



**EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
5TH APRIL 2013**

**SUBJECT: THE LOCAL PARTICIPATION ACTION PLAN FOR CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE**

REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the new statutory duties requiring Local Authorities to make arrangements for the participation of children and young people in decision-making.
- 1.2 To report on the progress made in developing a Local Participation Action Plan (LPAP) as a response to the statutory guidance.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Welsh Government issued statutory guidance for Children and Young People's Participation in February 2013, which places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to make arrangements to promote and facilitate participation by children and young people in decisions of the authority that might affect them. A draft Local Participation Action Plan has been developed which sets out arrangements and key improvement actions that will ensure that statutory duties are fulfilled and that the participation of children and young people is further embedded in multi-agency service delivery.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Children and Young People's Participation Strategy for Caerphilly County Borough 2008-2011.
- 3.2 The Caerphilly Local Service Board (LSB) Citizen Engagement Strategy.
- 3.3 The Children & Young Peoples Plan 2011-2014, where participation provides the foundation upon which the Plan is built – stating that 'All children and young people are listened to and are treated with respect.
- 3.4 "Caerphilly Delivers" – the draft Caerphilly LSB Single Integrated Plan.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Welsh Government statutory guidance for LSB's on developing their Single Integrated Plans, which is entitled "Shared Purpose – Shared Delivery", has been updated to include *the duties in respect of local authorities to promote and facilitate participation by children in decisions of the authority which might affect them, and to publish and keep up to date information about its arrangements. (Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 section*

12).

- 4.2 The statutory guidance is issued in accordance with Section 17(3) of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 and applies to local authorities both in respect of the single integrated plan and whenever decisions are taken which might affect children and young people. The legal basis for this duty is Section 12 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010.
- 4.3 The statutory guidance places children and young people's participation within the context of the Single Integrated Plan, and in particular, to the Engagement Strategy required as a part of Single Integrated Plans.
- 4.4 The Engagement Strategy has to set-out how partners intend to engage with people and communities with a clear focus on how this will best support service improvement and improve the experience of people using services. The revised guidance outlines how the Engagement Strategy should be used to discharge local authorities statutory duties in respect of promoting and facilitating children and young peoples participation.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 In order to meet the requirements of the legislation, Local Authorities are expected to work with relevant partners to put in place specific arrangements. These include:
- a) To promote and facilitate participation within the broad context of children and young people's rights as part of policies, services and wider citizen engagement;
 - b) To embed children and young people's participation into all aspects of planning, delivering and reviewing services. The Single Integrated Plan Engagement Strategy should set out how this will be addressed and evidenced.
 - c) To publish information about arrangements;
 - d) To ensure that a range of opportunities and appropriate support are provided for effective participation (including integration into day to day services as well as specific structures);
 - e) To establish a County Youth Forum as a representative body of young people and to represent those views to local and national decision making bodies;
 - f) To support training and the promotion of participation.
- 5.2 The guidance also states that there is an expectation that Local Authorities should make sure that as many children and young people as possible are aware of their right for their opinion to be heard and to be involved in decision-making about policies and services that affect their lives. There are a number of stipulations about how this is to be achieved.

The Local Participation Action Plan (LPAP)

- 5.3 A Local Participation Action Plan (LPAP) has been drafted which fully considers the statutory guidance and builds upon developments in children and young peoples participation over previous years, both within the Local Authority and amongst partners. It has been formulated by a multi-agency working group with representatives from the Local Authority, Aneurin Bevan Health Board, GAVO and Voluntary Sector Organisations.
- 5.4 The LPAP is based on clear performance indicators with a focus on four key objectives:-
Objective 1, Support organisations to involve children and young people in decision-making;
Objective 2, Promote children and young peoples right to be heard on a range of issues
Objective 3, Support organisations to develop a clear commitment to the National Participation Standards; and
Objective 4, Develop sustainable mechanisms enabling children and young people to influence decision-making.

A number of comprehensive actions identified within each objective can be directly linked to each of the stated requirements under the statutory guidance, thus ensuring that arrangements for children and young people's participation are effective and continually improved upon and that statutory duties are fulfilled.

- 5.5 Elements of the LPAP have also been developed in partnership with colleagues from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, and specifically colleagues who facilitate Children and Young People's Participation. Areas for joint working have been identified which will strengthen opportunities and processes for enabling children and young peoples participation in decision-making and realise the recognised benefits from sharing resources, expertise and capacity.
- 5.6 The Caerphilly LSB Citizen Engagement Strategy will outline how children and young people's participation is embedded into all aspects of planning, delivering and reviewing services. It will also state that the LPAP will serve as the operational document detailing the arrangements for promoting, facilitating and further strengthening children and young people's participation.
- 5.7 A consultation period on the draft LPAP will run from the 25th March to 3rd May 2013.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct equalities implications to this report, therefore no Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 At this stage, there are no financial implications arising out of this report.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no personnel implications arising out of this report.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 The comments of all consultees are reflected in this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Members note the content of this report.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 This report is for Member's information.

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Appendices:
Appendix 1 The draft Local Participation Action Plan for Children and Young People 2013-2016