

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**16 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF  
CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**CABINET DECISION**

**Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Lisa Evans**

**FROM CONCEPTION TO RECEPTION : STOCKTON-ON-TEES STRATEGY TO GIVE EVERY CHILD THE BEST START IN LIFE**

**SUMMARY**

This report presents the Stockton-on-Tees strategy to give every child the best start in life.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)/DECISION(S)**

The 'Best Start' strategy supports the key priority of making the Borough a place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm. It is specifically focused on the priority to:

Develop a new approach to support the best start in life through a focus on 'pregnancy, birth and beyond', and an emphasis on speech, language and communication development.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Endorse the Strategy and its five key priorities.
2. Note that the Strategy has been coproduced by families and a range of partners who are committed to improving pregnancy and early childhood outcomes.
3. Note that an accompanying action plan will be developed to ensure accountability for key partnership actions and progress towards the strategic outcomes framework.

**DETAIL**

1. The Stockton-on-Tees Best Start strategy 2021-23 (**Appendix One**) has been developed jointly by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS Acute and Community Health Service Providers, Early Years Providers including schools and the private, voluntary and independent sector, alongside families. Families have been involved throughout all stages of development and proposed the title of the strategy 'From Conception to Reception' to affirm our commitment to the ante-natal period alongside a child's earliest years of life.
2. The strategy outlines the Borough's commitment to driving developments across our system and the services within it so that collectively we empower families and communities to support their children's development and improve outcomes. We recognise that communities which seek to improve the health and development of its children are helping to build strong foundations for future economic growth and prosperity and happy, healthy and nurturing families.

3. The development of this strategy is the culmination of a journey during which we have listened to families and the practitioners who work directly with them, undertaken a multi-agency self-assessment, sought an external view of our system through a peer challenge process and implemented new ways of working within our 0-19 Healthy Child Programme service as part of our wider commitment to family wellbeing and prioritising the needs of our youngest children.
4. The strategy sets out a shared vision for children in the earliest years of life that is the same as for all children and young people: that Stockton-on-Tees is a great place to grow up, where children and young people are protected from harm and supported to be the best they can be in life. For families with children in the earliest years of life, this vision will be realised through a prevention and early intervention approach which focuses on strengthening relationships – between parents and their children, the wider community and the services that provide help and support in communities. The Strategy identifies five key priorities:
  - Work alongside families to develop a clear offer of support for all children from conception to five years
  - Building and strengthening early relationships
  - Supporting children and families with the development of early speech, language and communication
  - Supporting families to provide a positive home learning environment
  - Encouraging access to high quality, inclusive and affordable Early Years education
5. Each of the priorities has a clear set of partnership commitments which will form an action plan which will be monitored by the Best Start steering group and reported to the Children and Young People's Partnership.
6. It is envisaged that additional investment will be required to deliver the strategy, including support for early years speech, language and communication programmes, and improving the quality of early years provision and learning environments which can help to support these ambitions. Funding will be sought from a variety of sources as opportunities arise.
7. The strategy will be steered by the governance structure as outlined in Section 8 of the strategy document and is due to be considered by Cabinet, Health and Wellbeing Board and Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group committees during May August and September. Following Cabinet approval, the Strategy will be promoted through a multi-agency shared communications plan to support wider communication across the borough.

## **COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

8. The strategy has been designed to support all families and communities to improve the health and development of children from the ante-natal period throughout the earliest years of life. It recognises that communities that do this are helping to build strong foundations for future economic growth and prosperity and happy, healthy and nurturing families.

## **CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**

9. Approximately 25% of all children in our care are aged between 0 to 5 years. This strategy directly contributes to the delivery of improved support for children in care in their earliest years.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10. Whilst there are no direct financial implications from the strategy, it is envisaged that additional investment will be required to strengthen support for early years speech, language and communication programmes and to improve the quality of early years

provision and learning environments to support the delivery of the strategy's priorities. Funding will be sought from a variety of sources as opportunities arise.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

11. There are no specific legal implications arising from this strategy.

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

12. The implementation of the strategy will be managed in line with established risk assessment systems. The strategy is non-statutory and has been designed to ensure that there are effective approaches in place to ensure that the needs of children and families are identified, assessed and responded to as early as possible.

### **WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS**

13. The strategy has been co-designed with partner agencies and families from across the Borough.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

14. There are no background papers.

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