4.1 Early intervention can have a profound impact on young people, families and the wider community. Research from both England and the USA illustrates these impacts, and highlights the potential savings to public services and other key resources. Numerous amounts of research also demonstrate the increased outcomes and improved life chances for those involved.

- 4.2 The Common Assessment Framework is an important document and is used to gather a variety of information that can help professionals to ascertain the correct type and level of support required. However the document is lengthy and was often considered burdensome particularly by those in a universal setting where capacity is already stretched. The council has invested in training and support for individuals around the CAF process and this is important. However, there is an opportunity to look at the form with the aim of producing a more streamlined and accessible document that can be used in all settings. Further to this it would also help to have a single contact point for potential referrers to seek help and support prior to the submission of a CAF assessment form.
- 4.3 Services based in the local area are acknowledged by leading professionals as being more efficient than previous arrangements. They allow for local people to build up trust and relationships with service providers who are on their doorstep. The importance of this should not be underplayed and by providing services and support in people's local environment can prove beneficial for a number of reasons including the development of relationships, the ease of access and the development of support networks beyond the bricks and mortar of a locality setting. The Children's Centres are a good example of this practice in action.
- 4.4 The recent peer review, independent review of CAF and Ofsted inspections around safeguarding and looked after children provide a timely review of processes, procedures and services. The development of subsequent action plans to tackle any areas identified for improvement including that important interface between CAF assessments and safeguarding will prove invaluable to the progress and development of this agenda. The scrutiny function is one of a number of suitable vehicles to monitor and challenge the action plan over the coming months.

## **5. Response from the Directorate**

- 5.1 Children's Services welcome this report which is timely and can be considered alongside both Ofsted inspection and the Peer Review. Children's Services would like to highlight the following actions that are currently being undertaken to ensure that there is support available for our children and their families at the earliest opportunity and that accessing this support is as swift and easy as possible. They are as follows:
- Review of Children's Centre and Childcare services including the introduction of the all-age Early Intervention Family Team and a service pathway;
  - Development of the Sunderland Early Intervention Strategy;
  - Review of CAF Process including supporting communications, documentation and partner engagement;
  - Integration of services as part of Responsive Local Services work including local governance arrangement; and
  - Strengthening Families project which will better link the early intervention service into services provided by partners thereby enhancing the support provided.

## **6. Reasons for the Decision**

- 6.1 The recommendations are intended to support, progress and raise awareness to early intervention and locality based services in Sunderland.

## **7. Alternative Options**

- 7.1 There are no alternative options recommended.

## **8. Impact Analysis**

### **8.1 Equalities**

The proposals are designed to support improved service delivery for children, young people and their families. Equality issues were addressed during the evidence gathering process and this is reflected in the focused recommendations.

### **8.2 Privacy Impact Assessment**

The proposals have no immediate additional implications for the protection of privacy of the public. Any privacy issues which arise will be addressed through the delivery of the action planning process.

### **8.3 Sustainability**

The proposals have no immediate implications for sustainability. Sustainability issues will be considered and addressed as part of the delivery of the action plan by Members and officers.

### **8.4 Reduction of Crime & Disorder – Community Cohesion / Social Inclusion**

The proposals have no immediate implications for crime and disorder. Any crime and disorder issues will be addressed as part of the delivery of the action plan by Members and officers.

## **9. Relevant Considerations / Consultations**

- 9.1 The findings in the report are the result of consultation and evidence gathering by the Scrutiny Committee. Consultation has been carried out with relevant key stakeholders from across the Council and the City using a variety of techniques including focus groups, site visits, and questionnaires. The Committee also held an Expert Jury Event which provided the opportunity to discuss key themes with a number of relevant experts. Members also visited a Children's Centre and a Locality Based Team to gain a better understanding of the importance of early support and help being placed within communities.

## **10. List of Appendices**

Appendix A – Policy Review Final Report  
Appendix B – Action Plan

## **11. Background Papers**

Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee Agenda Papers 2011/12