

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**REPORT TO CHILDEN & YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****DATE 13 OCTOBER 2014****REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – CHILDREN****EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION STRATEGY****1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the progress made to develop a Strategy to define the activity around early intervention and prevention services in Bridgend, now known as the 'Early help in Bridgend'.

2 Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 This report links to the following Community strategy priorities:

- Working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement.
- Working with children and families to tackle problems early.
- Working together to help vulnerable people to stay independent.
- Working together to tackle health issues and encourage healthy lifestyles.

3 Background

- 3.1 Historically investment in prevention and early intervention initiatives in Bridgend has been un-coordinated. Many services are still relatively new and they need time to embed and to develop robust links with other provision. There is a hope that, in time, these initiatives will impact positively on the lives of children and young people and their families but in order to achieve this we recognise that there is a need to co-ordinate services better and to make more rigorous links between our approaches to children at different tiers of need. In recent years there has been some significant investment and commitment to prevention and early intervention within Bridgend, i.e. Connecting Families, the Intensive Family Support Service, Rapid Response Team, and Families First. In addition, some services have been re-organised with the aim of increasing skills and capacity within the team. The local authority has increased its focus on developing integrated approaches to supporting families and supporting social workers and other practitioners. It is acknowledged that there needs to be a strategy in place to ensure that the range of prevention and early intervention initiatives in place are joined-up, coherent and have a common purpose and that children's needs do not escalate. The council intends to publish its "Early help in Bridgend Strategy". This strategy defines the council's whole systems approach to preventing the needs of children and their families becoming more acute.

4 Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 Attached at Appendix 1, is the Council's "Early help in Bridgend Strategy". It recognises that in order to be effective in developing services that co-ordinate effectively and provide a wraparound service for children and families we require a strategy that is continually reviewed, has sound leadership and rigorous approaches to prevention and early intervention. The strategy describes clearly defined approaches to social work practice, a strong collaborative working approach to working with children and families and a proactive use of relevant data, information and intelligence in respect of children and families at all levels of need.
- 4.2 This strategy describes the way in which we want to provide our services in the future, and focuses on how we will improve our current arrangements to improve outcomes for children. Key elements of this strategy are that Children's Services are driving a 'whole system' approach to supporting children and keeping families together. Together with the looked after children and placement Strategy, these will form a multi-agency response to driving improved outcomes for children.
- 4.3 The focus in the strategy is on describing what will change in relation to our work with children at all levels of the continuum of need. The strategy contains an action plan for the future rather than an attempt to cover every detail of our current services and support.

5 Effect upon Policy Frameworks and Procedure Rules

- 5.1 This has been considered but as there are no new or changed services policy / functions in this report, it is therefore not applicable at this time.

6 Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 This has been considered but as the report is for information purposes, an assessment is not deemed necessary at this stage.

7 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The 14/15 gross budget for early intervention and prevention is £7.975 million. Of this £6.311 million is funded by grants and £130k from the Bridgend Change Programme.
- 7.2 There will be budget savings linked with the strategy, which will be achieved by streamlining the management of our current support service portfolio. The value of these savings is unknown at present.

8 Recommendations

- 8.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note and consider the content of this report and associated appendices.

Deborah McMillan
Corporate Director - Children

Date: 13th October 2014

Contact Officer: Nicola Echanis

Telephone: (01656) 642611

E-mail: nicola.echanis@bridgend.gov.uk

Background documents:

None