

City of Edinburgh Council

10am, Thursday, 24 June 2021

Children's Rights, Participation and Delivery

Executive/routine	All
Wards	All
Council Commitments	All

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 This report is submitted for consideration and review.
- 1.2 This report identifies work already planned for and being taken forward and makes no further recommendations.
- 1.3 That there will be a progress report provided to Council in June of 2022.

Andrew Kerr

Chief Executive

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Children's Rights, Participation and Delivery

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report identifies the range of activities in place to ensure that Children's Rights are respected, known of and understood. The report also identifies where children and young people's participation in decision making affecting their and other children's lives, and the delivery of services influenced and shaped by that participation continues to cement and build on recent work undertaken in Edinburgh by the Council and Children's Partnership.

3. Background

- 3.1 This paper responds to the Council Motion raised by Councillor Alison Dickie in February 2020:
- 3.2 The City of Edinburgh Council welcomes, the Children's Parliament 'Year of Childhood 2021' to celebrate the forthcoming United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child into Scots law, and their own 25th birthday.
- 3.3 Commends, the work of the Children's Parliament to progress the rights of children, recognising them as citizens in their own right, and working to ensure their human rights and voice are embedded across all aspects of our society.
- 3.4 Further commends, the 'What Kind of Edinburgh?' partnership work in 2019 to influence children's services and acknowledges how it has now shaped the 3Bs (Best Start; Bridging the Gap; Being Everything You Can Be) of our new Children's Services Plan.
- 3.5 Celebrates the Scottish Parliament's unanimous agreement to the general principles of the UNCRC Bill at Stage One and notes the Deputy First Minister's expectation that readiness for commencement of the Bill should be a priority for all public authorities (no date has yet been identified for when this Bill will become an Act).

- 3.6 Recognises, the ongoing hard work and increasingly collaborative approach of our own services and partners to deliver for children, including our new Corporate Parenting Plan, Children's Services Plan and our second Child Poverty Action Plan.
- 3.7 Further recognises, the outcomes of last year's governance review of Children's Services, particularly the importance of a whole system approach to the involvement and participation of children, and the creation of an independent 'One Edinburgh', children and young people's board.
- 3.8 Council therefore,
- 3.9 Acknowledges 2021 as a year to maximise on the right and participation of children, and our delivery with and for them.
- 3.10 Agrees that this needs holistic commitment by Council and partner organisations.
- 3.11 Requests that the Chief Executive works with all Council Directors to establish how the impact of children's rights, particularly the rights of care experienced children as Corporate Parents, and children experiencing poverty are considered in relevant decisions as the Council drives its agenda forward of reducing poverty, becoming more sustainable and improving wellbeing for all citizens.
- 3.12 Agrees that the Chief Executive report to Full Council in two cycles on the readiness of the Council for the commencement of the UNCRC Bill; progress with 'One Edinburgh'; and, building on 'What Kind of Edinburgh?' work, the assigning of children Ambassadors across all Council services.
- 3.13 Agrees that a further report comes to the first Full Council in 2022, highlighting the impact of the UNCRC on Council wide services delivering for children in Edinburgh."

4. Main report

- 4.1 The Edinburgh Children's Partnership, which the City of Edinburgh Council is a key partner in, produced the Children's Rights Report 2017-2020 earlier this year.
- 4.2 The [report](#) highlights many areas of Children's lives which involve and require sensitivity and awareness of Children's Rights. The Children's Right's Report is a far-ranging report, covering bullying, children's planning, education curriculum, child protection, parenting support programmes, physical health, mental health and wellbeing, environment, youth justice as well as the impact of the Pandemic.
- 4.3 Taking a strengths-based approach, the report highlights what is working well in Edinburgh, including multiple case examples of where Children's Rights are being respected and promoted across Edinburgh's services.
- 4.4 However, the report also identifies gaps set against the eight Cluster areas that the report is written against. Colleagues working on this, from the Council and from partner agencies, are now formulating a delivery plan from the areas that the report identifies. This has involved colleagues from the Scottish Government's Children's

Rights Unit being requested to become involved in exploring how best to ensure that colleagues can access training and education opportunities connected to Children's Rights. Future Council reporting will articulate how this work is being taken forward.

- 4.5 To support the Council in addressing our responsibilities of the new Children's Rights legislation and fulfil the ambitions within the Children's Rights Report 2017-2020, the new job descriptions for both Executive and Service Directors, following Council approval of the new structure, set requirements in terms of officers duties in respect of children's rights. The statement in these job descriptions state the need for officers to:

Consider the Council's responsibility in supporting children's rights when planning and developing services that may impact on children and their families.

- 4.6 As Scotland moves towards legislating for Children's Rights, the Council's transformation programme has adopted this into its planning. New job descriptions for both Executive and Service Directors contain explicit accountability relating to corporate parenting that means that all Chief Officers within the Council will collectively work to support our responsibilities in this area:

Executive Directors and Service Directors will..... Fulfil their Corporate Parenting responsibility through the collective responsibility for looked after children in Edinburgh and for listening to and acting upon the views of care experienced children and young people.

This helpfully ensures that these responsibilities and any policy related implications take account of the impact on looked after children and care experienced children and young people in the City. These responsibilities for Council, are set out in the '[These are Our Bairns](#)' Guidance and further emphasised within the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 which defines corporate parenting as "*the formal and local partnerships between all services responsible for working together to meet the needs of looked after children, young people and care leavers*".

- 4.7 In early 2020 The Good Governance Institute were commissioned by the Edinburgh Children's Partnership to review its Governance arrangements. This resulting report and its considerations landed at a time of mid-Pandemic as well as a series of departures of senior officers from the Council and NHS Lothian. Further work is therefore required to review the report's findings, including the suggestion of a One Edinburgh Board.
- 4.8 [What Kind of Edinburgh](#) was a series of participatory events that took place between March 2018 and August 2019. The report that these events produced, with the same title, became the foundation for the Edinburgh Children's Partnership Children's Plan 2020-2023. Further What Kind of Edinburgh events are currently not planned. However, further opportunities to replicate this clear linkage between children's voice and views, and service strategy and delivery exist.

- 4.9 [The Promise](#) is a Scottish Government programme of nine years (3 cycles of 3-year planning) of transformation for children’s services as a result of the Independent Care Review. The Promise deals mainly with Scotland’s Care System.
- 4.10 The Promise is clear in its expectation that children and young people are to be included and have a voice in the decisions and designing of services that affect them and their families.
- 4.11 Published in 2020, with the first 3-year plan, [2021-2024](#) being published in April 2021. Edinburgh’s Promise is the response to this. Edinburgh’s Promise will see children’s participation and consultation at its heart, as the Promise will affect many, if not all areas of service delivery and strategic planning i.e. Corporate Parenting, Children’s Social Work, Education, Secure Care, Fostering, staff support, training, Poverty Commission, Children’s Services Strategic Planning, etc.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Creation of a Children’s Rights plan, including staff training in preparation for UNCRC legislation.
- 5.2 Incorporation of new job descriptions detailing explicit accountability for corporate parenting.
- 5.3 Review of Good Governance Institute findings.
- 5.4 Planning and prioritisation of Edinburgh’s Promise and associated involvement and participation of children and young people.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 This report covers many areas of Council service delivery, as referenced in the Council’s Business Plan, as well as that of the Edinburgh Children’s Partnership 2020-2023 Service’s Plan. Any financial impact regarding children’s rights, participation and delivery are contained in existing financial and budget planning.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 This report references consultations which are or are yet to be planned for, and these all align to the Council’s Business Plan, as well as existing developments at Edinburgh Children’s Partnership and Edinburgh Partnership levels.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 All background papers are hyperlinked in the document – indicated when font is [blue](#) and underlined.

9. Appendices

9.1 None.