

**Report for:** Cabinet, 13 June 2017

**Item number:**

**Title:** **Child Friendly Haringey - Scrutiny Review and Cabinet Response**



**Report authorised by:** Jon Abbey-Director of Children Services

**Lead Officer:** Marc Kidson- Transformation Strategy Manager

**Ward(s) affected:** ALL

**Report for Key/  
Non Key Decision:** N/A

## 1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 A number of local authorities in the UK have undertaken initiatives that have aimed to make them become 'child friendly'. All of the initiatives undertaken have been inspired to a greater or lesser extent by the concept of 'Child Friendly Cities'. The purpose of this report is to respond to the five recommendations made by the Scrutiny panel-the five recommendations are:

1. That the Council declares its intention to become a "Child Friendly" borough, with this approach embedded in everything that the Council does and driven by strong political and officer commitment.
2. That a "Child Friendly borough" strategy be developed for Haringey and that this includes the following:
  - A clear local vision of what a "Child Friendly" borough should look like;
  - Enhanced arrangements for listening and responding effectively to the voice of the child;
  - Engagement of children in the design, implementation and evaluation of services designed for them;
  - Child impact assessments and evaluation to be considered within proposed new policies and reviews or change to existing policies;
  - Action to ensure that children know their rights; and
  - A coordinating mechanism.
3. That, as part of the development of a "Child Friendly" strategic approach, engagement take place with partners and the voluntary sector in order to secure their collaboration.
4. That an application be made by the Council to become a Unicef Child Rights Partner.

5. That the following issues, based on feedback and performance information, are key priorities for children and young people in the Council's new Young People's Strategy and the focus of any projects developed as part of the Unicef Child Rights Partners scheme:

- community safety for young people and, in particular ensuring that they are able to travel safely around the borough;
- youth facilities and activities which provide fun as well as opportunities for personal, educational and social development;
- mental health and the promotion of social and emotional well-being;
- housing and, in particular, the avoidance of homelessness; and
- reducing the percentage of children living in households living in poverty.

1.2 In this context, the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel conducted an in- depth review on how Haringey could become a 'child friendly' borough. This also included considering what would constitute a 'child friendly' borough and the actions that might be required by the Council and its partners to achieve such a goal. Therefore Children's Services have responded to the recommendations in **Annexe 2**.

1.3 The final report of the second part of this review is attached at Appendix 1. This outlines the conclusions and recommendations of the Panel, which were approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 March 2017.

## 2. Cabinet Member Introduction

The aspiration to be a "child friendly borough" is one that I hope we all share. As the Panel's report highlights, delivering on that aspiration in a way that is relevant and impactful locally can take many different forms. We have set out a strong, system-wide commitment to children and young people through 'Best Start in Life', Priority 1 of Haringey's Corporate Plan 2015-18 and it is important that our resources and the efforts of our partners are focused on delivering that. As we seek to refresh our strategy in 2018, we will incorporate the learning from the Panel's review into engagement with our partners around what a "child friendly Haringey" could look like. However, for now I do not believe that formal participation in the Unicef programme, or the establishment of a separate strategy and governance mechanism distinct from Priority 1 would help us to improve outcomes for children and young people. Nonetheless, this year we will be co-producing a Participation Strategy with children and young people, to ensure that the rights and opportunities of children to be listened to and to have their views respected are being maximised.

## 3. Recommendations

3.1 That the Cabinet approve the Children's Services responses to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as outlined in **Appendix 2** of the report.

## 4. Reasons for decision

4.1 The evidence supporting the Panel's recommendations is outlined in the main body of the report (**Appendix 1**).

## **5. Alternative options considered**

5.1 The evidence supporting the Panel's recommendations is outlined in the main body of the report (**Appendix 1**). The Cabinet could choose not to accept the recommended response by officers to them, as outlined in Appendix 2. The potential implications of alternative courses of action are referred to within this, as appropriate.

Some of the recommendations presented in the Review would have financial and resourcing implications that have not fully been costed by the Panel and Cabinet is asked to consider this as part of their decision.

## **6. Background information**

6.1 The agreed terms of reference were to consider and make recommendations on the feasibility of the Council declaring its intention to become a Child Friendly City, including:

- what it might entail;
- potential benefits;
- risks and resource is uses; and
- what a scheme for Haringey might look like.

6.2 Sources of evidence included:

- research and documentation from Unicef and a number of different local authorities;
- interviews with officers from Haringey Council, other local authorities and Unicef;
- consultation responses for a range of young people within Haringey; and
- performance information.

## **7. Contribution to strategic outcomes**

7.1 The work undertaken by the Panel will contribute to Priority 1 of the Corporate Plan – 'Enable every child and young person to have the best start in life, with high quality education'- and Priority 4 - 'Drive growth and employment from which everyone can benefit'.

## **8. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)**

**Finance and Procurement**  
NA

## Legal

- Under Section 9F Local Government Act 2000 (“LGA”), Overview and Scrutiny Committee have the powers to review or scrutinise decisions made or other action taken in connection with the discharge of any of Cabinet’s functions and to make reports or recommendations to Cabinet with respect to the discharge of those functions. Overview and Scrutiny also have the powers to make reports or recommendations to Cabinet on matters which affect the Council’s area or the inhabitants of its area. The Constitution provides that the Scrutiny Review Panels must refer their findings/recommendations in the form of a written report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for approval and afterwards, final reports and recommendations will be presented to the next available Cabinet meeting together with an officer report where appropriate.
- Under Section 9FE of the LGA, there is a duty on Cabinet to consider and respond to the recommendations indicating what if any action Cabinet proposes to take and to publish its response.

## Equalities

The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equalities Act (2010) to have due regard to:

- tackle discrimination and victimisation of persons that share the characteristics protected under S4 of the Act. These include the characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (formerly gender) and sexual orientation;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not;
- foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

The report highlights the need to ensure that there are opportunities for all children and young people within the borough as well as a number of areas where there are particular challenges in respect of this.

### 9. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Report of Scrutiny Panel

Appendix 2 – Response by the Children’s Service to recommendations

### 10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

NA