

CHILD RIGHTS PARTNERS PROGRAMME

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG
LEARNING**

AGENDA ITEM: 8

**PORTFOLIOS: EARLY YEARS, CHILDREN & FAMILIES (COUNCILLOR
SUE LENT) AND SKILLS, SAFETY AND ENGAGEMENT (COUNCILLOR
DAN DE'ATH)**

Reason for this Report

1. To enable the Cabinet to consider a recommendation to enter into a three-year partnership with Unicef UK, to deliver a 'Child Rights Partners Programme' in Cardiff, which will underpin the Council's ambition to become a 'Child Friendly City'.

Background

2. The Council's Corporate Plan 2016 – 2018 set out a commitment to work towards Cardiff becoming a Child Friendly City by March 2017. This commitment is followed through in the new draft Corporate Plan 2017 – 2019 and embedded within the Council priority to work together to transform services.
3. The ambition to deliver a Child Friendly City, directly contributes to the Council's new obligations under the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The Act requires the Council to involve people in all that we do, and to act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs- the 'sustainable development' principle.
4. During the summer of 2016, Unicef UK, as the promoter of the global Child Friendly Cities initiative, signalled their intention to expand this scheme in the UK under the designation the Child Rights Partners Programme.
5. Following an introductory meeting with Unicef UK in Cardiff, a range of events were held with key stake holders, including two Grand Council events involving 180 children and young people, and discussions with nominated officers representing service areas across the Council and public and third sector partners to identify potential areas of work to take forward with Unicef.

Key issues raised by a wide range of children and young during the engagement sessions were the need to:

- Raise awareness and champion children's rights across the city
 - Provide children's rights training for adults who work with or support children.
 - Have more of a voice on decision making in communities.
 - Offer 'rights based' programmes in schools to enable children to learn about and claim their rights.
 - Provide opportunities for children and young people to shape and design services.
6. These engagement activities demonstrated wide ranging interest across young people, diverse service areas in the Council, and public service and third sector partners to build on existing practice in engaging young people through following up participation in the Unicef UK programme.
7. In December 2016, Informal Cabinet approved the submission of an expression of interest to join the new Unicef UK - Child Rights Programme from 2017. In January 2017, a formal invitation to join this programme was received from Unicef UK. This statement of invitation noted that the application from the City of Cardiff Council demonstrated a commitment to children's rights, high aspirations for children and young people in the local authority and a coherent vision for how to use the programme as a vehicle for change.
8. The City of Cardiff is one of only five cities in the UK invited to join the 2017 Child Rights Partners Programme. Acceptance of the offer to form a partnership with Unicef UK to deliver the Child Rights Partners Programme in Cardiff will lead to a three-year collaboration, to embed a child rights-based approach across the city.

An overview of the Unicef UK Child Rights Partners Programme: 2013 - 2016

9. The UK Child Rights Partners Programme was launched by Unicef UK and seeks to embed children's human rights in the UK's public services. It is predicated on a commitment to equity – ensuring positive outcomes for all children, including the most vulnerable – and seeks to develop local implementation of children's human rights in practice. The Child Rights Partners Programme is the UK model of the global Child Friendly Cities initiative.
10. A report from Unicef regarding the UK Child Rights Partners programme highlights the importance of a rights based approach in the delivery of public services for children and young people:

'Public services play a vital role in the lives of children and young people. Through universal, targeted and specialist services, local authorities and their partners safeguard and nurture the well-being of all children and young people in their community. Children and young people's experience of these services has a huge impact on their lives, both now and in the

future. It is therefore vital that these services are effective, equitable, responsive and sensitive to the unique circumstances that each child and young person brings with them. Despite this, services are seldom designed around the experiences and voices of children. Children in vulnerable situations in particular are even less likely to have their views heard and taken into account, leaving them in danger of becoming marginalised and falling through the cracks. By approaching children as passive recipients defined by a set of needs rather than capable and resourceful individuals entitled to legally enshrined rights, services systematically exclude the group they aim to support’.

11. Unicef UK has been running five pilots of the Child Rights Partners programme since November 2013, in the following local authorities: Leeds, Glasgow, Newcastle, Tower Hamlets and Derry and Strabane. Each local authority has approached the programme differently to meet their own needs:
 - **Leeds** has used a child rights-based approach to improve the experience of young people leaving care, with a particular focus on the support provided to young people as they move to independence.
 - **Glasgow** has developed a rights-based approach to services for care experienced young people, with a specific focus on those who are parents or expecting a baby. Glasgow is also using the child rights principles to change the planning and delivery of early year’s services and has made child rights training mandatory for all its members.
 - **Newcastle** is applying a rights-based approach in their children’s social care services.
 - **Tower Hamlets** is embedding child rights principles in the way it commissions services for children and young people. The council started with the commissioning of services for young people affected by drug and alcohol misuse.
 - **Derry and Strabane** is embedding children’s rights in their community plan and ensuring that children and young people are involved in developing the council’s new plan.
12. These pilots capitalised on local insights and knowledge about children and young people in a specific area and led to Unicef announcing a new programme in the UK, commencing in April 2017.

Proposed Scope of a Child Rights Partners Programme in Cardiff

13. In line with the Council’s clear commitment to embrace the requirements of the Well- Being of Future Generations Act, in particular to involve people in what we do and ensure that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the Council serves, it is proposed that we take a two dimensional approach to the implementation of a Child Rights Partners programme in Cardiff. The approach seeks to enable a cultural shift in ensuring the consideration of children’s rights in all Council policy and decisions, along with a number of focused initiatives which will seek to ensure purposeful engagement of children and young people in specific areas.

13. At a whole Council level it is proposed that a range of cross cutting thematic approaches will embed an awareness of children's rights in all we do. The areas of priority would be:

- Securing cross party political commitment from all members, through a programme of member training and development.
- Developing an understanding of, and commitment to, children's rights across the workforce of the Council, through workforce training and practical project activity.
- Ensuring that expertise is accessible to facilitate the participation of children and young people in policy decisions, major consultations and needs assessments etc.
- Ensuring a consistent approach to the consideration of children's rights across programmes of work that are enabling the implementation of the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Social Services and Well-being Act.
- Creating capacity to lead on innovation in children's rights, share best practice and celebrate success.

All activity would ensure the consolidation and enhancement of the wide range of good practice that is already happening across the Council.

14. In parallel with these cross cutting themes, involvement in in the Child Rights Partners Programme would focus on the development of the active participation of children and young people in the following priority areas:

- **City Space**

The Council is committed to delivering a high quality city environment, including new sustainable transport strategies. Through the Unicef UK programme, we will aim to ensure that children and young people are given the opportunity to participate fully in developments that affect them, including active travel and the physical design and operation of city streets.

- **Children Looked After**

Collaboration with Unicef UK will provide an invaluable opportunity to support the Corporate Parenting Board to deliver its mission to ensure the best possible outcomes for children who are looked after or who have left care, so that they can be happy and lead a fulfilling life. Using the experience of Unicef UK, we propose to strengthen the voice of Children Looked After by the City of Cardiff Council and support all those individuals involved in delivering services to and supporting these children.

- **Commissioning and Procurement**

This programme will seek to embed children's rights in the City of Cardiff Council's corporate approach to Strategic Commissioning

frameworks. As an extensive commissioner of services, the Council can play an influential role in promoting children's rights in significant developments which are commissioned by the Council and delivered under contract by other bodies.

- **A locality approach to integration of services for children and young people**

The Council seeks to work with partners in the public and third sectors to maximise integration and alignment of services and community assets on a locality/place basis. This approach has initially been focused on service for older people. We propose to apply a similar approach to the delivery of services for children and young people, initially in a specific locality, drawing on the experience of cities in the UK and elsewhere of developing 'Children's Zones'.

15. The dual approach of both thematic and specific action in collaboration with the Unicef UK programme seeks to build on the existing strong practice in the engagement of children and young people in the public life of the city, and to maximise the impact of existing activities and resource allocations impacting on children and young people, across the full range of Council services and also those of partners in the public sector and third sector in the city.

The Way Forward

16. Those cities that have been invited to participate in the 2017 Child Rights Partners programme must formally accept the invitation to form a partnership with Unicef UK and enter into a service level agreement to define the scope of the partnership. This will clearly set out the requirements of both parties on how to work collaboratively and creatively with local stakeholders and children and young people over the next three years.

Programme Timeline:

- Formal acceptance of invitation and development of service level agreement by April 2017.
- Establishment of a Children and Young People's Advisory Board for the programme to enable a wide range of children and young people to have a voice throughout the programme, including those most vulnerable.
- Programme initiation May 2017.
- Engagement workshops to develop outline 3-year programme plan.
- Initial high level training for strategic officers and elected members by Unicef UK June 2017
- National programme launch November 20th 2017 in conjunction with Unicef UK.

Financial Implications

17. The estimated revenue costs associated with this programme are £80,000 for each of the three financial years commencing April 2017. This amount comprises the £25,000 annual programme fee to Unicef and costs in relation to staffing, administration and operations totalling £55,000.
18. As part of the 2017/18 Council budget process, a financial pressure bid of £80,000 was approved for use in connection with this initiative. This amount has been allocated to the base revenue budget for the Education directorate and the costs outlined in this report will be funded from within this allocation.

Legal Implications

19. At this stage there are no direct Legal implications arising from the submission of the bid.

HR Implications

20. At this stage there are no direct HR Implications arising from the submission of the bid. Should the Council proceed with the programme; the HR implications arising from individual projects will be assessed and dealt with in line with the Council's corporate policies and procedures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Accept the invitation from Unicef UK to enter into a three-year partnership to deliver the Child Rights Partners Programme in Cardiff from April 2017.
2. Delegate responsibility to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, in conjunction with Cabinet members for Early Years, Children & Families and Skills, Safety & Engagement, to lead the partnership arrangements to deliver the Child Rights Partners Programme.

NICK BATCHELAR

Director

10 March 2016