

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 22 MAY 2012
 title: CHILDREN'S TRUST UPDATE
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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To bring members up to date with the work of the Ribble Valley Children's Trust, and the Borough Council's role/involvement in its work.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's priorities:
This report contributes to the priority:
 - **To help make People's Lives Safer and Healthier**
 - To improve the opportunity for young people to participate in recreational and sporting activity
 - To combat rural isolation

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Children's Trust arrangements were established across the county in 2009 to take an overall strategic level in the future development of services for children and young people. Within Lancashire, the structure includes a county-wide trust, cascading down to arrangements based on district footprints.
- 2.2 Each District trust has a management board, made up of relevant partners, who deal with strategic issues, along with a number of sub groups, who deliver agreed work programmes.
- 2.3 The Borough Council is viewed as a strategic partner, and has both elected member and officer representation on the board. The Council also provides administrative support for the board and its working groups. We currently receive a payment of £20,000 pa to provide such service, with an expectation that this will be matched, in kind, through officer/accommodation support.
- 2.4 Each year, the district trust is expected to identify and evidence local priorities, and produce an Action Plan to deliver against them. Funding to deliver the Action Plan is a combination of external services, and the pooling of existing resources.

3 CURRENT SITUATION

Over the last twelve months, district trust activity has included the following:

3.1 Children and Young Persons Trust Priorities and Action Plan

The Ribble Valley Children and Young Persons Trust priorities were produced after a major consultation with partners, young people and statutory agencies in the Civic Chamber on 28 January 2011.

The priorities centred around the emotional health and wellbeing of the child and young person supported by an Action Plan for the district addressing the specific priorities around Families/Parenting Issues, Personal Safety/Risk Taking behaviour of young people and the need for positive contribution achieved through developing Places to go/Things to do.

The Action Plan template was circulated, and members asked to complete actions on behalf of their organisations, partnerships and groups under each of the agreed Ribble Valley priorities. The final plan was circulated in September 2011, and the performance of the Partnership against those plans reviewed in March 2012. Most of the actions were described as completed or remaining as on going projects. The shortcomings of the partnership were identified as the ability to facilitate a wider representation of young people's views, and having a more determined approach to obtaining evidence of need and identifying gaps in services to young people in Ribble Valley.

There was discussion around the District Performance Scorecard that had been set up for the Ribble Valley on the Trust website. It was felt that there were several additional areas of performance monitoring that could be made available, but that it was essential that the measures noted on the scorecard should be related to Ribble Valley priorities.

A refresh of the Ribble Valley Children and Young Person's Trust Priorities and Action Plan was undertaken by the full Partnership on 18 April 2012.

Initial indications are that the priorities remain the same, but the work streams undertaken by the County in putting an emphasis on Early Intervention, Working together with Families and Workforce Integration would feature as part of the Ribble Valley Action Plan for 2012/13.

3.2 Early Intervention

The appointment of the Early Intervention Officer in 2011 was a key step to the setting up of this group. The formation of the group allowed identification of key needs and gaps in service provision to be prepared, and the different resource groups were also consolidated into one sub-group, so that issues arising out of specific incidents could be considered as opportunities for early intervention projects.

A project brief and tendering document, which encompasses the specific Ribble Valley needs and priorities, as identified by the group was prepared and agreed by the Trust Board.

The opportunity to bid for Lancashire Drug and Alcohol Action funding arose, and the Castle Ground Activities project was developed to run in conjunction with The Grand, the Clitheroe Skate Park, and the new drop-in facility under the Bowling Green Café in the Castle Grounds, to provide a mentoring and intervention project aimed at the young people using the area who may be drawn into substance and alcohol misuse and abuse. There will also be the opportunity to develop further the facilities around the skate park, with further bids to external agencies. The Borough Council leads on this project, and is responsible for holding funds and reporting back on the project to the Trust Board and the Early Intervention Group. Other projects across the Ribble Valley will be confirmed shortly.

The first meeting of the group discussed the opportunity presented by the Early Intervention and Prevention fund, and the details and plans for the Early Intervention and Family Support tender, and, similarly, the Schools Counselling provision.

The group also worked throughout the year on strengthening contacts with other Ribble Valley partners, and identified areas where it was felt additional projects may be needed.

The commissioning of Action for Children to deliver the Early Intervention Family Support to seventy families and Freeflow to provide 740 hours of counselling to

children and young people aged 5-9yrs in Ribble Valley was confirmed, with the schemes starting in October 2011. The provision will cost £130,000 in the first year, and the scheme is funded in the second year to March 2013. Both provisions are being closely monitored by the Group and the Board, with particular attention to effective utilisation of the resource and care taken to avoid duplication of services.

Specific activities within the LDAAT funded project designed to tackle alcohol and substance misuse amongst young people in Ribble Valley (primarily funded by LDAAT and PRG money), continue to be developed. The initial work is concentrating on known locations throughout the district. There are many partners involved in the project, and a separate steering group has been set up to organise and co-ordinate activities and formalise bids for funding.

The initial impact of the Early Intervention activity is very encouraging and on track to achieving their organisations' targets.

There were some "Gaps in Service" identified by the group, and further work is being undertaken to establish evidence and potential funding streams.

The Ribble Valley Early Intervention Support fund had another £80,000 awarded from the 2011/12 budget and a further £80,000 for 2012/13. This will be used to extend the contracts of Action for Children and Freeflow (subject to their continued good performance) into 2012/13.

A task and finish group from the Financial and Performance Group was authorised to pull together proposals for the remaining funding, which has resulted in approval for a small grants scheme for young persons' activities and spot commissioning for grants to support the target young people and their families, along with a tender shared with the Hyndburn Children's Trust for services around families experiencing issues arising from domestic violence.

3.3 Engagement

The initial piece of work undertaken on behalf of the Engagement group was on Internet Safety working through the newly established Primary Schools Forum.

The meetings of the group generally report on upcoming activities, review events, raise issues, and publish booklets and pamphlets outlining activity programmes.

The group regularly updates and reviews a Calendar and Action Plan ensuring that projects are delivered in line with the plans, and that there will be sufficient funding available to maximise the performance of the delivery. These plans and reviews are, in turn, presented to the Trust Board.

The group was encouraged by the increased representation from High and Primary Schools and the Youth Council at its meetings, and smaller work groups have been set up to support the Healthy Streets Action Plan, populate the Go4it website, implement the co-ordination of volunteering opportunities and deliver through the Grand Schools Youth Forum a radio project around substance misuse.

3.4 Other projects

Other projects commissioned by the Trust included after-school and holiday activities for children with special needs.

3.5 Safeguarding

Whilst there were no serious safeguarding issues in Ribble Valley, the Trust has a significant responsibility in this area, and maintains a strong link with the agencies involved.

3.6 Working together with Children

This project has been piloted in four Lancashire districts, and will be 'rolled out' to Ribble Valley in 2012. It is anticipated that there will be 57 families in Ribble Valley identified as working with more than two agencies. The objective will be to undertake integrated working of all of the agencies involved with that family through one lead professional. Not only will there be more efficient ways of working, but it is felt that the families will benefit from the single pathway approach.

3.7 Road Safety

Road safety in Ribble Valley is one of the priorities of the Trust, and a session was devoted to the presentation and discussion of the issues. The rate for "killed or seriously injured" for 16-25 yrs was highlighted as the worst in Lancashire, as was the 16-19 yrs for powered two wheelers.

There were very few changes planned to Highway Infrastructure or speed management in the district, so the emerging task for the Children's Trust was one of engaging partners in educating this age group.

Road Safety is similarly treated as a priority for the Ribble Valley Community Safety Partnership, and their work will be reviewed and brought back to the Board.

4 CONCLUSION

As the role of the Trust develops, greater partnership work will be needed to ensure that all agencies are engaged in improving outcomes for children and families. Whilst we were unsure as to the involvement of the Borough Council in this work, it is becoming more evident that we do have a positive contribution to make.

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For further information, please ask for Chris Hughes 01200 414479