

**13 JULY 1999**

**This report may be of interest to: all Members of the Community Learning Committee; Family of Committees; Environment Committee and Policy and Resources Committee.**

**The report was considered at the meeting of the Community Learning Committee held on 6 April 1999**

**UPDATE AND REVIEW 1999 - 2001 OF THE MILTON KEYNES COMMUNITY  
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES PLAN 1998 - 2001**

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**1. Purpose**

1.1 To present the Review and Update Plan 1999-2001.

**2. Summary**

2.1 The first MK Community Children and Young People's Services Plan 1998-2001 was submitted to the Secretary of State on 1 April 1997 and covered all services for children and young people in Milton Keynes. Circulated separately to this report is the first annual review. A considerable amount has been achieved as a basis for further work in following outcome measures and developing the involvement of children and young people themselves.

**3. Recommendations**

3.1 The Committee is asked to approve the Update and Review Plan 1999-2001 of the Milton Keynes Community Children and Young People's Services Plan 1998-2001.

#### 4. **Background**

- 4.1 Each local authority, responsible for Children's Social Services, is required to submit, to the Department of Health, a three year Services Plan, supplemented by an annual document which evaluates progress and re-sets objectives and targets for the remaining period. The statutory requirement relates only to Children's Services.
- 4.2 The shadow Council decided that the new Authority's First Children's Services Plan, reflecting its major commitment to children and young people, should include a profile of all its services for them covering aims, dated objectives, achievements and evaluation.
- 4.3 The Council also agreed that the document should become a community plan, and include a similar profile for children and young people provided by its major partners, namely the Buckinghamshire Health Authority, the two Health Trusts, Thames Valley Policy and the Voluntary Sector.
- 4.4 This is the first annual Review and Update Plan 1999-2001 of the first Milton Keynes Community Children and Young People's Plan, covering the period 1998-2001. The earlier "parent" Plan was approved by the Policy Committee on 24 February 1998 (Minute PO110 refers). It was well reviewed in a national study of Children's Services Plans, in research for the Department of Health, undertaken by the National Children's Bureau.
- 4.5 Each of the partners has a section within the Plan, but many of the inserts reflect the integration agenda across agencies which, in some cases, pre-dated the Government's 'joined-up' initiatives, and certainly adopts them.
- 4.6 The Plan also underpins the Strategic Plan of the Learning and Development Directorate and is shaped by it. Similarly the targets and benchmarking information described relate to the service plan objectives of teams and individual staff.
- 4.7 This Plan addresses the 'whole' needs of children, young people and their families, and covers the wide-ranging changes in major areas of their lives, in education, health, social inclusion and childcare, both universally and particularly for those cared for by the Council.
- 4.8 The three year "parent" Plan is shaped by legislation and guidelines that relate to children and young people specifically, for example, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The annual Review and Update Plan covers major national initiatives that have been introduced this year, including "Quality Protects"; the Milton Keynes Education Development Plan; the Milton Keynes Early Years Development and Childcare Plan; and the Health Improvement Programme. It also draws out areas concerning the needs of children, young people and their families, in other major policy documents like the Milton Keynes Community Care Plan, the Lifelong Learning Plan and the Environment Strategy.
- 4.9 Six cross-directorate and inter-agency Working Groups were established, matching the major sections within the Plan, to facilitate development of objectives. Some changes have occurred, as a result of national policies. The Early Years Working Group has fulfilled its original tasks. Early Years has now been extended to cover Childcare, and has been subsumed into the work of the Council's Early Years and Childcare team and that of the MK Early Years and Childcare Partnership.

- 4.10 Working Group Leaders meet regularly and have made major contributions to both Plans.
- 4.11 The wide-ranging, inter-agency Consultative Board, established in February 1997 meets quarterly, and continues to support and monitor the progress of the Working Groups and the Plan. Two young people are members of the Board. A final draft of the Plan has been distributed and approved by the Consultative Board Members. The Plan will be submitted to the Buckinghamshire Health Board in April 1999.

## 5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 The 'parent' Plan was submitted to the Department of Health on 1 April 1998.
- 5.2 However, one weakness of the original Plan was the lack of detailed performance measurement. This has been addressed, to some degree, in the Review and Update Plan 1999-2001 by including comparative figures of performance, where possible, or a benchmark. This has been a complex task, and can be improved further in the next annual supplementary Plan. Performance indicators are becoming universal requirements in all major Plan, and Best Value will have a significant impact. However, the establishment and monitoring of multi-agency outcome measures for children and young people is a complex issue. It is also being addressed through the Strategic Plan, which is reported separately on this agenda.
- 5.3 Sadly, due to other pressing demands and stretched resources, it has not been possible to consult children and young people formally. Nevertheless the issues that arose through the consultation in the previous year - with young people in partnership with the MK Youth Council, and children, undertaken by the Policy Unit - continue to influence the Plan. Every effort will be made next year to consult and listen to children and young people. This will happen through several avenues, for example the Youth Assembly and the Children and Young People's Rights Officer.
- 5.4 This annual Review and Update Plan 1999-2001 enables staff and service users, to use it as a working document, allowing amendments to be considered by all agencies represented on the Consultative Board, particularly any major legislative changes on requirements, for example the Joint Investment Programme (JIP) between the Council and Buckinghamshire Health Authority.
- 5.5 The Plan is a statement of the significant achievements that staff have made with and on behalf of children and young people. This is particularly encouraging when viewed against a period of extreme change and uncertainty, within the Council and partner agencies. Buckinghamshire Health Authority Board felt its own section within the 'parent' Plan was limited. Its section in the Review and Update Plan has much more detail and more targets.

## 6. **Implications**

### 6.1 Environmental

Environmental issues are integral to both Plans and their implementation. The Best Value guidelines indicate that environmental issues need to be considered in every service.

### 6.2 Equalities

Equality and anti-discrimination are integral to the Plans and their implementation. The Children and Young People's Rights Officer will focus on implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Council services and those of the two Health Trusts.

### 6.3 Financial

It was not possible to include a financial profile in the 'parent' Plan, due to early submission dates to the Department of Health. This Plan includes the actual budgets for 1997 - 8; the projected outturn for 1998-9 and the projected budget for 1999 - 2000.

In future years requests will be made to external partners to see if it is possible to include their expenditure on services for children and young people in the Review and Update Plan 2000-2001.

### 6.5 Legal

Legal requirements, related to both statutory and discretionary services, are mentioned in the Plan.

### 6.6 Staff and Accommodation

Accommodation for new staff, e.g. Development Officers, identified in the MK Early Years Development and Childcare Plan 1999-2002, will present challenges with regard to location.

## 7. **Conclusions**

- 7.1 This Plan is an ambitious document, unique in its approach, range and partnerships. It captures the Council's commitment, and those of its partners, to children and young people and working with them in meaningful fora. It recognises, promotes and celebrates the vital importance of childhood and adolescence as part of life not solely a preparation for adulthood. It describes the inter-agency vision of providing improved services in new, integrated ways. It high-lights considerable achievements, whilst recognising some delayed progress, in a period of change, uncertainty and stress. Performance measurement needs further work in the Update and Review Plan 2000-2001.

Background Papers: MK Community Children and Young People's Service Plan 1998-2001  
Strategic Plan (Learning and Development)