

CABINET MEETING: 21 JANUARY 2021

CHILD FRIENDLY CITY PROGRAMME

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS (COUNCILLOR SARAH MERRY)

AGENDA ITEM: 2

Reason for this Report

1. To provide the Cabinet with an update on the progress to date in working towards global recognition for Cardiff as a Unicef Child Friendly City.
2. To seek Cabinet support to ensure continuity of commitment to our Child Friendly Cardiff vision, within and beyond the Council.
3. To advise Cabinet of the next steps in preparing for potential recognition as a Child Friendly City in Autumn 2021.

Background

4. The Child Friendly City and Communities initiative is a global programme that brings together Unicef and local government to put children's rights at the heart of communities and public services. It supports Local Authorities and partners in developing a child rights-based approach, when designing, delivering, monitoring and evaluating local services and strategies for children.
5. Cardiff Council launched its Child Friendly Cardiff Strategy on World Children's Day, 20th November 2018. A detailed multi agency delivery plan was submitted to UNICEF UK in April 2019, triggering a 2 year implementation phase.
6. Cardiff's Child Friendly Vision is at the core of our Capital ambition to make Cardiff 'a great place to grow up'. Specifically it sets out the aim for Cardiff to be:

- A city with children and young people at its heart, where the voices, needs and rights of all children and young people are respected.
 - A city where all children and young people, regardless of belief, ethnicity, background or wealth are safe, healthy, happy and able to share in the city's success
7. The vision will be delivered through the Child Friendly City Strategy, which outlines five goals and a series of commitments to action.
8. The five key goals are:
- Every Child and Young person is valued, respected and treated fairly.
 - Every Child and Young Person has their voice, needs and priorities heard and taken into account.
 - All children and young people grow up in a safe and supportive home.
 - All Children and Young people access high quality education that promotes their rights and helps them develop their skills and talents to the full.
 - Children and Young people have good physical, mental and emotional health and know how to stay healthy.

Progress update

Unicef Monitoring Visit

9. Unicef UK held a monitoring visit in Cardiff in January 2020 and a report was received in early spring providing an update on progress and recommended areas for action for 2020/21.
10. Within the report Unicef UK recognised that Cardiff Council has played a pioneering role in establishing the Child Friendly City Programme in the UK; stating that there is clear evidence that the Council has made significant progress in establishing, prioritising and implementing a child rights-based approach in the Council's culture and commitments.
11. In recognition of this and emerging areas of particularly good practice, Unicef has recommended that the Council should submit for Child Friendly City recognition in the Autumn of 2021. This would entail Unicef convening a panel of rights based experts to assess progress to embed children's rights.
12. The points of note in each goal of Cardiff's Child Friendly City strategy are indicated below.

Culture, Cooperation & Leadership

13. **Unicef progress note:** Building the capacity of decision-makers in a child rights-based approach is a fundamental building block of the CFC programme and Cardiff have led the way with an impressively high attendance of elected members at child rights training. There is also significant commitment from senior leaders within the council, with the

programme being championed at the director level and the programme being supported by a full-time coordinator.

14. Key areas of focus to progress to recognition:

- Collate qualitative evidence to show cross-agency cooperation.
- Obtain perspectives of partner agencies and the third sector on the city's realisation of child rights.
- Work with Unicef to conduct an ethnographic study that aims to understand the impact of taking a child rights approach in identified areas of work through qualitative research.
- Incorporate child rights principles and planning into the Covid-19 recovery and response.
- Work with Unicef to embed Child Rights Impact Assessments in policy development.

Communication

15. Unicef progress note: The Council has made tangible efforts to establish a local brand and digital presence and have worked with children and young people to achieve this. Cardiff's Communication Plan includes a wide range of engagement across key stakeholders including real world and digital platforms. Unicef understands that these plans have been delayed somewhat by the Covid-19 crisis.

An excellent response to a staff perception survey conducted in 2019 demonstrated significantly increased awareness of child rights among staff.

16. Key areas of focus to progress to recognition:

- Revisit the staff perception survey to map progress.
- Adapt the planned communication activities in response to the Covid-19 crisis and beyond.
- Consider a child friendly annual 'state of children's rights in the city' report.

Family & Belonging

17. Unicef progress note: The establishment of the Cardiff Family Advice and Support service in a short space of time is an impressive achievement. It responds to a need observed across several cities and communities and the importance of a single point of comprehensive information and support for children and families. The incorporation of a child rights-based approach into the organisation's stated approach is a particular strength.

18. Key areas of focus to progress to recognition:

- Ethnographic study to be conducted by Unicef UK in collaboration with the Family Advice and Support Service.

- Focused training with the Family Advice and Support Service Team to understand how the child rights-based approach is being embedded in practice.
- Focused training for corporate parenting members and personnel.
- Revisit the 'belonging' element of the badge, considering whether marginalised or discriminated groups of children and young people are actively included in the life of the city.

Education

19. **Unicef progress note:**In establishing a child rights-based approach to education across the city, Cardiff has accelerated the growth of the Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA), establishing a firm child rights knowledge base and network in the city's schools. In addition, Cardiff has launched some key initiatives, including one focusing on widening career aspirations and pathways for disadvantaged children and young people.
20. **Key areas of focus to progress to recognition:**
- Evaluate the impact of the RRSA programme.
 - Consider non-formal education settings – how can these be supported through the programme and benefit from a rights-based approach.

Healthy

21. **Unicef progress note:**The City has started to put some strong ideas into practice in this area, including the establishment of a young people's health board, a child-focused health charter, child friendly streets, a symposium on child rights and health and a focus on young people's use of and treatment within A&E.
22. **Key areas of focus to progress to recognition:**
- Work with Unicef UK to identify projects to track for the purposes of recognition, including ethnographic study and additional focused training. These will include participation at local and strategic levels, role of the Youth Health Board, impact of Elected Member training programme and the Rights Respecting Schools programme.

COVID-19 Recovery Planning

23. Child and young people have been involved throughout the pandemic in webinars and engagement sessions with the Director of Education, the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council to support approaches to COVID-19 management.
24. This engagement needs to extend to involving children and young people in citywide recovery planning, to ensure that the needs and interests of children and young people are taken into account at all stages.

Pathway to recognition – Next Steps

Addressing the recommendations in the Unicef Progress Report

25. There are a number of key recommendations that we need to address prior to the recognition evaluation next autumn as outlined within each goal above. In particular, we need to demonstrate a sustainable approach to embedding children's rights in Cardiff that signals a long term commitment to children and young people. In particular we should work towards:
- Integrating the Children's rights impact assessment into the policy framework; with equal stature to other policy and decision making impact assessments.
 - Continued implementation of the Rights Respecting Schools programme model which will further embed children's rights into school communities.
 - Developing a 'train the trainer model' to maintain capacity in relation to workforce development and mandating child rights training for senior managers.
 - Clear demonstration of a focus on better outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people, for example in fulfilling our corporate parenting responsibilities.
 - Maintaining a meaningful approach to the participation of children and young people in policy, strategy and decision making where changes will impact upon their lives.
 - Producing an annual Child's Rights Report to capture progress and areas for improvement annually alongside the Council's Wellbeing report.
 - Establishing the Child Rights Unit within existing budgets, in Education, to provide a 'centre of excellence' for this work.

Monitoring and Evidence

25. Good progress has been made across all the Child Friendly Cardiff goals. However, as we enter the assessment and recognition phase, monitoring and evaluation activity will need to be enhanced to strengthen the evidence base and clearly celebrate areas of progress, whilst identifying any areas of concern. To ensure visibility of progress at a Corporate level, this reporting will continue to feature in Education's quarterly reports against Capital Ambition and Corporate Plan priorities.

Governance

26. Programme governance arrangements will be reviewed to ensure robust oversight of the programme in this critical phase against the programme goals and identified areas for improvement. This will entail the establishment of a renewed Operational Steering Group, a Strategic multi agency Board and termly update reports to the Public Services Board.

Sustainability

27. Sustainability of commitment to children's rights is key to attaining Unicef recognition in 2021 and the establishment of a Child Rights Unit and embedding Child Rights Impact Assessments are critical. If Cardiff successfully attains the accreditation as a Unicef Child Friendly City this status is in place for three years where another assessment then takes place. However if during this time any statutory inspections of council services report areas of inadequate practice, Unicef can review this status.

Meaningful Participation of Young People

28. Meaningfully involving children and young people in the decisions that affect them is more important now, than ever before.

Examples include:

- Covid-19 recovery and response planning.
- One Planet Cardiff
- Votes at 16
- 21st Century Schools Programme
- Corporate Parenting Strategy
- Children's Service's Participation Framework
- Local Development Plan
- Transport White Paper
- Staff Recruitment Process
- Representation on strategic boards and Scrutiny Committees.

This needs to continue with the rigour and enthusiasm seen to date which is extremely positive across most areas.

Reason for Recommendations

29. The following recommendations are made to enable progression towards UNICEF UK recognition of Cardiff as a Child Friendly City during 2021. Also, to ensure a continued and shared commitment to making rights a reality for all children and young people in the city.

Financial Implications

30. The report outlines progress made to date in embedding a Child Rights approach across the Council and working towards recognition as a Unicef Child Friendly City. The activities and initiatives that have formed part of this work have been funded from within base budget allocations and it is anticipated that this will continue to be the case in future years. Should there be a need for additional resources or if there are any indirect financial pressures arising from the work undertaken, it will be necessary to consider these as part of the Council's annual budget setting process.

Legal Implications

31. In agreeing to these recommendations consideration must be given, amongst other matters, to:

- a) the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards.
- b) public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must in making decisions have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics. Protected characteristics are: a. age; b. gender reassignment; c. sex; d. race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality; e. disability; f. pregnancy and maternity; g. marriage and civil partnership; h. sexual orientation; i. religion or belief – including lack of belief, and;
- c) the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('the Act') is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act places a 'well-being duty' on public bodies aimed at achieving 7 national well-being goals for Wales - a Wales that is prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal, has cohesive communities, a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language and is globally responsible. In discharging their respective duties under the Act, each public body listed in the Act must set and published wellbeing objectives. These objectives will show how each public body will work to achieve the vision for Wales set out in the national wellbeing goals. When exercising its functions, Cabinet should consider how the proposed decision will contribute towards meeting the wellbeing objectives and in so doing achieve the national wellbeing goals. The wellbeing duty also requires Councils to act in accordance with a 'sustainable development principle'. This principle requires Councils to act in a way which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This means that Cabinet must take account of the impact of their decisions on people living their lives in Wales in the future.

There are no other legal implications for this report.

HR Implications

- 32. This report sets out a number of actions that relate to employees within the Council. It is therefore important that trade unions are briefed on the contents of the report and a process of regular communication is in place to update on progress against the actions, in particular those that relate to employees.
- 33. One of the key actions is to consider how young people can be meaningfully involved in employee recruitment processes. This will build on the arrangements already in place for recruitment to key senior officer positions and positions within areas such as Children's services and will require the development of a policy and process that supports

meaningful engagement. The trade unions will need to be fully consulted on any proposals.

34. HR People Services will work closely with the Education Directorate on proposals for employees to access training to ensure that this is embedded in the Cardiff Academy offer to employees across the Council. Consideration will need to be given to how such training can be accessed by those employees who do not have access to digital resources.
35. The development of the Child Right's Unit will be subject to the usual procedures for the evaluation and creation of posts on the Council's establishment.

Property Implications

36. There are no specific property implications in respect of this report. The Strategic Estates Department will assist where necessary in working towards global recognition for Cardiff as a Unicef Child Friendly City. Where there are property transactions required to deliver any proposals, they should be done so in accordance with the Council's Asset Management process and in consultation with Strategic Estates and relevant service areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to agree that Cardiff Council will:

1. Continue to sponsor a Council wide commitment to action to embed a child rights approach across all Council services.
2. Commit to the meaningful involvement of children and young people in COVID-19 city-wide recovery planning.
3. Work towards embedding the Child Rights Impact Assessment into the Policy framework.
4. Receive an Annual Child's Rights Report at Council, to capture progress and areas for improvement annually alongside the Council's Wellbeing report.
5. Develop a sustainable approach to rights based training including mandating child rights training for senior managers.
6. Maintain a meaningful approach to the participation of children and young people in all policy, strategy and decision making where changes will impact upon their lives.
7. Support the evaluation of progress towards the Child Friendly Vision for Cardiff as we embark upon the recognition phase with Unicef in 2021.

SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Melanie Godfrey Director of Education & Lifelong Learning
	15 January 2020