

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	12 March 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Developing a Child Friendly City
REPORT NUMBER	OPE/20/056
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CHIEF OFFICER	Graeme Simpson
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TERMS OF REFERENCE	1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide an overview of some of our work to become a Child Friendly City.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee:-

2.1 note the work undertaken to date as we work to become a Child Friendly City; and

2.2 instruct the Chief Education Officer to establish a representative city-wide pupil forum that will meet regularly and support identification and setting of strategic priorities of the service, discuss a range of relevant issues and influence the recommendations being brought before the Education Operational Delivery Committee.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1.1 The Unicef's Child Friendly Cities Initiative is a global programme aiming to translate Unicef's mission - to advance children's rights and well-being - into action at the local level. Using the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as our guide, Unicef work with political leaders, young people, social workers, community organisations and others, to make sure children have a say in shaping local services.

- 3.1.2 In doing so they aim to create neighbourhoods, communities and cities where children and young people are treated with dignity, have a say in decisions that affect them, experience services that are built with and for them, know what services are available and feel safe and prioritised. A child friendly city (CFC) is a place where the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children are considered and taken seriously.
- 3.1.3 The approach brings together the vision of childhood set out by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the core tenets of a human rights-based approach.
- 3.1.4 The Community Planning Partnership is in the final stages of finalising the self-evaluation and associated action plan. This will ensure that all Community Planning Partners work to a clear set of actions. As the self-evaluation process has progressed, a number of key themes are emerging for action and focus areas ('badges') have been identified correspondingly. These include:
- 'Participating' and,
 - 'Child-Friendly Services'.
- 3.1.5 These focus areas require all services to be child and young person (CYP)-Friendly, which includes routinely applying a children's rights-based approach (CRBA) to design, develop and commission delivery ('Child-Friendly Services'). They also ask that CYP's views are genuinely considered in decision-making processes within the local authority, enabling them to draw on their own knowledge skills and abilities, and that there is clarity about how their participation has made an impact ('Participating').
- 3.1.6 Furthermore, Scotland will incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into law to the maximum extent possible within the powers of the Scottish Parliament. To incorporate the UNCRC into law a Bill will be laid before Parliament this year and this will provide children and young people (or advocates acting on their behalf) with a legal challenge should their rights be denied or neglected. Article 12 of the UNCRC states that Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during housing decisions, school closures/re-zoning or the child's day-to-day home life.

3.2 Level of influence currently experienced by children and young people in schools and communities

- 3.2.1 All children currently have the opportunity to influence decision making at a local level within their own school communities, pupils are key stakeholders when determining annual school priorities as part of the school improvement planning process. In addition, there are a number of community-based groups which actively engage with children and young people in decision making, Priority Based Budgeting in priority areas being an example of the level of influence available to some.

- 3.2.2 There are many well-established Pupil Participation Groups within schools who independently set agendas and actively drive forward improvement, whilst others are less mature and still rely more heavily on adult support and intervention. The service is working to promote consistent practice in this area to ensure that all pupils of school age have a voice and mechanism to directly influence decisions which affect them.
- 3.2.3 Despite some excellent practice in this area, there is currently no mechanism for children and young people to directly influence the on-going work of the central team. When developing committee reports, council officers now consistently seek feedback through school-based pupil voice forums and this data, such as that shared to establish the school holiday pattern, directly influences decision-making and has been welcomed and valued by Elected Members. This practice will continue.

3.3 An approach from the Pupil Leadership Group at Bridge of Don Academy

- 3.3.1 A senior pupil leadership group at Bridge of Don Academy have undertaken considerable work around a range of sustainability and recycling issues related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), Goal 13 (Climate Change), Goal 14 (Life Below Water) and Goal 15 (Life on Land). They sought information from other secondary schools to help them to identify the extent of recycling in our schools.
- 3.3.2 A child rights-based approach is key for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) All goals and targets of the '2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' are relevant for children, even where they are not explicitly mentioned. For there to be realisation of the goals, children's rights need to be respected, protected and promoted in all areas of implementation.
- 3.3.3 The group uncovered inconsistencies in terms of approaches to recycling across schools and a lack of shared understanding about which materials could and could not be recycled. With this in mind, the group decided to write to the Chief Executive to seek her help in improving practice and raising awareness. The Chief Executive met the young people and identified resources to support their campaign. Officers decided to approach the group to seek their help in ensuring that all city schools develop a shared understanding of recyclable materials and are provided with greater access to recycling bins in their school and local communities.
- 3.3.4 Officers met with the Leadership group to discuss their concerns and to support them to develop a strategic approach to addressing the issues raised. Working closely with the group, the pupils are being supported to create a short film to highlight the issues related to recycling and showcase the steps they have taken to raise awareness across their school community and improve recycling in schools. Through close partnership working between council officers, the school and young people, pupils have been supported and empowered to become advocates for change and it has further demonstrated the importance of establishing a mechanism for children and

young people to directly share their thoughts and opinions to inform strategic decision-making.

3.4 Moving Forward to become a Child Friendly City

3.4.1 The value and importance of meaningful engagement of children and young people in strategic decision-making cannot be overstated. The recently published Education Scotland refreshed narrative of Curriculum for Excellence places renewed emphasis on the need to build the capacity of our children and young people to become 'Responsible Citizens' and 'Effective Contributors', stating that we must "enable children and young people to be democratic citizens and active shapers of the world".

3.4.2 Our ongoing commitment to becoming the first Unicef accredited Child Friendly City in Scotland and Stretch Outcome 7 of the LOIP (Child Friendly City which supports all children to prosper and engage actively with their communities by 2026) means that it is imperative that we establish a robust and effective mechanism for children and young people to directly influence strategic decision-making. The proposed group will be invited to identify and share their views on a range of issues within the service and, through coordination and planning with report authors, the group will also serve as a mechanism for consultation on wider issues.

3.4.3 It is recommended that Elected Members support the creation of a representative city-wide pupil-led participation forum which will enable pupils from across the city to share their views and opinions on a range of issues that directly affect them.

3.4.4 It is envisaged that this pupil group will largely be comprised of secondary age pupils from across each city associated school group who will act as representatives of pupils for each secondary school and corresponding feeder schools. The Chief Education Officer will meet regularly with the group to discuss a range of issues and to support setting the strategic priorities of the service and influence the recommendations being brought before the Education Operational Delivery Committee.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	Potential costs for logistical movement of children and young people across the city to one central venue.	L	Mitigated by investigating the use of digital solutions such as Microsoft Teams.
Legal	Potential non-compliance with future UNCRC incorporation in Scot's Law, specifically with relation to Article 12 of the UNCRC.	L	Mitigated through the creation of a robust mechanism for children and young people to directly influence decision-making.
Employee	None		
Customer	Disaffection of children and young people who feel that their views are not sought or used to inform decision-making.	L	Mitigated through the creation of a robust mechanism for children and young people to directly influence decision-making.
Reputational	Risk of not realising our ambition to become a CFC.	L	Mitigated through meaningful ongoing engagement with children and young people.

7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous People	7. Child Friendly City which supports all children to prosper and engage actively with their communities by 2026.

Design Principles of Target Operating Model	
	Impact of Report
Customer Service Design	The plan provides consideration for range of future engagement activities/opportunities to ensure that we actively seek the informed children and young people and deliver a customer focussed service.

Governance	Overseen by Chief Officers and by the Education Operational Delivery Committee.
Technology	The plan includes consideration of potential advantages and cost savings through the use of technology.
Partnerships and Alliances	Significant partnership work is key to addressing the needs of our learners and empowering them to become advocates for change.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	Not required.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	Not applicable

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

10. APPENDICES

None.

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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