

Report of:	Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Culture and Communities - Councillor Mieka Smiles Executive Director of Children's Services - Sue Butcher
Submitted to:	Executive - 9 November 2021
Subject:	Middlesbrough's Ambition for Children: A Whole Town Strategy

Summary

Proposed decision(s)
<i>That Executive endorses the Middlesbrough Children Matter (MCM) approach and priorities, and that those priorities form part of a town-wide children's strategy which outlines Middlesbrough's ambition for all children within the town, directly linked to our (MCM) vision and mission.</i>

Report for:	Key decision:	Confidential:	Is the report urgent? ¹
<i>Decision</i>	Yes	No	No

Contribution to delivery of the 2021-24 Strategic Plan		
People	Place	Business
<i>The strategy will have an impact on almost all priorities within the council's strategic plan but from the lens of children and young people.</i> <i>For example this will support our strategic priority of 'children and young people' by showing them that they matter through the development of a town-wide children's strategy, co-</i>	<i>The strategy will have an impact on almost all priorities within the council's strategic plan but from the lens of children and young people.</i> <i>For example this will support our strategic priority of 'physical environment' as we will be working with children and young people to ensure they feel safe,</i>	<i>The strategy will have an impact on almost all priorities within the council's strategic plan but from the lens of children and young people.</i> <i>For example this will support our strategic priority of 'Culture' through providing a focus on activities and leisure.</i>

¹ Remove for non-Executive reports

<i>produced with children and young people.</i>	<i>proud of where we live, and have a chance to do well.</i>	
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Ward(s) affected
<i>As the MCM priorities and supporting children and young people's strategy will be town-wide, all wards will be affected.</i>

What is the purpose of this report?

1. The purpose of the report is to seek endorsement from Executive of the MCM brand and priorities.
2. To develop a town-wide children's strategy and supporting delivery plan setting out Middlesbrough's ambition for all children, directly linked to our MCM vision, mission and priorities. This will be a strategy informed and co-produced with children and young people.

Why does this report require a Member decision?

3. As per the executive scheme of delegation terms of reference, an executive decision is required as this is a change to existing policies and procedures which is likely to have a significant impact on service provision.
4. It is important that members endorse our MCM approach and fully support the delivery of the priorities across the town. Through supporting the development of a town-wide ambition for all children, we will further strengthen our ongoing improvement journey for all of Middlesbrough's children, young people and their families.
5. Having a clear strategy for children and young people of the town will also allow informed member challenge and the ability to hold officers to account against delivery of agreed priorities as appropriate.

Report Background

6. The Corporate Reference Group is made up of key partners from across all Directorates and was established to provide a whole council response to delivering against our Children's Services Improvement Programme.
7. The group have an established work plan which outlines how each directorate can contribute to the delivery of the Children's Services Improvement Programme and this is monitored within monthly meetings.
8. As the Improvement Programme focusses solely on our response to Ofsted findings and has a clear set of priorities and outcomes to deliver against, it was agreed that through the Corporate Reference Group a wider offer would also be created.
9. This wider offer will be the endorsement of our MCM priorities through the development of a corporate Children's and Young Person's Strategy, which will focus on improving the lives of all children of Middlesbrough and not just those who are impacted by our ongoing improvement journey.

10. Our current MCM mission is 'to show Middlesbrough Children that they Matter'. The priorities which sit below this are:
 - a. Place – *We feel safe, proud of where we live, and have a chance to do well*
 - b. Work – *We have help to find work opportunities*
 - c. Community – *Making Middlesbrough a community that we feel part of and we are proud of*
 - d. Family and Relationships – *We are important and deserve to be supported to have healthy and safe relationships with the people that are important to us*
 - e. Wellbeing – *We will be given the opportunity to be healthy, physically and emotionally.*
 - f. Activities and Leisure – *Middlesbrough has lots of things that we want to do*
 - g. Communication and Connectivity – *Our voice is important, and we feel that we are heard*
 - h. Learn and Achieve – *We have a mix of opportunities for education and training*
 - i. Best Start in Life – *Our families are supported to give us the best start in life*
11. To ensure our Children and Young Person's Strategy is co-produced with our children and young people, we are proposing to undertake a town-wide consultation of our priorities. This will therefore be a strategy informed and developed with our children and young people, and for our children and young people.
12. The two work streams of the Corporate Reference Group will run in parallel and complement each other in their delivery by having our core improvement programme focusing on the key service improvements, and our MCM Children and Young Person's Strategy encompassing the wider vision for the town.

What decision(s) are being asked for?

13. That Executive endorses the Middlesbrough Children Matter (MCM) approach and priorities, and that those priorities form part of a town-wide children's strategy which outlines Middlesbrough's ambition for all children within the town, directly linked to our (MCM) vision and mission.

Why is this being recommended?

14. The decision is recommended as this will further support our ongoing Children's Services improvements by setting an ambition for all children within the town, which includes direct input from children and young people. This will allow Middlesbrough Council to have a focus on how we improve the lives of all children and young people and also extend our collaborative working through MCM by bringing key partners in to support a shared vision. As the strategy will be informed by a town-wide consultation, the associated cost to deliver, benefits and risks are not fully known. These will all be confirmed during the strategy development.

15. Internal engagement with the Corporate Reference Group was undertaken to determine the decision. This was not statutorily required. The outcomes of the consultation found that all directorates supported the proposal of a children's strategy outlining Middlesbrough's ambition for all children.

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

16. Another option would be to do nothing. This is not recommended as it would mean that Middlesbrough do not have a clear strategy aimed solely at improving the lives of all children and young people within the town that is directly co-produced with children and young people of the town.

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

Legal

17. The report has been considered by legal and there are no legal implications for the Council.

Financial

18. The initial cost associated with the consultation is £28,000 which will be funded from existing Children's Services budgets, initially from Change Fund but will be discussing contributions from other directorates. This will cover the cost of recruiting, training and supporting 25 Young Researchers. The Young Researchers will undertake the town-wide consultation aiming to seek the views of 5000 children and young people across Middlesbrough, be responsible for the cleansing and analysis of the data, and co-produce the findings into Middlesbrough's Children's Strategy.
19. Once the strategy is developed further work will be required to understand full costs, benefits and risks associated with the delivery of all identified priorities.

Policy Framework

20. This decision does not have any impact of the council's policy framework.

Equality and Diversity

21. The consultation does not require an impact assessment. Following the development of the draft strategy, an impact assessment will be undertaken.

Risk

22. The relevant risks this decision would influence are cited below, with an explanation as to why they are relevant and how it would affect each risk.

Risk No	Risk Description	How it impacts on each risk
O9-019	If the town wide Children and Young People's Strategy is not delivered then this will lead to an uncoordinated and disjointed approach with partners to provide services for children which	The Town Wide and Children and Young People's Strategy seeks to provide a coordinated and linked approach with partners to the delivery of the services to

	may result in children not reaching their potential, possible intervention from regulatory bodies and reputational damage to the Council.	all Children and Young People. The proposal will have a positive impact on this risk.
O5-025	If the Council fails to deliver the Improvement Plan and to remain on track this may lead to services for children and families remaining inadequate resulting in increased scrutiny from DfE/Ofsted and ultimately that MBC does not have capacity to improve. The minister would consider alternative delivery models such as a Children's Trust and this would damage the Council's reputation.	By improving the delivery of service to all Children and Young People this will support the delivery of the Council's overall Improvement Plan. The proposal will have a positive impact on this risk.
O4-007	If Children's Service experiences ineffective partnership working, then this will impact on ability to deliver priorities.	The strategy is seeking to consult with Children and Young people to ensure that their experiences are known. The information will be utilised to inform services and this will include partners in the development of this work. The proposal will have a positive impact on this risk.
O13-005	Failure to engage effectively with local communities in the development and delivery of public services, leading to poor decisions, a deterioration in the relationship between the Council and local communities, the potential for decisions to be challenged and / or overturned, and the resulting significant reputational and financial impacts of this.	Children and Young People are part of our communities and consultation is being undertaken to obtain their views for the Town Wide and Children and Young People's Strategy so they can help shape the service requirements. The proposal will have a positive impact on this risk.
O8-008	If effective partnership working is not achieved, then this will reduce the Council's ability to deliver strategic priorities and key services, resulting in reduced outcomes for local communities.	Partnership working is included within the Town Wide and Children and Young People's Strategy which will ensure that there is a coordinated approach to delivering priorities and providing the outcomes that are required by communities. The proposal will have a positive impact on this risk.

Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

23. The governance for the delivery of the report will be managed via the Corporate Reference Group and project exception reports will be submitted to the meeting on a monthly basis.
24. Key milestones include:
- Recruit and train Young Researchers – Nov-21 to Dec 21
 - Undertake town-wide children and young person's consultation – Jan 22 to Feb 22
 - Consultation data cleansing and analysis – Mar 22
 - Co-production of Ambition For Children strategy – Apr 22 – Sept 22 (TBC)
 - Strategy launch – Sept 22 (TBC)
 - Develop strategy delivery plan – Sept 22 to Dec 22 (TBC)

Appendices

25. None.

Background papers

26. No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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