

## **BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **REPORT TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**21 JULY 2016**

#### **REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION & FAMILY SUPPORT**

##### **PARTICIPATION STRATEGY**

###### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek the Committee's endorsement of the Authority's Participation Strategy for Children and Young People (attached as Appendix 1).

###### **2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priorities**

- 2.1 The report relates to the following priorities in the Corporate Plan 2016-2020:

- Helping people become more self-reliant – involving service users and enabling community groups to have a voice.
- Smarter use of resources – Improving our understanding of citizens views.

###### **3. Background**

- 3.1 In December 2012, under section 12 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, the Welsh Government issued statutory guidance to Local Authorities to promote and facilitate participation by children and young people in decisions that might affect them.
- 3.2 In April 2015 the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 received Royal Assent and within section 4.3 of the Core Guidance 'Shared Purpose: Shared Future', there is an emphasis on the role of the young person in implementing the seven wellbeing goals through inclusion in the decision making process. Within this guidance there are further recommendations for Local Authorities to adhere to the National Participation Standards (Appendix 2) which will ensure effective working practice.
- 3.3 There is also a commitment in Wales to ensure that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) principles are enshrined in legislation within the expectations set out within the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011. The UNCRC has been summarised into seven core aims which will underpin the working practices of any service working with children and young people. The seven core aims states that all children and young people: -
1. Have a flying start to life
  2. Have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities
  3. Enjoy the best possible health and free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation

4. Have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities
5. Are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised
6. Have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing
7. Are not disadvantaged by poverty

#### **4. Current Situation/Proposal**

- 4.1 Bridgend will deliver its commitment to embedding the participation agenda in all aspects of the delivery and reviewing of services through the implementation of a Participation Strategy (Appendix 1) in line with the 'Shared Purpose: Shared Future' Core Guidance, which has encompassed the National Participation Standards and the UNCRC. A self-assessment within Bridgend will take place and will be guided by the National Children and Young People's Participation Standards Self-Assessment Toolkit (Appendix 3)
- 4.2 The development of a Bridgend wide Participation Strategy Group will introduce a collaborative approach to effective planning and delivery of both strategic and operational activities as outlined within the Participation Strategy. The planning and delivery of services will be mapped and monitored against the National Participation Standards and the UNCRC Seven Core Aims. The Participation Strategy Network consists of representatives from both Statutory and Voluntary Sector services working with Looked After Children, Young Carers, children and young people with disabilities, and is also representative of Local Partnership boards, Community Safety and Safeguarding colleagues as well as ongoing representation from the Youth Mayor. This network is collaboratively progressing with the action plan as part of the Participation Strategy, with short medium and long term priorities being implemented across services areas.
- 4.3 Bridgend Youth Council will be supported by staff within the Integrated Working and Family Support Team, and will be recognised as the platform through which all children and young people throughout the County will be encouraged to influence positive change within services and decisions which will affect them. The Youth Council will be the primary platform through which children and young people may engage in the democratic and decision making process, however, supplementary forums are available within schools, via their School Councils, in addition to specific youth forums which will take forward the five priorities of the Youth Council for 2016 – 2017, which include: -
  1. School Issues
  2. Bullying, Cyberbullying and Hate Crime
  3. Mental Health
  4. Community Issues
  5. Young Carers

Each Youth Council lead for these five priorities will be supported to progress their action plans, which will, in addition be disseminated to, and progressed by primary school councils through the guidance of a governance structure.

#### **5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules**

- 5.1 There is no effect on the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 A Children's Rights Impact Assessment will be developed through the Participation Strategy Group which will ensure that all children and young people in Bridgend are provided with a platform to engage in the democratic process within the Local Authority and beyond.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 There are no financial implications regarding this report as the Strategy will be implemented within existing resources.

## **8. Recommendation**

- 8.1 To endorse the Participation Strategy (Appendix 1), to provide feedback on the Strategy, and to support the implementation of the wider participation agenda.

**Deborah McMillan**  
**Corporate Director - Education and Family Support**

**Contact Officer: Nicola Echanis, Head of Education and Early Help**

**Telephone:** 01656-642611

**E-mail:** [Nicola.echanis@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:Nicola.echanis@bridgend.gov.uk)