

DECISION-MAKER:	CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
SUBJECT:	CHILD FRIENDLY CITY UPDATE
DATE OF DECISION:	24 NOVEMBER 2022
REPORT OF:	STRONGER COMMUNITIES MANAGER

<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>				
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY
None
BRIEF SUMMARY
<p>Southampton City Council has explored the potential to become a Child Friendly City since 2017, following the launch of its Restorative Charter in November 2017. The initiative has had the support of both the current and previous administrations and is referenced as a key focus within the new Corporate Plan for 2022 to 2030, as well as the Children Young People's Strategy. The Corporate Plan highlights the objectives of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working towards Southampton becoming accredited as a UNICEF Child Friendly City, • Creating a Southampton Youth Council that allows young people to influence decision making, • Improving the condition of children's play areas within neighbourhoods and work towards introducing more play equipment within neighbourhoods, • Supporting Southampton's Cultural Education Partnership to enhance creative opportunities for children. <p>In February 2022 Southampton City Council 'onboarded' with UNICEF UK as an official candidate city and this continues to be among the main priorities for the administration. UNICEF have welcomed the consensus within Southampton for the initiative.</p> <p>Responsibility for pursuing a Child Friendly City is led by the Children and Young People's Participation Team within Stronger Communities working collaboratively with the Children's and Learning Service. The Executive Director for Children and Learning is the programme sponsor. The rationale for locating the initiative within Stronger Communities is to ensure that the rights of children can be promoted across the organisation as well as city wide.</p>

A range of Ambassador organisations have now been appointed. Rights based practice for children is already starting to influence local strategies. Children’s rights are reflected for example in the current Domestic Abuse & Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (in draft), the Prevention and Early Help Strategy, the Safe City Strategy and the Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Strategy (in draft).

On 21st July 2021 the Corporate Plan for 2021 to 2025 was approved at full council which set the objective to ‘Achieve our ambition to become a UNICEF Child Friendly City by 2024/25’.

The plan set the following milestones:

- Acceptance onto accreditation programme by Autumn 2021 (achieved)
- Install first children’s mayor by May 2022 (achieved)
- New programmes of support and engagement involving children and young people by March 2022 (ongoing)
- Rights of children enshrined in local policy making and scrutiny processes by 2024.

The new Corporate Plan has embedded Child Friendly as a core priority. Rights based practice for children is being incorporated within other initiatives such as the Accessibility Inquiry Report Action Plan, transport initiatives, Child Centred Policing and the Southampton Cultural Education Partnerships and the Connecting Cultures Programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

	(i)	That the Panel considers the report and notes the progress being made towards Southampton becoming accredited as a UNICEF Child Friendly City.
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REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1.	The Chair requested that the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel received an update on Child Friendly Southampton.
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DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

2.	Southampton City Council officially joined UNICEF UK as a candidate city on 21 February 2022. The success in joining the programme means Southampton is the first South Coast City in the UK to have joined the programme along with Aberdeen, Cardiff, Derry and Strabane, Liverpool, Nottingham, Wokingham and the London Boroughs of Lambeth and Redbridge. Joining the programme requires demonstrable commitment, ambition and the capacity to be a child friendly city.
3.	Several local partners have stepped forward to support Southampton’s Journey as Ambassadors. The main role of Ambassadors is to support the implementation of the programme and to support Children and Young People to be engaged. Ambassadors so far are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saints Foundation • No Limits • Solent NHS Trust • GO! Southampton Business Improvement District • John Hansard Gallery • The Mayflower Theatre Trust • Artswork

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Catering • Sound Pop Academy • Yellow Door • Southampton Cultural Services • West Quay <p>A bi-monthly ambassadors network meeting takes place to keep ambassadors informed and engaged. Ambassadors also oversee the programme as a governance structure with links to the Executive Steering Group.</p>
4.	<p>An internal Executive Steering Group has been established, chaired by the Executive Director for Children and Learning, inclusive of representation from the following teams, who, as internal stakeholders, have been invested in supporting our ambition to become a Child Friendly City:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Health • Cultural Services (City of Culture/Cultural Education Partnership) • Transport • Urban Design and Planning • Children and Learning • Green City • Strategic Skills • Democratic Services
5.	<p>The Programme is overseen by a dedicated Project Officer who links with UNICEF UK coordinators to ensure the programme is on track and each milestone is being achieved. Investment in a project officer was a pre-requisite for acceptance on to the programme. The Project Officer links with internal and external partners to involve each of them in the many aspects of the programme. Whilst the Project Officer holds the work plan for the programme the achievement of accreditation is a Southampton wide responsibility with the governance structure being key to the movement. Without the support of the Steering Group, Ambassadors, and other key partners the programme would not be possible.</p>
6.	<p>Joining the programme supports us in achieving our vision for children and provides a clear framework to deliver improved outcomes for all children who live, are educated or visit the city. Southampton has a strong foundation upon which to build success with Southampton Connect (representing key partners including business) demonstrating a commitment to support the child friendly ambition – this is articulated in the five-year Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Children and Young People’s Strategy.</p>
7.	<p>Our key priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To hear the voices of children, families, and communities on an individual basis but also on all key decisions within the city. • To develop strong pathways for education, training and employment and post 16 education and learning pathways leading to skilled and meaningful work in our growing economy. • To keep children safe, tackling domestic abuse, youth crime and all forms of exploitation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support young people with emotional and mental health issues and ensuring we provide environments where young people can talk and get the support they need. • To ensure that as a city of culture, children are at its core, and we continue to develop and build on our initiatives for children to engage in a range of cultural activities.
8.	The UNICEF programme will support Southampton City Council and its partners through a three-stage process of Discovery, Development, and Implementation. Our key priorities will be established towards the end of the Discovery stage in December 2022 following extensive engagement with stakeholders, children and young people.
9.	<p>The main aim of Discovery is to talk to Children and Young People about their thoughts and feelings. Throughout June, July and August a Children and Young People’s survey has been undertaken capturing this information. From 20th November to 23rd December children and young people will be given an opportunity to vote on their key priorities, (badges), and the top 3 will be selected as part of the Development stage. The possible UNICEF UK badges from which the top 3 will become the City’s priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe and Secure • Flourishing • Education and Learning • Participating • Child Friendly Services • Place • Family and Belonging • Healthy • Equal and Included • Innovation <p>These sit alongside three mandatory badges (areas) which are Communication, Culture and Co-operation and Leadership.</p>
10.	A badge rationale report will be submitted to UNICEF UK based on the evidence from the Discovery Phase which will be written by the steering group. This will lead into the Development Phase where Southampton will write 6 action plans based on each badge which will be the main focus of the journey for the following 3-5 years (Delivery Phase). Southampton has taken the decision to extend its completion of the Discovery Phase to support a wider span of children’s input to the process, to allow children to acquire informed consent of what the proposals are they are being consulted on and to allow ambassador organisations to develop their contributions to the scheme.
11.	Southampton City Council will be marking World Children’s Day on 20 November 2022 by raising a Child Friendly/UNICEF Flag with the Children’s Mayor. The Leader and Deputy Leader have indicated that, space allowing, we should seek to fly the flag permanently as a mark of our ambition.

12.	The competition to appoint the second Children's Mayor (23/24) was launched with Primary Schools on 1 November 2022 and the closing date for competition entries is 16 December 2022.
13.	The next Youth Council meeting will take place the week commencing 11 December 2022.
14.	<p>To date we have had 2200 plus qualitative interactions with Children and Young People under the age of 18. This has been via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstream online/ paper survey • Easy read online / paper survey • 5 online / paper activity sheets • Focus group with Looked After Children • Roadshow visiting youth settings through June • Attendance at events such as Mela, SPCA Play Day and more • Engagement via Ambassadors, Steering Group and Schools <p>Most interactions have been in person at a range of community events and have been supported by Stronger Communities Team staff.</p>
15.	<p>Other points to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst all Child Friendly activity is encouraged, UNICEF UK expect applicant cities to first focus on activity that will be recognised under the badge scheme. Early business engagement work has started, but this is a longer-term ambition to ensure accreditation is prioritised. • There are currently no cities in the UK that have yet been given recognition but four are expected to be by 2023. • We are exploring the potential to partner with other cities in the international network of accredited cities, including cities in Poland, Japan and Canada. • Contact has already been made with Cardiff and Barnet to support peer learning, with close connections maintained with other Child Friendly Cities as part of a bi- monthly coordinators meeting.
16.	<p>Other key milestones that support our ambition include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The launch of Southampton's first Children's Mayor who was appointed at this years' 800th Mayor Making Ceremony • The Child Friendly Youth Board launched in September 2022. The group will work alongside existing governance structures to oversee the implementation of the programme.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>	
17.	Accreditation to the programme is on a pro-rata basis determined by City size and is £35,000 per annum which is within the allocated budget for the programme. A full time Child Friendly Project Officer has been appointed to steer the programme. There are however no other resources currently budgeted for and contributions, or in-kind support from programme partners, will in time be necessary to ensure meaningful engagement with children can take place. It is likely additional resources may need to be deployed to the scheme given the intensity of inputs required by UNICEF UK.
<u>Property/Other</u>	

18.	None
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
19.	None
<u>Other Legal Implications:</u>	
20.	The inclusion of, or reference to children's rights into Southampton City Council legal processes will be better understood once the city embarks on the 'Delivery Phase' of the programme.
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
21.	The proposals are included within the new Corporate Plan for 2022-2030.
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
22.	The process of ensuring that children's rights are embedded in local processes will require some further work to understand the implications within our constitutional and legal frameworks.

KEY DECISION?	No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
Appendices	
1.	UNICEF UK CFC Participation Criteria

Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None
Equality Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out?	No
Data Protection Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out?	No
Other Background Documents	
Other Background documents available for inspection at:	
Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1.	Child Friendly City Update to the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel – 25 November 2021: https://www.southampton.gov.uk/modernGov/documents/s53862/Child%20Friendly%20Southampton%20-%20Progress%20report.pdf