

North Somerset Council

Report to the Children and Young People's Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Date of Meeting: 16 June 2022

Subject of Report: Children's Services Annual Directorate Statement

Town or Parish: All

Officer/Member Presenting: Sheila Smith, Director of Children's Services

Key Decision: No

Reason:

It does not meet the criteria for a key decision.

Recommendations

- i) That the Panel notes the plans for 2022/23.
- ii) That the Panel consider the ADS when setting their Work Plan.

1. Summary of Report

- 1.1 Our business planning process sets out how we are going to achieve the aims and priorities we have identified in the Corporate Plan 2020-24 and how we will work towards a vision of an **open, fairer, greener** North Somerset. Business planning begins with the Corporate Plan and everything we do as an organisation should link back to it. The Plan guides our work and explains why we are focusing on specific areas. From there, Annual Directorate Statements outline the key commitments of each directorate for the year ahead to show how we will contribute to the Corporate Plan. Annual Directorate Statements are then used to inform Service Strategies, Team Plans and appraisals.
- 1.2 Progress against these commitments will be monitored through the 2022/23 Performance Management Framework which includes the directorate's risk register.

2. Policy

- 2.1 The Corporate Plan is the council's overarching strategic document. It is the only plan which covers the full range of the council's responsibilities and is an important tool to help focus our effort and resources on the right things. The Corporate Plan informs other key strategies and plans which vary widely in purpose, scope, and time horizon. The Corporate Plan does not replace these other documents but it should shape them whenever they are being updated.

3. Details

3.1 Directorate wide commitments

Our directorate wide business as usual and service improvement commitments:

| Our commitment | What is the outcome we expect? |
|--|--|
| Undertake a Policy and Strategy review across the directorate. | All policies and strategies are up to date. |
| Develop and embed a clear Practice Framework which incorporates a strength, relational based and trauma informed approach and the Signs of Safety model. | The practice framework principles are owned by the service and evidenced in our interventions with children and their families and run as a thread through children's records. |
| Strengthen quality of supervision and management oversight. | Appropriate levels of management oversight and evidence of reflective and effective supervision. |
| Ensure timely resolution of directorate complaints. | Increase in the learning from complaints by officers to improve customer satisfaction. |
| Increase opportunities for young people to engage in education, employment and/or training opportunities. | Increase the number of young people on programmes engaged in education, employment and/or training. |

Our directorate wide transformational commitments:

| Our commitment | What is the outcome we expect? |
|--|--|
| Refresh the Children's Climate Emergency Strategy and deliver any in year actions in the action plan. | The action plan contributes to the organisational wide Climate Emergency Strategy and reduces our carbon footprint both organisationally and individually. |
| As part of the DSG Management Plan, lead the Council's participation in the DfE's Safety Valve Project, to ensure that benefits are maximised. | Strategies are in place to ensure the High Needs System is put on a sustainable footing, i.e. spend in the medium term can be managed with budgets. |
| Contribute to a mental health and wellbeing needs assessment for children. | Improved mental health outcomes for children and young people delivered across all agencies. |

3.2 Children's Support and Safeguarding commitments:

Business as usual / service improvement / transformation commitments:

| Our commitment | What is the outcome we expect? |
|--|--|
| Embed Phase 2 of the Front Door developments – to include the MASH, missing and exploitation meetings. | Children and young people benefit from timely and robust assessment of their needs and any identified risks. This results in the right intervention/support being provided at the right time and by the right services. |
| Review of the Family Wellbeing Service offer including consultation with partners inc. the voluntary sector and the public and publicising across the partnership. | Children and their families are not subjected to unnecessary assessments and processes. Children and their families know where to seek support. |
| Develop a robust and responsive QA framework to support a learning organisation to include purposeful case audit activity. | Children and their families receive effective, impactful interventions and support which are focussed on assessed needs and improve outcomes. |
| Complete an Exploitation Needs Assessment to inform an Exploitation Strategy. | Children and young people are supported, the risks to them reduced and they feel safer in their communities as a result of proactive disruption activity and the development of trusted relationships to enable positive engagement. |
| Achieve permanence for children by ensuring all children in care have clear plans for permanence which are appropriately tracked to avoid drift and delay. | Clear Permanence Plans in place – avoidance of drift and improved, more timely outcomes. Increased placement stability. |
| Seek regular feedback from children and families and use this to inform practice improvements. | Children and young people experience that their voices are heard and their experiences are understood. Children and young people are involved in the co-production of practice developments and this has a positive impact on their lives. |
| Commission a variety of placements to meet the needs of children and young people. | Children and young people are cared for/supported in provision which meets their needs. |
| Focused recruitment of mainstream, specialist fostering and supported lodging carers, and promotion of staying put scheme. | Increased pool of carers to allow for better matching between children and carers. More supported lodgings hosts to allow for a step down towards independence for our young people. |
| Deliver Children's Family Support and Safeguarding Recruitment and Retention Action Plan. | A stable workforce will provide consistency for children and families and allow practitioners to build relationships of trust and confidence and to intervene to achieve positive change together with children and their families. |

3.3 Education Partnerships commitments:

Business as usual / service improvement / transformation commitments:

| Our commitment | What is the outcome we expect? |
|--|--|
| Develop and deliver an Education Strategy in partnership with key stakeholders. | Increased participation, improved attendance, progress and attainment, particularly for vulnerable pupils. |
| Deliver the Education Commissioning Strategy including any in-year actions. | The strategy can follow our principled strategic priorities and deliver sufficient school places. |
| Ensure sufficiency of high-quality placements for 2-4 year olds including take up, quality, and training of workforce. | All entitled children receive high quality provision. |
| Deliver the SEND improvement plan in partnership with key stakeholders. | Improved outcomes for children with SEND. |
| The Virtual School ensures the right level of support for those children for whom they have legal responsibility. | Close progress and attainment gaps for children with a social worker. |
| Reduce the number of children missing education (CME). | All children receive a high quality education. |
| Promote good relationships with parents who are electively home educating their children and young people (EHE). | Ensure all children receive a suitable, full time education. |
| Improve the rigour of monitoring of safeguarding arrangements in schools and settings. | Children are safeguarded in all settings. |
| Ensure all children and young people have meaningful transitions to post-16. | All children have successful pathways to achieve their full potential. |
| Ensure we provide a comprehensive music education service to children, young people, their families and schools across North Somerset. | Continued delivery of high quality music provision. |

4. Consultation

Consultation has taken place with a range of staff and been informed by priorities identified by them alongside the current Improvement Plans in Children's Services.

5. Financial Implications

The activities necessary to deliver the ADS are budgeted for within the directorate's budget. The directorate will continue to explore one off funding opportunities presented by government in order to expand or supplement the work.

6. Costs

As above.

7. Funding

As above.

8. Legal Powers and Implications

None.

9. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

This ADS contributes to the Climate Emergency Strategy through the implementation of the directorate's Action Plan.

10. Risk Management

Not applicable.

11. Equality Implications

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? No.

12. Corporate Implications

None.

13. Options Considered

Not applicable.

Author:

Sheila Smith, Director of Children's Services

Background Papers:

None.