

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

|    |                     |                                    |
|----|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. | <b>Meeting:</b>     | Cabinet                            |
| 2. | <b>Date:</b>        | 23 <sup>rd</sup> May, 2012         |
| 3. | <b>Title:</b>       | Early Help Strategy                |
| 4. | <b>Directorate:</b> | Children & Young People's Services |

### 5. **Summary**

The new Early Help Strategy is attached. This is a refreshed strategy to set out Rotherham's partnership approach to delivering prevention and early intervention services for children, young people and families in the borough.

### 6. **Recommendations**

**Cabinet is asked to endorse the new Early Help Strategy.**

## 7. Proposals and Details

### Background

The Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy was launched in April 2010 following multi-agency endorsement. It was agreed that the current strategy should be refreshed in the light of recent independent reviews and new government policy (including the Comprehensive Spending Review) which change the context for delivery. The findings of the recent CYPSP Peer Challenge endorsed this view and recommended that the work should proceed as a matter of urgency in order to sustain the multi-agency commitment to this agenda. The purpose of the strategy is to provide the strategic framework for operational delivery.

### Early Help Strategy

The new strategy adopts the terminology used by Eileen Munro in her influential review of child protection published in May 2011. The term 'early help' is adopted to show that we will seek to support children, young people and families across the continuum of need (or windscreen) as their needs shift between preventative services delivered through universal provision, to more targeted, complex or acute needs. Further details are in the strategy on page 6.

The multi-agency **pledge** that was agreed for the Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy published in April 2010, is maintained for the Early Help Strategy:

We are committed to identifying need and supporting children, young people and families at the earliest possible stage. We will change our focus to a preventative and early intervention approach with a radical shift of ways of working and resourcing to support this. This is a significant step forward for integrated working in Rotherham.

The **strategic objectives** for the Early Help Strategy are:

- To identify the needs of children, young people and their families (across the continuum of need or windscreen)
- To understand and respond quickly to the needs of children, young people and families across the continuum of need
- To support the re-focusing of resources from crisis intervention to prevention;
- To mitigate the effects of child poverty (including health inequalities) by supporting families to fulfil their potential)
- To provide the context for multi-agency partnerships to work together to improve outcomes for children young people and families for generations to come

## 8. Finance

The case for shifting resources to support a 'predict and prevent' approach instead of a 'find and fix' approach is outlined in the strategy (page 27). Delivering early help services is more cost effective than responding to crisis,

however, to establish operational delivery systems will require short-term investment (invest to save methodology).

For 2012/13 3% (£0.96m) of the Net Revenue budget (10% (£8.51m)) of the total gross budget of Children and Young People's Services will be directed towards services focused on Prevention and Early Intervention.

#### 9. **Risks and Uncertainties**

There is a risk that the continued focus on reducing the national budget deficit will have a negative impact on the ability of families in the borough to thrive and on the local authority and its partners to support them.

#### 10. **Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The national policy agenda continues to emerge. Government have announced that they will legislate in response to the Support and Aspiration Green Paper in this Parliament.

The Early Help Strategy is aligned with other local strategies, including Rotherham's Community Strategy, Corporate Plan, Children and Young People's Plan as well as the priorities identified for the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (page 14).

#### 11. **Equality and Diversity**

Equality Assessment to follow.

#### 12. **Background Papers and Consultation**

Early Help Strategy

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