

Annual Report

Councillor Tracy Brown, Champion for Children and Young People

I am delighted to present my first Annual Report as Champion for Children and Young People.

Childrens Partnership Board

The newly created Children's Partnership Boards (CPBs) have continued to meet quarterly, the CPB being a culmination of the former Children and Young People's Trust and the Locality Safeguarding Children's Board. Established in October 2014 the CPB covers Fylde, Lancaster and Wyre districts and the membership is made up of multi-agency officers who hold a senior leadership role within their organisation that ensure they can either make resourcing decisions or can provide a perspective of the sector they represent.

The purpose of the CPB is to drive and deliver effective multi agency working that safeguards and promotes the well-being of children and young people and improves outcome for families. Along with district councillors from Fylde Borough and Wyre Council I attend these meetings to represent the Lancaster District.

The Board, as a sub-group of the county-wide Children and Young People's Trust, provides a means by which local agencies can come together to ensure effective collaboration in the development and delivery of services to children and their families, and ensures that local priorities can be influenced by local people.

One of the top priorities of the CPB for this year was Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), where significant work took place around training and awareness raising across the children and young people's workforce.

Prevention and Early Help Services

Wellbeing, Prevention and Early Help services have now merged and are managed by the county council, districts have a nominated coordinator who deals with any requests for extra help and support from the District's Prevention and Early Help Service.

The core purpose of the District Prevention and Early Help Panel is to make a positive difference to the lives of children, young people and families. Panels are responsible for identifying the most appropriate support and interventions for families and also review cases to ensure progress is being made, panel meetings are held within the district and are attended by a Housing Options Manager from Health and Housing.

Children's Holiday Activities Programme

The Summer Holiday Activities Programme was produced with the help of funding from Lancashire's Children and Young People Trust. It included activities for children and young people provided by the City Council, along with those being offered in the district by partner organisations. The result was a comprehensive on-line brochure and an 'at a glance guide' which was an asset to families in the district, providing a central resource on available activities during the summer holidays.

Children's Holiday Activity programmes for children aged from 4 to 16 are also available during other school holiday periods, in February, April, May and October. Each programme is packed with exciting art and sport workshops at affordable prices to make them accessible for all. Places prove to be popular and are strictly limited to ensure a high quality coaching session. All our workshops are in a fun and safe environment delivered by experienced coaches.

The Children and Young People's Multi Agency Forum

This forum has met on five occasions over the year, coordinated by the council's Children and Young People's Coordinator. It continues to provide a valuable opportunity for those working with children and young people in the district to share information and keep up to date with what is happening on the front-

line. Guest speakers are invited to give presentations on new developments and many new contacts are forged enabling practitioners working with children and young people to keep up to date with current services in the district.

Meetings have been held at Lancaster Town Hall, Lancaster Library, YPS Centre at Morecambe Library and Furniture Matters.

In between meetings the C&YP Coordinator distributes information on behalf of members of the forum, sharing information and keeping everyone better informed about local opportunities and changes to services for children and young people in the district.

This forum continues to be a successful example of agencies and individuals working together practically and effectively.

Safeguarding and Child Sexual Exploitation

The council's safeguarding arrangements for children and young people have now been updated to meet current requirements. The Safeguarding Policy is now easy to read and follow should an incident arise, and includes an online reporting form designed to simplify the process by which staff can report safeguarding concerns or queries.

The authority continues to give particular attention to the Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Section 11 Audit, which ensures that Safeguarding is at the forefront of all council activities and that such procedures and practises are an integral part of our business. The authority was audited by the LSCB on its section 11 return. A representative of the LSCB met with officers and reviewed the evidence that supported our Section 11 Audit and they were more than satisfied with our return.

In July 2015 the City Council hosted two Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Events, the first one aimed at Line Managers within our own services, was to prepare managers to be better informed for dealing with any queries they may receive in the future and to roll out the online CSE Training facility. The afternoon session was an Awareness Raising event which was opened up to anyone working or delivering services on the front line with children and young people. 98 people attended the event and the programme introduced people to services as well as providing networking opportunities for support services.

Taxi drivers are now being trained up to spot the signs of Child Sexual Exploitation, the licensing manager together with DCI Tony Baxter from Lancashire Constabulary Operation Awaken are delivering the training.

The Council Housing Spring/Summer 2015 'Your Council Housing Matters' publication which is delivered to all council housing tenants hosted a full page on CSE – 'The more you know the more you see', this contained a brief description on CSE and information on where to go with any concerns.

Local Plan Consultation

In November young people from schools and colleges across the Lancaster district got to have their say on the future provision of housing, employment and leisure facilities at a special event at Lancaster Town Hall. The event was held as part of Lancaster City Council's Local Plan consultation and looked at the proposed approach to allocating future housing and employment land for potentially 9,500 jobs and 13,000 new homes up to 2031.

Local Democracy Campaign

Due to on-going building works at Lancaster Town Hall the annual 'Pupil Power Event' was postponed, however plans are afoot to hold an event at Lancaster Town Hall in June 2016. This will provide an excellent opportunity for young people to meet councillors and officers, and find out how a district council works, and how decisions are made about budgets and service provision. In preparation for the event a leaflet is being prepared as a 'guide for pupils attending the event, this gives brief information about the council and the services that we provide and helps prepare the pupils for their visit to the town hall and gives them an introduction to services.

Career Events

The council have continued to participate in school careers events, with visits local schools. The aim is to inform pupils and their parents about the variety of job roles performed by the council, to give advice on careers within the council, and to promote us as an employer. These events always generate lots of interest from pupils and their parents.

Apprenticeships

The council continues to provide apprenticeships, creating opportunities for local young people to train and learn in a working environment. 2015 saw the largest intake of apprentices over recent years. Apprenticeships have been provided in different areas of the council.

Pupil Parliament

Working together with schools engaging primary children in local issues that affect their communities. The Children are encouraged to debate and find ways to resolve the issues. Along with support the children fund raise to help improve their environment.