



meeting	CABINET	
date	7 June 2006	agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Nottinghamshire Early Years (0-5 years) Strategy

Purpose of report

1. To request members' endorsement of the Nottinghamshire Early Years (0-5 years) Strategy that has been agreed in principle by the Nottinghamshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. Formal endorsement is being sought from all organisations represented on the Partnership.

Information and advice

Background

2. This strategy was initiated by the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership as a contribution to the emerging Children's Services Plan for Nottinghamshire.
3. A wide range of stakeholder groups have been actively involved in shaping this strategy from the very beginning of the process. Multi-agency consultation workshops were held on 6 July 2005 and 19 October 2005, each of them attended by about 50 delegates covering all sectors. This devised the draft local vision, principles and priorities for early years services in Nottinghamshire. This was followed by a countywide paper and internet based consultation during January 2006 when all members of key early years multi-agency working groups were emailed a draft of the strategy and 1,500 paper copies were distributed with the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) Newsletter. Responses to the consultation were collated and evaluated by Janet Lang Research Associates.
4. There were only 32 written responses to the consultation but generally these were positive, with all respondents agreeing with the vision and principles and only one respondent disagreeing with the priorities, feeling that specific reference should have been made to the role of the community and voluntary sector. The consultation showed how many groups or agencies are already endeavouring to work in the ways

indicated by the strategy. Some respondents wanted it to be clearer how they or their concerns would be included in the strategy, e.g. childminders, social services staff, links with Nottingham City provision, services for disabled children, 24/7 childcare, early intervention services. Other respondents expressed some concerns about the potentially negative impact that new initiatives might have on existing services; others about what support might be available for smaller employers; and others about what extra funding might be available and how effectively it might be used:

5. “In essence, therefore, the consultation indicated that there is good support for the strategy and only minor changes have been made to it in response to some of the points raised above. An important lesson from the consultation, though, has been the need to emphasis the strategy's context and purpose in order to respond to some of the misunderstandings expressed in the responses that might be reflected more widely within the early years stakeholder community. In the introduction, on page 2 of the document, emphasis is placed on the intention for it to be an inclusive, flexible framework document

- The strategy aims to be inclusive – it is for all children, all parents, all agencies and all sectors
- The strategy aims to be flexible and will need to be regularly reviewed – some new issues have arisen since it was first drafted and, inevitably, others will arise as soon as the final version is approved. The strategy has to be, therefore, a framework within which new initiatives and new ideas can be considered and focussed. Things that are "missing" should be found a home within the strategy.
- The strategy aims to be a framework for working together – it could not be a detailed action plan for every contributor to early years services because that would make it an enormous and unreadable document However everyone should be able to reference their work to the strategy's framework.
- The strategy aims to link to other service strategies being developed as integrated children's services become a reality. Because these developments are happening in parallel there may be rough edges and inconsistencies to be ironed out. Through communication and consultation any such inconsistencies will be addressed”.

6. Any action plan following from this strategy needs to mesh with five other strategic planning and performance target sets in particular:

- The DfES Public Service Agreement and Performance Indicator Sure Start targets for 2005-08
- The NHS National Service Framework Core Standards
- The Nottinghamshire Children's Centres Outcomes Framework
- The Nottinghamshire Children and Young People's Plan
- The Nottinghamshire Local Area Agreement Targets Framework

Some of these have been developing in parallel with this Early Years Strategy. **Appendix 3** indicates how the relevant elements of these various documents fit to make consistent sets and how these relate to the strategy.

7. It is intended that an Early Years Strategy group will be established, under the overall direction of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and the Children and Young People's Plan in order to progress the actions in the strategy through systematic multi-agency delivery. This strategy group should also take account of changes to the Children's Centre Steering Group and to the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, the functions of both of which could be subsumed into such an Early Years Strategy Group. A further report outlining proposals for membership of the Strategy Group will be presented for approval as a matter of urgency.
8. The final version of the strategy will be published in a style which reflects the spirit and principles of the multi agency partnership and that the presentation of the strategy will be consistent with other documents endorsed by the Nottinghamshire Children and Young People's Partnership.

Public engagement policy

9. Details of the scope of the consultation process appear in **paragraphs 3-5 above**.

Statutory and policy implications

10. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, personnel, crime and disorder and those using the service. Where such implications are material, they have been described in the text of the report. Attention is however drawn to the following:-

Equal opportunities implications

11. The Service diversity review form that has been completed for this report is listed as a background paper.

Implications for service users

12. The Strategy sets out an approach to joined up working between statutory, voluntary and private sector partners, children, parents and communities with the aim of enhancing and enriching the life chances of young children and families, the primary service users. Service users are directly involved in implementation of the strategy, and are instrumental in shaping its development in the future.

Crime and disorder implications

13. Access to a varied menu of activities all year round, swift and easy referral to specialist services, and parenting support all serve to create

a web of opportunities for children and young people enabling them to make a positive contribution to their communities. Effective implementation of the strategy will help to ensure that risk factors for children are reduced and protective factors and resilience are enhanced.

Human Rights Act implications

- 14.. This strategy is designed to support the Every Child Matters “five outcomes” for children and young people outlined by Government.

Corporate Property implications

15. One of the effects of the proposed Nottinghamshire Early Years Strategy will be to encourage agencies to work together to provide a range of facilities that are easily accessible to the community. This mirrors the County Council's Corporate Property Strategy which attempts to reduce property requirements by multi-agency partnership working. Any proposals to increase the property portfolio must be considered against the Corporate Property Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

16. That the Nottinghamshire Early Years Strategy be endorsed.

COUNCILLOR JOYCE BOSNJAK

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Reasons for recommendation

17. Strategies agreed by the Nottinghamshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, of which the County Council is a key member, require endorsing by each constituent member.

Legal Services' comments (LM15/5/06)

18. The Cabinet may endorse the strategy as it has delegated power to discharge all of the functions and exercise all of the powers of the County Council not expressly reserved to the full Council or to any other part of the County Council by statute or by the Constitution of the County Council.

Director of Resources' financial comments (NDR)

19. Nil

Background papers available for inspection

These are included in Appendix two of the Strategy Document

Service diversity review

Electoral division(s) affected

Nottinghamshire

M19C1572