

ITEM No ...2.....

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 12 DECEMBER 2016

REPORT ON: STRATEGIC COLLABORATION AND ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP WORKING

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 410-2016

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides members of the Policy and Resources Committee information on proposed developments for strategic collaboration, enhanced partnership working and streamlined delivery of services between Angus, Dundee and Perth & Kinross councils in the area of Children and Families Services.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Members of the committee are asked to:

- note the current collaboration across the three council areas;
- note the key political and legislative drivers for change;
- note the proposals for strategic partnership working; and
- instruct the Executive Director to present a report at June 2017 Committee which includes an Action Plan for enhanced strategic and collaborative working across the three council areas from 2017 to 2020.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no financial implications at this stage.

4 CURRENT POSITION

4.1 The status quo across the political and democratic landscape in Scotland is changing. A variety of publications in recent years have called for increased levels of partnership working at national and local council level. The 'Programme for Government' (September 2016) reviewed 'the system changes required to deliver Government's commitments to empower schools, decentralise management and support the encouragement of school clusters and creation of new educational regions'. The review of Child Protection services currently taking place will report by the end of the year. The Scottish Government's Programme Board for Realigning Children's Services focusing on the Early Years Collaborative and Raising Attainment for All is leading to a cohesive approach, nationally to a Children & Young People's Collaborative. The ongoing Education Governance Review started in September 2016 concludes in February 2017. This is focused on reviewing local governance arrangements and models whilst respecting the important status and integrity of local political accountability, scrutiny and oversight.

4.2 This report sets out the potential for extended collaborative approaches involving Education, Children and Families' Services working in close partnership with

Children's Health, NHS Tayside, the Third sector, Neighbourhood Services and employers to address the national agenda in terms of tackling poverty, closing the equity gap, raising attainment and improving the health and wellbeing of all children, young people, families and communities. It acknowledges the potential for partnership working around the emerging Tay Cities Deal structures particularly in areas such as developing Scotland's Young Workforce and enhancing links with colleges and employers.

4.3 The three Education and Children's Services and NHS Tayside already work closely together and are well placed to build on this foundation to act in the best interest of all of our children, young people and their families and improve outcomes for all in line with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Moving forward, a core priority would be to identify areas of policy and practice across the three authorities, and where possible NHS Tayside, that is consistent with best value approaches and suitable for joint working purposes in the short, medium or longer term. The following activities are taking place across the three council areas at present:

- The development of a Council wide format for a Children's plan template to ensure a consistent model is used across the three council areas;
- Opportunities for joint training in areas such as planning, assessment and reporting to ensure consistency of approaches in the implementation of the National Improvement framework and Child Protection;
- A shared initiative with Education Scotland to consider the ways on which common quality improvement activities could be used
- Joint work to implement the national 1+2 policy on the implementation of Modern Languages in primary schools
- An evaluation of Delegated School Management approaches across the three authorities
- The development of a common approach to a Council wide school and early years estate;
- Discussions on the performance and reporting models to determine areas of common practice;
- A review of the way in which data is analysed and used to inform practice at school.

4.4 The national policy framework is more coherent than it has ever been. To implement the policy framework fully will require a concerted and collaborative approach. The key drivers for the delivery of excellence and equity for all are:

- Getting it Right for Every Child;
- Curriculum for Excellence;
- Developing the Young Workforce;
- Child Protection;
- Looked After children;
- Tackling intergenerational poverty and creating fairer opportunities for all; and
- The delivery of national outcomes for children's health.

To this end, quality partnership working at Council, NHS, Third Sector and locality level will be a fundamental requisite if we are to achieve the best possible outcomes for our children, young people, families and communities.

Angus, Dundee & Perth and Kinross Councils share the aim of creating a unified Education and Children's Services Strategy and Delivery Plan for the three council areas. This would involve working in close partnership with NHS Tayside and other key stakeholders to ensure that the three Council areas are the best place in Scotland for children and young people to grow up. Our intention, as a collaborative, is to implement the Scottish Government's national policies and improve the outcomes for all children, young people and their families through our collective effort. By entering into a strategic collaboration we will work in partnership and at pace to maximise impact in all areas of education and children's services. We will develop a joint action plan which recognises the different challenges faced by individual Council areas but maintains a strategic focus on collaborative working between the NHS and councils in those areas of policy and practice (e.g. the Scottish Attainment Challenge, the Children's Workforce, and asset management) where better outcomes will be achieved from working closely together.

The implementation of a phased action plan over 2-3 years will provide the opportunity over a period of time for the councils and NHS Tayside to transform the delivery of education and children's services by:

- reshaping **services**;
- aligning or adapting current management **systems**; and
- streamlining operational **structures** to deliver better results and improved outcomes.

4.5 The senior management teams across the three council areas work well together already and are well placed to build on current work streams. The three Directors (Chief Education Officers) and the Chief Social Work Officers would work with NHS Tayside's Director of Children's Health Services to drive forward the change agenda. In addition, Scottish Government are prepared to second a senior member of staff to support this proposal and engage in the development of a shared action Plan. A future governance review by the end of 2018-19 would evaluate progress and assess impact as well as responding to any future proposals by Scottish Government in relation to the role and remit of regional boards for Education and Children's Services.

4.6 Future priorities will be set out by producing a single plan for the collaborative across the three council areas. Guidance is awaited from Scottish Government about what this should look like for Scotland's Councils. We will better align our improvement activity and use our Dartington (E2S) research information to match local need to deliver outcomes in our plan. The Action Plan will be clearly linked to our individual Council and NHS Tayside plans in 2017. The Plan will be reviewed and where appropriate revised annually to ensure we have an ambitious, robust plan that involves collaboration, children's services commissioning and commitment of shared resources to support improvement across our respective areas.

4.7 The key actions required in the short term are:

- Identify work that will be carried out before March 2017 to create a shared, strategic ICSP and set out the connection with single authority planning and strategic commissioning
- Promote the approach as an agenda shared between the Councils and the Scottish Government. Agree to jointly second an executive from within our senior management teams and an inward secondment from Scottish Government to lead this work at pace

- Engage with Local Outcome Improvement Plans across the three Council areas to ensure we are working collectively towards excellence and equity, particularly in relation to health and wellbeing
- Revise and secure governance and accountability arrangements to ensure that they are led by our elected members and our stakeholders. To this end it will be imperative that we build in Organisational Development and HR support from the outset
- Develop a joint communication and media plan.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1** The Chief Executive, Executive Director of Corporate Services and Head of Democratic and Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report. Discussions have taken place with key stakeholders across Angus, Perth & Kinross, NHS Tayside.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1** None.

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November 2016