



Subject:	Consultation response on Children and Young People's Strategy
Date:	7 February 2017
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director City & Neighbourhood Services Department
Contact Officer:	Cate Taggart, Community Development Manager

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to make Members aware of the Department of Education's consultation on the Children and Young People's Strategy and to seek Members' approval of the Council's draft response.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none">Consider the draft response and approve its submission to the Department of Education, subject to any comments or amendment provided, with the proviso that the response is subject to full Council approval at its meeting in March 2017.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	The Department of Education is currently consulting on the Children and Young People's Strategy; the consultation period commenced on Monday 19 th December 2016 and will run until 5pm on Monday 27 th February 2017.
3.2	Members are also advised that officers from the Children and Young People Unit have had ongoing discussions with representatives from the Department of Education during the development stage of the draft strategy.
	<u>Summary of draft strategy</u>
3.3	A copy of the draft strategy is attached as appendix 1 but in summary it is designed to

improve the well-being of all children and young people living in Northern Ireland.

3.4 The Programme for Government (PfG) identifies that a key desired outcome is “giving our children and young people the best start in life” - the Strategy states that it is a key component to achieve this and that it sets out a direction of travel for how it wants the lives of children and young people to improve.

3.5 The Strategy seeks to build upon the many positive outcomes children experience whilst also focusing on areas of concern where outcomes are poorer or specific groups of children and young people face barriers to positive outcomes.

3.6 PfG has established the budget priorities which will reflect and drive the Executive’s improvement agenda. Within this context funding for this Strategy will come from within departmental budget allocations.

3.7 The Strategy proposes the following eight outcomes:

- Children and young people are physically and mentally healthy
- Children and young people enjoy play and leisure
- Children and young people learn and achieve
- Children and young people live in safety and stability
- Children and young people experience economic and environmental well-being
- Children and young people make a positive contribution to society
- Children and young people live in a society which respects their rights
- Children and young people live in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted

3.8 For each of the eight outcomes, the consultation response asks:

- Based on evidence, where is the greatest effort needed?
- How do we know if we are achieving the outcome? (Proposed indicators)

Draft Response

3.9 A copy of the draft response to the consultation is attached as appendix 2 and a summary of the key issues are outlined below. As the closing date for responses is prior to the March Council meeting it is proposed that the response, subject to any comments or amendments from Members, be submitted with the caveat that it is still subject to ratification at the full Council meeting.

3.10	<p>The Council welcomes the strategy and agrees with its proposed aim, key principles and the new structures that will oversee its delivery. We demonstrate how it fits closely with the Belfast Agenda and the work we are doing in the area and highlight the work of the Youth Forum. We suggest that further detail on how the strategy will be reviewed and clarification around how Councils will fit into new structures would be useful.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Children and young people are physically and mentally healthy</u></p> <p>We agree with all of the areas and indicators proposed under this outcome. We highlight the work and programmes we are delivering in these areas through our Play, Community and Leisure Centres and Leisure Development Unit.</p>
3.12	<p><u>Children and young people enjoy play and leisure</u></p> <p>We agree with all of the areas and indicators proposed under this outcome. We highlight the work and programmes we are delivering in these areas and in particular initiatives to support children and young people with a disability and those living in poverty.</p>
3.13	<p><u>Children and young people learn and achieve</u></p> <p>We agree with all of the areas and indicators proposed under this outcome and again highlight the work we do in this area. One of the areas highlighted is children and young people in custody, which the Council does not have a direct remit for but we indicate that we support the focus on this area.</p>
3.14	<p><u>Children and young people live in safety and stability</u></p> <p>We agree with all of the areas and two of the indicators proposed under this outcome and again highlight the work we do in this area. There are two of the indicators that we neither agree nor disagree with, these are the victims of crime and child contact order indicators. The reasons for these are that in the case of the first we know that a high proportion of crimes where young people are the victim are not reported and in relation to the second we are not involved in this area of work and therefore unable to comment.</p>
3.15	<p><u>Children and young people experience economic and environmental well-being</u></p> <p>We agree with two of areas identified as requiring greatest effort but neither agree or disagree with the one around rural young people. The rationale for this is that Belfast is primarily an urban environment. There are two indicators under this outcome: Percentage of children living in absolute poverty before housing costs and Number of 16-24 year olds in education, employment or training. Whilst we agree with both indicators it is important to note that they both have limitations and these are highlighted in the response with suggestions for</p>

	strengthening them.
	<u>Children and young people make a positive contribution to society</u>
3.16	We agree with the areas identified and highlight that it can be challenging for many organisations to ensure participation by children and young people, we highlight the Council's Youth Forum as an example of best practice. We neither agree nor disagree with the two proposed indicators, the rationale for this is we feel that further work is required on both to ensure they fully capture how the outcome is being achieved.
	<u>Children and young people live in a society which respects their rights</u>
3.17	We agree with all of the areas proposed under this outcome. We agree with one of the indicators but disagree with two of the proposed indicators. We feel that just having heard of the UNCRC is not useful in terms of ensuring that the principles of the UNCRC is embedded in the policies and practices of organisations. The second indicator relates to the percentage of young people who feel they can give their views on issues that affect them, we suggest that this should be expanded to 'and acted on'.
	<u>Children and young people live in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted</u>
3.18	We agree with all of the areas and indicators proposed under this outcome and again highlight the work we do in this area. We reference the potential of Peace IV to assist in achieving this outcome.
	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>
3.19	None associated with this report.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u>
3.20	There are no relevant equality considerations associated with this report. Department of Education have completed an associated equality and human rights policy screening exercise.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Draft Children and Young People's Strategy https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/consultations/children-and-young-peoples-strategy-2017-2027
	Appendix 2: Belfast City Council draft consultation response