

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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Agenda Item No.

7

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S PREVENTATIVE STRATEGY

Report of the Director of Children, Schools and Families

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1. Purpose of report

- To outline the background to the Hertfordshire Children & Young People's Preventative Strategy and report on progress in developing it
- To set out Hertfordshire's position in relation to the requirements laid out in the Government's Interim Guidance about developing local preventative strategies
- To outline the main issues and planned developments for 2003/4

2. Summary

One of the three key drivers of the Children Schools and Families service is to develop local preventative strategies to stop children failing in school or living in an unsupportive family environment. During 2002/3 the CSF Strategy was developed across 27 local communities. Locality Groups reviewed local needs and identified priorities for action, set out in Locality Action Plans to be implemented in 2003/4.

In Autumn 2002 the Government announced that all agencies would be asked to agree a co-ordinated strategy for preventive services for children and young people. Accordingly, the Hertfordshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership agreed that the Preventive Strategy be developed from the work CSF had already done with partners, in line with Government proposals.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 Members are invited to give their feedback about the preventative strategy and the approach taken. In addition Member support for the preventative strategy in their contacts with partners would be very welcome. It would be particularly helpful if, in forums where they represent the County Council, they are able to advocate on behalf of the strategy and assist in getting prevention mainstreamed into Local Strategic Partnerships and community plans, and health planning processes.
- 3.2 During 2003/4 the first cycle of locality action plans will be implemented across the County, and at the end of the year these will be reviewed to ensure that they are making a real difference to outcomes for children and families. Accordingly, the Committee may wish to receive a further progress report in twelve months time.

1. Background

- 1.1 When the Children Schools and Families service was set up in April 2001 one of the three key drivers of the new service was to develop local preventative strategies to stop children failing in school or living in an unsupportive family environment. The aim was to develop with local communities realistic action which will counteract/stop, at the earliest stage in a child's life, those factors which may cause children to:
- live in an unsafe/chaotic environment/family
 - suffer poor health
 - underachieve at school
 - turn to crime or drug/alcohol abuse
 - suffer as a result of poverty
- 1.2 The Preventative Strategy was developed following wide consultation, which included a series of workshops running up to the formation of CSF, attended by people drawn from CSF staff, schools, health, police, the voluntary sector and District Councils. Colleagues and partners emphasised that, to succeed, the preventative strategy had to be developed and implemented at a local level.
- 1.3 The Strategy was not designed to either duplicate or take over the work being done by existing partnerships and groups whose work impacts on children and young people, such as the Early Years and Community Safety Partnerships, and Local Strategic Partnerships and local action groups. Rather, the aim of the Strategy is to build on the good work that is already being done by a range of agencies, joining up what we do in response to key local problems identified by local people such as health visitors, headteachers, youth workers, and community police officers.
- 1.4 The focus of the Preventative Strategy is on two levels of prevention:
- Universal prevention: to enable schools, health and other universal services to do things that will help all children to succeed and prevent problems from occurring.
 - Targeted prevention: early intervention to prevent risk, to stop small problems from becoming big ones, or to intervene with children and young people when they show the first signs of becoming at risk.
- 1.5 The Strategy is targeted on:
- children and young people - to increase their motivation and self-esteem, with the aim of avoiding or preventing problematic or disaffected behaviour
 - parents - to enhance their parenting capacity, so that they can better support and motivate their children.
- 1.6 The Strategy will mean that more children and families will be responded to within universal services, with the aim of reducing the numbers of children at risk, and thus fewer children and families will need to use targeted and specialist casework services. Outcomes should include improvements in achievement and skill levels, school attendance and children's physical and emotional health, and a decrease in young people offending, family breakdown, teenage pregnancy, and drug and alcohol abuse.

2. Development of the Strategy

- 2.1 During 2002/3 the Strategy was developed across 27 local communities in the County that were identified in the consultation period. The localities are based on clearly identifiable local settlements and clusters of secondary schools and their feeder primaries. A list of the 27 localities is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 CSF brought together Locality Preventative Strategy Groups (LPSGs), with a wide range of membership, including voluntary, community and faith organisations, schools, the police, health and district councils. The groups have reviewed local needs and services and identified priorities for joint action, set out in Locality Action Plans (LAPs). Each LAP has between four and six priorities for attention. Against each of these priorities the LAP identifies one or more joint preventative action to tackle it, many of which have already started to be implemented. All the locality action plans can be found on the website: www.hertsdirect.org/preventativestrategy
- 2.3 Each locality action plan is different and reflects local needs. However, frequently identified priorities include:
- Health – emotional and mental health and well being, counselling, reducing smoking, drugs and alcohol abuse, promotion of healthy living, reducing under 18s pregnancy
 - Family and parenting support, including support to young parents and parents of teenagers, childcare
 - Things for children and young people (including disabled children) to do – play, sports and leisure facilities and ensuring they know what is available
 - Reducing poverty, advice on debts, maximising take up of benefits
 - Information for professionals and for families on services and activities available, enabling early access by vulnerable families
 - School and educational achievement – increasing attendance at school, support for children for whom English is a second language, mentoring support for ethnic minority children
 - Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and bullying
 - Supporting young carers
- 2.4 A wide range of surveys and consultations from CSF and partner agencies has been taken on board in choosing local priorities for action. Amongst the actions and services identified as being important by children and young people are:
- After school and lunch time clubs, and things to keep young people out of trouble
 - Stricter punishment for bullies
 - More and better quality leisure activities for teenagers, such as youth clubs, sports facilities and better access to computer and I.T. equipment
 - Support group and education for young mums
 - More social workers, more teachers
- 2.5 The actions add value to the priorities set out in local plans. Priorities and issues raised by the Locality Groups for action have already influenced:
- District Community Plans
 - Health Improvement Plans
 - Priorities in the CSF Plan and development of strategies
 - How the Children's Fund will be targeted to support children and young people
 - Allocation of CSF short term funding for the voluntary sector

2.6 The actions identified in the locality action plans focus on a preventative way of working and joining up services already being provided by partners. These partnership preventative actions and projects are being implemented as a direct result of the preventative strategy. Set out below are just a few examples of preventative actions that have been set up with the support of locality preventative strategy groups:

- Partnership directories of services, particularly those relevant to prevention, are being developed in Bishops Stortford and Welwyn. This information has been added to the HCC website and will be updated annually. In Broxbourne the LPSG/Youth Network will publicise youth events by roadshows, the use of church and hall notice boards, posters, "What's on" "Capers" and press releases.
- With active support and encouragement from the locality group in Hitchin, a minority ethnic forum has successfully put forward a mentoring project for black and ethnic minority pupils, in selected primary and secondary schools, which the forum will run in partnership with MECCS and the schools.
- In Watford a 'Counselling & Practical Help' pilot project has been set up for pupils and parents at Francis Combe school. It provides support and advice about drugs and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, offending, and general mental health issues. A family room now exists in the school which is well attended; families are encouraged to come into lessons with the pupils; drop in sessions are provided to share a problem; Girl about and Connexions provide free pregnancy testing and free confidential counselling and information to teenagers. The project is supported by CAMHS, Connexions, Education Welfare Officers, the Drug and Alcohol Reference Group, feeder primary schools, local PCT and Police, Signpost Watford, the Women's Centre and the Youth Offending team.
- The Young Citizens Project (YCP) have now completed a social skills programme in Collenswood School in Stevenage and Knights Templar School in Baldock with pupils in danger of exclusion. It is a 10-week programme covering issues around bullying, self-esteem and friendship, delivered by a YCP worker and a learning support assistant from the school. Each programme has 10 pupils attending and attendance rate is good. At the request of the schools, programmes are planned now for Highfield School in Letchworth and Meridian in Royston.
- In Hemel Hempstead Cavendish School have partnered up with the SIAS Behaviour Support Unit to develop an anti bullying project. This resulted in successful funding bids to Parent Line Plus and the Family Service Unit. The project includes anti bullying work with all year 6 feeder school pupils, a school drop in centre, and a mentoring system.
- In Welwyn Hatfield a project called "Bodyzone " has been developed to meet an identified priority in the local preventative strategy to allow young people access to sexual health services and support, and provide information and advice to teenagers. It is a partnership project involving the Welwyn Hatfield PCT, Healthy schools, and the youth service. The project started at Sir Frederic Osborn School with two school nurses available for the young people to drop in and discuss any problems. The project is popular with the students, and has been extended to Breaks Manor for students at Onslow St. Audrey's School.

- In Hertford the LPSG supported parents at Richard Hale School to successfully bid for a Parents in the Community Millennium Award from CEDC to produce a parents' guide "To support your child's achievement in secondary school". Parent workshops have been held to review materials, advise on website content and access, and a guide is being produced. The guide will be shared with other schools and preventative strategy partners.
- A supportive drop in for young mothers started on 23 January in Potters Bar with support and advertising by the Locality Group.
- Locality Groups are promoting involvement of young people in planning services. In Royston, the youth worker (HCC) District Council and Primary Care Trust have approached the Youth Council to engage them in the Community Network Young People's action plan process. Youth Councillors will engage in the Royston Community Network planning process.
- The Hatfield Locality Group identified a limited range of facilities and activities for all age groups and teenagers frequenting play areas in parks, perceived as intimidating and threatening, discouraging use by younger children. In response they have initiated an integrated project in Breaks Manor Youth centre for 11-14 year olds, combining an attractive programme of Out of School Hours Learning with 'after school care', which opened in January 2003.
- Bringing groups together has enabled wider access to different agencies' resources. The CAD (Communities Against Drugs) bus is being accessed and used by groups across Stevenage. The Connexions and Watford Football Club Bus will be made more widely available to help young people access activities in Borehamwood.
- Locality Groups have been made aware of and are disseminating advice from the HCC Money Advice Unit on benefits take up and the new child tax credits, targeting low-income families.

3. Future Developments

- 3.1 In September 2002 the Government announced that, from April 2003, all those agencies responsible for delivering services to children and young people will be asked to agree a co-ordinated strategy for preventive services for children and young people aged 0-19 at risk of social exclusion. The Hertfordshire Preventative Strategy has many features in common with the Government model. Accordingly, the Hertfordshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership agreed that the Children and Young People's Preventive Strategy be developed from the work CSF had already done with partners, in line with Government proposals. N.B. An outline of the origins, membership, and terms of reference of the Strategic Partnership is attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.2 Subsequently, the Government's Children and Young People Unit (CYPUP) issued Interim Guidance on taking forward the Preventative Strategy which suggests that it should be led by Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership in each top-tier authority. The Strategic Partnership has expressed concern to CYPUP that the interim guidance addresses prevention in the widest sense of the word, ranging through universal, targeted, specialist and rehabilitative services. This has the potential to dilute the focus and divert preventative resources into the more specialist and rehabilitative levels of casework service. The Partnership believes

this to be unhelpful in breaking the cycle of need and wishes preventative work to be 'pre referral'.

- 3.3 In a county the size of Hertfordshire there is always a tension between "bottom-up" issues identified by local groups, and "top-down" strategies that have to be led by a countywide perspective. CSF have established a Preventative Strategy Core Group, to co-ordinate the implementation of the Strategy at a locality level with countywide services and plans. The Core Group includes officers who play a strategic lead role with regard to a range of major services and strategies. Countywide issues for action beyond the power of the locality groups are referred to the Core Group to take on board in county and district wide strategies. Examples include responding to needs of children and young people at risk of developing mental health problems or drugs and alcohol misuse. To help take forward the Strategy at a countywide level, the Strategic Partnership has agreed to expand the membership of the Core Group to include representatives from PCTs, District Councils, and the voluntary and community sectors.
- 3.4 It is clear from the Government's Interim Guidance that the approach to the Preventative Strategy should be both strategic and local. This is especially important in a county the size of Hertfordshire. We have expressed concern to CYPUC that the interim guidance does not fit well with the complexities of responsibilities and relationships in large, two tier counties. The aim should be to establish a model that gives overall strategic coherence and countywide coverage and retains the focus on preventative work for children and young people. At the same time, it should allow flexibility in the processes for developing and delivering local priorities.
- 3.5 In order to achieve this strategic coherence and local delivery, CSF are developing with partner agencies our vision about the purpose of the strategy and our joint understanding of how this will be achieved. There must be strong, collective ownership of our approach in order to effectively lead and support local implementation across our organisations. To help achieve this, CSF is running five Quadrant-based workshops in June/July 2003, in conjunction with the Strategic Partnership. The aims of the workshops are to:
- develop our understanding of the definition of prevention in the context of our strategy
 - agree outcomes
 - determine the processes for agreeing priorities
 - agree roles in relation to tasks
 - determine the accountability processes

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 To date the additional work required by the Preventative Strategy has largely been internally funded by the partner agencies, using existing resources such as the CSF Short-Term Fund for the voluntary and community sector. Other authorities have been able to build their preventative work on the basis of additional funding. However, Hertfordshire does not have significant benefits from Sure Start and other targeted government programmes such as Education Action Zones.
- 4.2 The one exception to the above is the Children's Fund, a multi-agency partnership fund of £6m spread over three years from 2003-2006. The aim of the Children's Fund is to provide preventative actions for 5-13 year olds at risk of social exclusion. Its development is overseen by the Children's Fund partnership, a sub-group of the Strategic Partnership. The Preventative Strategy has provided a comprehensive

framework and a holistic context for 0-21s against which Children's Fund proposals could be set. Priorities from the Locality Action Plans formed the basis of many of the developments identified in the Children's Fund Plan, which was submitted to CYPUC in December 2002. In addition, four Children's Fund Workers will be recruited to work within the CSF Quadrant Community Teams to support local implementation of preventative projects. The Partnership has subsequently been congratulated by CYPUC for the quality of the Children's Fund Plan.

5. Rural Implications

- 5.1 Links have been made between the Preventative Strategy and the Hertfordshire Rural Forum. The main rural issues that have merged have been around the lack of facilities for young people, and poor access to facilities in nearby towns.
- 5.2 Actions to tackle the above are inevitably in the early stages. Examples include:
- Hertford and Ware locality action plan identifies that transport is needed to enable rural young people to take part in after-school and evening activities. The LPSG supports research by Hertford and Parishes Local Area Partnership into overcoming barriers to participation through improved transport and possible mobile youth clubs.
 - Bishops Stortford, Sawbridgeworth and Buntingford LAPs have all identified development of accessible support for young carers in rural East Herts
 - Welwyn/Hatfield plan - Young people living in rural areas, such as Welham Green, do not have ready access to facilities/information. The LPSG supports establishment of a Young People's liaison group to tackle some of the issues for young people in Welham Green. One action being explored is the possibility of the "Wheels" crime diversion mobile going into the Welham Green area.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The Preventative Strategy is still in the process of evolution. Nevertheless, it is clear from discussions with other authorities and Government agencies that Hertfordshire is in the vanguard in developing preventative strategies. We derived considerable benefits from the shift in focus onto preventative strategies early on in the thinking about CSF, with the result that we are now well into acting on it. This achievement has been externally recognised, both in the response to the Children's Fund Plan, and in a recent CYPUC audit of all authorities' state of readiness for developing a preventative strategy. Each authority was given a rating of "early stages", "developing", or "mature". CYPUC concluded that we are "developing, on the cusp of mature".
- 6.2 The first generation of locality action plans is already being implemented across the County. At the end of the year these will be reviewed to ensure that they are making a real difference to outcomes for children and families, and another generation of plans will be developed to drive prevention forward. To make this next generation of plans even better, CSF will be actively developing with partners ways of increasing preventative capacity in mainstream services by enabling schools and other universal services to appropriately address difficulties within their provision rather than referring out. Examples would be Youth Programmes Units working in schools rather than children coming out and Home and Hospital Education workers helping schools make the adjustments needed for some sick children to learn in school rather than referring for home tutor for long periods.
- 6.3 Members are invited to give their feedback about the preventative strategy and the approach taken, both up to now and in the future. In addition Member support for

the preventative strategy in their contacts with partners would be very welcome. It would be particularly helpful if, in forums where they represent the County Council, they are able to advocate on behalf of the strategy and assist in getting prevention mainstreamed into Local Strategic Partnerships and community plans, as well as into health planning processes.

- 6.4 During 2003/4 the first cycle of locality action plans will be implemented across the County, and at the end of the year these will be reviewed to ensure that they are making a real difference to outcomes for children and families. Accordingly, Members may wish to receive a further progress report in twelve months time.

Background material referred to by the author while compiling this report:

Children and Young Persons Unit (March 2003): *Local Preventative Strategy: interim guidance for local authorities and other local agencies (statutory and non-statutory) providing services to children and young people*

If you would like to know more about the issues referred to in this report please contact Andrew Wellington (Tel: 01992 556980) or Dorothy Blatcher, Strategic Partnerships Manager (Tel: 01992 588762).

PREVENTATIVE STRATEGY - LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Quadrant	District	Local Community
East	East Herts " " "	Bishops Stortford Sawbridgeworth Hertford & Ware Buntingford
	Broxbourne "	Broxbourne & Hoddesdon Cheshunt & Waltham Cross
	Welwyn/ Hatfield "	Hatfield Welwyn Gdn City
North	N Herts " " "	Royston Baldock Letchworth Hitchin
	Stevenage " "	Stevenage Old Town Stevenage NE Stevenage South
West	St Albans "	Harpenden St Albans
	Dacorum " " "	Hemel Hempstead E. Hemel Hempstead W. Berkhamstead Tring
South	Hertsmere " "	Borehamwood Potters Bar Bushey
	Watford/ Three Rivers " "	Watford N/ Abbots Langley Watford S&W/ S Oxhey
	Three Rivers "	Rickmansworth/Croxley Green/Chorley Wood/ Maple Cross

The Hertfordshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership

1. Children and young people up to 21 years of age make up over 25% of Hertfordshire's population today, and they and their children will make up 100% of the population of the future. In their 2002 consultation document *Tomorrow's Future: Building a Strategy for Children and Young People* the Government Children and Young People's Unit (CYP Unit) says that in a modern society, a huge variety of other people and organisations contribute to our children and young people's upbringing. If all these people and organisations share a common view with families about what we want for our children and young people, it is far more likely that our children and young people will benefit in the way we want. To drive this agenda forward, the Children and Young People's Unit proposed that a Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership be set up in each authority to actively engage the full array of professionals and agencies that deliver services for children and young people.
 2. At the beginning of 2002 the Hertfordshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership was set up to respond to this vision and take it forward in Hertfordshire. Membership is drawn from all sectors – it includes all the PCTs and District Councils in the county, as well as CSF, the Strategic Health Authority and Health Trusts, Police, YOTs, Connexions and voluntary sector. The group is chaired by Ray Shostak, Director of CSF.
 3. The Partnership has the following Terms of Reference:
 - To develop and implement a co-ordinated planning framework for services for all children and young people and their families. The focus of the Partnership's work will be 0 – 21 year olds.
 - To develop a child and young person centred Children and Young People's Strategic Plan.
 - To provide a forum where partner agencies reach a shared understanding of children's issues in Hertfordshire, articulate shared objectives, determine priorities and jointly address levels of need, by agreeing targets, milestones and action.
-