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**REPORT TO:** Cabinet

**DATE:** 20th September, 2006

**DEPARTMENT:** Corporate Policy & Improvement  
Community Services

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Fiona Friday (Community Engagement Officer)  
Lois Toyne (Principal Leisure Officer)

**SUBJECT:** **Children & Young People's Work**

**WARD/S AFFECTED:** All

**FORWARD PLAN REF:** N/A

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## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on progress relating to Harrogate Borough Council's work in response to *Every Child Matters – Change for Children*, and in particular its future approach and support for this work.
- 1.2 It is also to receive the report back on "Living Here", the Young People's consultation event held in June 2006.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:-
- 2.1.1 note the "Living Here" report and the HBC staff and Connexions be thanked for putting on the Event.
  - 2.1.2 approve the Action Plan at **Appendix 2** to implement the recommendations from the "Living Here" event.
  - 2.1.3 approve the proposed arrangements for future support for this work.
  - 2.1.4 the report be submitted to Cabinet and Partners and Community Overview & Scrutiny for approval.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDED REASONS FOR DECISION**

- 3.1 To ensure the Council fulfils its duties under the Children Act 2004, and effectively manages and co-ordinates its role in the development and delivery of Children's Services.

### **4.0 DECISIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED**

- 4.1 None. Statutory requirement for Council to consider the implications of the national strategy.

### **5.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 5.1 On 05 April 2006 Cabinet received a report setting out the background to the Children Act 2004 and outlining the emerging role and new responsibilities for District Councils. Members endorsed the Governance Arrangements for the North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and approved the North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Plan 2006-09 (CYPP) as a shared framework for partnership action.

- 5.2 The CYPP sets out a programme of work for agencies and services to work together to improve the lives of children and young people in North Yorkshire against the 5 *Every Child Matters* outcomes:

- Being Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying and Achieving
- Making a Positive Contribution
- Achieving Economic Well-being

- 5.3 Findings from consultations and direct work with children and young people, identifying issues of importance to them, were used to inform the Plan. The Plan highlights a range of priorities of interest to the Council including:-

- Improving access to sports and fitness activities.
- Children and young people want places to play and hang out where they feel safe and free from threatening behaviour and intimidation.
- Ensuring children and young people are involved in decisions about matters and services that affect them.
- Further develop and improve 14-19 year old provision in local communities and schools working with key partners and other providers.

- 5.4 Harrogate Borough Council's input into development of partnership arrangements and the production of the CYPP has been managed through the Chief Executive's Network with the detailed work being undertaken by the Principal Leisure Officer in Leisure, Museums & Arts (Lois Toyne) in DCS who has been part of the countywide Lead Officers group.

- 5.5 Following completion and adoption of the CYPP there is now a need to move forward and look at the District Council response and Action Plan.

## **HBC Strategic Plan**

5.6 The Council, as part of its Corporate Planning Process in 2005, identified the work as a key strategic action and there are two key actions in the Council Strategic Plan related to this work. These are:-

|      |      |   |
|------|------|---|
| SA01 | 1.3a | To develop a Children and Young People's Action Plan which sets out HBC priorities based upon the CYPP. |
| SA01 | 1.3b | Approve and implement a Safeguarding Children Policy.   |

5.7 The first stage of this work has been to contribute to development of the CYPP and a range of associated Partnership developments, and then to agree the Council's future management and resource arrangements.

## **HBC Community Engagement – “Living Here” Event**

5.8 The purpose of the “Living Here” project was to find out the views of young people aged 11-18, on living in the Harrogate District in 2006 so that Harrogate Borough Council can provide appropriate services and opportunities which meet their needs.

5.9 The project objectives were:-

- To increase opportunities for young people in the Harrogate District (in accordance with the Harrogate District Community Plan).
- To make Harrogate District a better place to live, work and visit (in accordance with the Harrogate Borough Council Strategic Plan).
- To obtain information on young people's needs in the Harrogate District to support the implementation of the Children and Young People's Plan.
- To extend and improve Harrogate Borough Council's consultation and engagement with young people and thus address a weakness identified in 2004 CPA, in particular, that there is no overall understanding of the needs of young people and hard to reach communities.

5.10 In March 2006 Harrogate Borough Council commissioned Connexions York and North Yorkshire and Connecting Youth Culture to find out the views of young people aged 11-18 in the District. This was the first such co-ordinated piece of research carried out on the views of young people in the District.

5.11 The research produced six key recommendations which are set out in the report and form part of a proposed Action Plan.

5.12 The Consultation Event has linked into the Council's involvement in the wider Children's Services agenda and will inform the local response and actions.

## **6.0 THE “LIVING HERE” EVENT - OUTCOMES**

- 6.1 The event took place at the Pavilions, Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate on Thursday 22 June 2006. The event was held in early evening to enable all young people, including those at school or in employment to attend.
- 6.2 A market place format was used to encourage interaction between the young people and the guests. The aim was to create a relaxed environment in which both the young people and the guests could ask questions, explore issues and enjoy the evening. Verbal feedback from both the guests and the young people suggests that this was achieved.
- 6.3 There were 12 groups involved in the event with 38 young people in attendance. These were representatives of their groups and approximately a further 40 young people were indirectly involved through their contribution to the production of the presentations or their involvement in consultation responses.
- 6.4 Councillors, Officers and other key discussion makers were invited to attend and hear the presentations and discuss the issues with the young people.
- 6.5 From this event a Conference Report was produced which highlighted six recommendations. These are:-
  - 6.5.1 Harrogate Borough Council, in partnership with young people, should establish a youth strategy that sets out the mechanisms and commitment for delivering participation activity. This should include a sustainable means of gaining young people's involvement in the development, delivery and evaluation of the strategy, for example through a Youth Council (or similar).
  - 6.5.2 The Council should define its local targets for delivering on the Children and Young People's Plan priorities and agree how young people will be involved in monitoring and evaluating progress against outcomes.
  - 6.5.3 It may be valuable to have an identified lead (Councillor and/or senior manager) for youth. These people need to be committed to the principle of participation work and have the status to ensure the implementation of the youth strategy.
  - 6.5.4 The Council should be active in countering the negative perceptions of its young people. It should use its influence to raise the profile of positive images of youth.
  - 6.5.5 The Council, as a large employer, a service provider and advocate for community development should support young people through a varied provision of personal, social and learning opportunities. This may include:
    - establishing a trainee scheme for local young people with a commitment to supporting vulnerable or disaffected young

- people
- providing resources to encourage young people to enhance or make changes to their communities
- educating young people in innovative ways about democracy

6.5.6 Awareness raising and training should be made available to Council staff to enable them to more effectively develop participation work within their department. Consultation activity and participation work should take place within the context of the Council's youth strategy and should be co-ordinated and shared across departments.

A copy of the conference report is attached as **Appendix 1** for Cabinet Members only. Officers can access the report on the Intranet and a copy has been placed in the Members' Room for all other Members.

6.6 Following the production of the report HBC Officers produced an Action Plan which was discussed with Connexions and relevant HBC Officers at a meeting chaired by the Chief Executive.

6.7 From that meeting it was agreed to seek approval for the Action Plan to take forward the Council's work with children and young people. A copy of the Action Plan is attached as Appendix 2.

## **7.0 CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN (CYPP)**

7.1 As outlined earlier in the report the Council has been involved in the development of new partnership arrangements for the planning and delivery of services for children and young people through the Principal Leisure Officer in DCS.

7.2 With the publication of the CYPP the Council now needs to determine how it will respond to the Plan and the actions identified in it for this Council.

7.3 The first stage of this process is to identify the lead responsibilities for this work within the Council and for them then to produce a report on the proposed action plan and the resource requirements to implement it.

7.4 Given that the Council has a significant role in the delivery of services for children and young people in the District it is important that the Council takes forward this agenda.

7.5 Also, under the Children Act 2004 the Council has new statutory duties to co-operate with the Lead Authority for Children's Services (NYCC) and to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

7.6 Following detailed consideration it is proposed that the lead strategic responsibility should be within the Cultural Services portfolio and that the Cabinet Member for Culture (Cllr Pat Jones) become the Lead Member for Children and Young People.

- 7.7 Alongside this it is proposed that the Strategic Lead Officer responsibility becomes an integral part of the Principal Leisure Officer's post and that a maximum of the equivalent of 2 days per week be allocated to the co-ordination, implementation and development of this agenda.
- 7.8 Other Officers, across a range of Council services, already have an involvement in children and young people's work and that will be co-ordinated through the emerging Action Plan.
- 7.9 If Cabinet approve this proposal and put in place the key responsibilities and roles related to children and young people then the detailed Action Plan required will be brought to Cabinet in November.

## 8.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The Council's Community Engagement work with young people and the Council's input to the emerging Children's agenda and development of the CYPP have been valuable in clarifying the views of young people and helping to shape the Council's approach and response to this key priority for both the Government and the Council.
- 8.2 The Action Plan sets out how this work should now be taken forward and in particular clarifies who will take lead responsibility (Cabinet Member and Officer). However successful implementation will depend on full and active support from all departments.
- 8.3 The final stage of the "Living Here" project is to feedback to the young people and delegates who attended the event. The conference report will be circulated together with information on the Action Plan, and also placed on the website. It is also planned to host a feedback event as part of Local Democracy Week in October.

**OFFICER CONTACT:** Please contact Fiona Friday or Lois Toyne if you require any further information on the contents of this report. The officers can be contacted at the Department of Corporate Policy & Improvement, Council Offices, Crescent Gardens, Harrogate, by telephone on 01423 556068 or by email - [fiona.friday@harrogate.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.friday@harrogate.gov.uk) or at the Department of Community Services, Brandreth House, St Luke's Avenue, Harrogate, by telephone on 01423 556721 or by email - [lois.toyne@harrogate.gov.uk](mailto:lois.toyne@harrogate.gov.uk)

## SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT/POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

|     |               | Implications are |         |          |
|-----|---------------|------------------|---------|----------|
|     |               | Positive         | Neutral | Negative |
| A.  | Economy       |                  | ✓       |          |
| B.  | Environment   |                  | ✓       |          |
| C.  | Social Equity |                  | ✓       |          |
| (i) | General       |                  |         |          |

|       |  |  |   |  |
|-------|--|--|---|--|
| (ii)  | Customer Care/People with Disabilities |  |   |  |
| (iii) | Health Implications                    |  |   |  |
| D.    | Crime and Disorder Implications        |  | ✓ |  |