

Children and Young People's Strategy

Rossendale Borough Council

Strategy in relation to Children and Young People

Foreword

Welcome to the Rossendale Borough Council's Children and Young Persons Strategy. The Strategy has been developed in response to the Government's vision for children's services "Every Child Matters". The Strategy details the Council's contribution to improving the lives of children and young people and delivering the key outcomes which are identified as the key to well-being in childhood and later life:

- Stay Safe
- Be Healthy
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

Lancashire County Council as the statutory Children's Services Authority is responsible for co-ordinating the production of the over arching Children and Young People's Plan for Lancashire as per the Children Act 2004. However, Section 10 of the Children's Act identifies "relevant partners" who have a valuable contribution to make to improve the well-being of children and young people. Rossendale Borough Council is one of those important and relevant partners.

The Strategy cannot be considered in isolation, it is linked to other plans and strategies including the Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement priority outcomes. The Strategy's delivery mechanisms are service focused Business Plans which focus on the activities the Council will deliver on the next three years.



**Leader of Council
Duncan Ruddick**



**Chief Executive
Carolyn Wilkins**

1. Introduction

Rossendale has ambitious plans for the future. These are set out in Rossendale Alive (our Community Strategy) and Rossendale Borough Council's Corporate Improvement Plan. We want the Borough to be a cracking place to live. This means we want good quality housing in safe, clean neighbourhoods. We also want people to work and live within the Borough. Rossendale's geography does impose limits on the transport infrastructure. We have low unemployment in the Borough and manufacturing still employs a quarter of the Borough workforce, but wage rates are low so we are looking to secure quality jobs for local people, and ensure they have the necessary skills and qualifications to access them.

On the index of multiple deprivation, Rossendale ranks 92nd among English councils. (Date) Aspects of deprivation such as crime and employment show few extremes, but there is a high degree of health deprivation in the Borough. We want good access to the necessary health service as well as promoting healthy lifestyles for local peoples so we can all enjoy the best quality of life.

2. Our Ambitions for the Borough

Both the Council and the Rossendale Partnership have agreed a vision for the Borough's future called "Rossendale Alive". It sets out a long term strategy to improve the quality of life in Rossendale which is contained in the following Strategic Objectives:

- Community Safety – A place where people do not live in fear of crime
- Health – A place where vulnerable people are looked after and all residents can look forward to long and healthy life
- Education – A place where people of all ages will be well educated and capable of providing business with the human resources to compete in highly competitive global markets
- Environment – A Place which has attractive rural settings a fantastic street scene and is easily accessible for all
- Housing - A Place where people have a choice of high quality housing which is affordable for all
- Economy – A place where job prospects and wages are high and the cost of living is low
- Community Network – A place where all opinions count and people respect and celebrate difference in gender, sexuality, race, age, ability, culture and religion.
- Culture – A place which is a great place to live for all ages and is widely accepted as a major place to visit

Rossendale Borough Council's contribution to the District Vision is defined by its overarching mission of 8x8 by 2008. This means that by 2008 the Council is determined to have 8 out of 10 of its corporate priority indicators meeting local targets and/or in the top quartile of performance by 2008.

3. Rossendale Borough Council's Strategic Objectives

The Council has eight Strategic Objectives, five of which are shared with the Rossendale Partnership:

- Environment
- Housing
- Culture
- Economy
- Community

The Council also has three internally focused objectives which are:

- Improvement
- Customers
- Partnerships

The Council recognises that its responsibilities regarding children and young people is a cross cutting theme across its eight strategic objectives.

4. Rossendale's Commitment to Children and Young People

Rossendale Borough Council is committed to the vision of the Lancashire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. "Together, we will provide excellent services where people live and which are tailored to local priorities. We will stand up for Lancashire's children, young people and their families, listen to what they say is important and take appropriate action. We will let everyone know what we are doing to improve the outcomes for our children and young people."

Our vision is supported by a number of values which are

- In the delivery and performance management of our services we will endeavour to protect all children especially those from vulnerable groups and children most at risk
- We will listen and consult with parents, children and young people in designing, planning and developing our services
- We will promote children and young people's health and well-being
- We will work collaboratively for the benefit of the wider community in our role as Community Leader

The Council is committed to ensuring that the building of safeguards and promoting well-being for children is integrated into the Business Planning process. Consequently the Council has appointed a Member Champion for Children and Young People and a Lead Officer for Children and Young People who is a member of the Senior Management Team.

5. Capacity Building

The Council recognises that it does not have the capacity to deliver its ambitions alone, and utilises the capacity of others to achieve objectives which will improve the lives of children and young people living in the Borough.

6. The key outcomes of this strategy

The key outcomes from this strategy will be that:

- Children and Young people are protected from harm
- Children and Young people will be engaged in the decision making processes
- Children and Young People will have appropriate and safe opportunities for play and for meeting friends
- Children and Young People feel safe within their communities and have the opportunity to do well and make a meaningful contribution.

7. The Children and Young Persons Plan

The Children and Young People's Plan is a strategic, overarching plan for all services for children and young people in Lancashire identifying the improvements that Rossendale and its partners including Lancashire County Council will make in relation to the Every Child Matters outcomes.

Key Priorities for Rossendale Linked to Children and Young Persons Plan

Priority Area	Local Area Agreement	Lead Officer
Positive Contribution		
Develop communication strategies so that partners can share information about the positive contributions made by children and young people within the community		Communications Manager
Increase the number of children and young people who are engaged in positive and diversionary activities	LAA	Community Safety Officer commissions activities from Youth and Community Service and other partners via Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and the

		Youth Strategy Steering Group
Be Healthy		
Ensure that children and young people chose not to take illegal drugs, smoke or misuse alcohol	LAA	Environmental Health Manager via visits to Schools/ health promotion initiatives
Stay Safe		
Ensure that children and young people are safe from accidental injury and death	LAA	Asset Management via provision of Safe Play
Reduce fear of crime and anti social behaviour	LAA	Community Safety Officer via Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
Enjoy and Achieve		
Improve provision of places to go and things to do for children and young people		Head of Community and partnerships via client side management of Leisure Trust Head of Street Scene and Liveability via Open Spaces and Youth Strategy Steering Group
Economic well-being		
Reduce number of children and young people living in low income households		Head of Regeneration re regeneration Agenda Customer Manager re Benefit Accessibility
More housing choice and opportunities for young people		Head of Regeneration via the Youth Housing and Support Group
Develop integrated processes providing information		Executive Director of Resources
Improve involvement and engagement with children and young people in service monitoring and planning		All Heads of Service/ Head of Legal Services contributing to the Lancashire Children and Young People's Charter of Engagement
Ensure service plans reflect the strategic		Heads of Service

direction of the CYPP		
Improve data available to enable accurate target setting		Heads of Service

8. Numbers of 0 – 19 year olds living in Rossendale. The percentage of those children and young people who live in areas which are in the top 20% in the Country in terms of deprivation, the number of schools in each District.

2001 Census of Population

0-19 year olds in 20% most deprived areas in England

No of 0-19s	% growth or decrease in 0-19 population since 1991 Census	% fall or rise in birth rate 1992 – 2002	No of 0-19s	% of total District 0-19s	Number of Schools
17,822	+ 0.3	-25.6	3571	20	44

** Source of data

Birth trends: Key Population and Vital Statistics, National Statistics

School data shown indicates total number of all LEA maintained schools in that district

Rossendale has 6.1% of the total number of 0-19s within the County of Lancashire. Trends in the number of births show a fall. These changes obviously impact on the demand for services and on school rolls.

9. The current reality

The Council has faced some significant challenges but has made some significant improvements which has developed the capacity of the Council to deliver on a range of priorities. In relation to safeguarding children there is a robust system of CRB checks in place but there is a need for clear guidance for staff who have concerns in relation to children at risk. The Council has developed an Open Spaces Strategy, has been an active partner in the Youth Provision Strategy and is in the process of developing a Play Strategy. The lack of previous investment in play facilities has been recognised and the Council has committed to a programme of expenditure in this area. The transfer of the Housing Stock has created the capacity to invest in and improve the quality of the Housing Stock. There is a recognition within the Council of the value of community engagement in the development and formulation of services and a number of initiatives are being established which will develop consultation mechanisms. The Environmental Health Team has been restructured to focus resource on the promotion of health lifestyles and

the Leisure Trust and the Community Safety Manager is active in the delivery of diversionary activities for young people through a number of different forums. A clear programme of regeneration for the Borough has been established which will leader to greater opportunities across the Borough.

10. Drivers to achieve the required outcomes

- Clear and well communicated Safeguarding measures
- Available Opportunities for Play and Diversionary Activities
- Decent Housing
- A Planning Framework which considers the needs of children and young people
- Education and Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles
- Effective Community Safety Initiatives
- Effective Community Leadership and Partnership Working
- Consultation mechanisms with Young People
- Regeneration and Development of the Borough to improve the life chances of Young People

10.1 Clear and well communicated Safeguarding Measures

The Council is committed to safe guarding children. District Council staff may come into contact with children and young people in many ways, arrangements have been put in place to ensure a robust system of Criminal Record Checks applies to a range of employees who may work for the Council which is monitored by the Human Resources Department. In addition where contractors provide services on behalf of the Council or services are delivered in partnership, the same checks apply which is monitored by the client services team within the Council. The implementation of voluntary CRB checks for Council is being considered.

Employees come into contact with children via a range of different opportunities. It is essential that employees know what action to take if they have concerns about the safety or welfare of a child. Consequently clear guidance is to be issued to Rossendale Borough Council employees and partner agencies, and training will be offered to front line staff to ensure a culture of openness and communication. Employees and the employees of partners are to be provided with “safeguarding cards” which clearly identifies who to contact where there is concern for the safety of a child.

The Council contributes financially to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. The Boards are designed to coordinate the responsibilities of different agencies that provide services to children and young people and to ensure that they effectively safeguarded and promote the welfare of children and young people within the Borough.

10.2 Available Opportunities for Play and Diversionary Activities

The Council's Leisure facilities are currently delivered in partnership with the Council through a Trust Arrangement. The Leisure Trust is committed to ensuring that Children and Young People benefit from leisure facilities which meet local needs. The Council is currently undertaking a review of the facilities which will respond to the outcomes as identified in Every Child Matters, in addition to consulting with young people in relation to the development of Leisure opportunities for the future.

The Trust is committed to engaging young people in leisure opportunities and there are a variety of initiatives in place, from the youth games to the summer ski race leagues. One of the key successes associated with the development of the Trust is the improvement in consultation with young people. The Trust is part of the Youth Strategy Steering Group but also carries out direct consultation as part of its Sports Development remit.

The Council have invested £50,000 per annum over the next five years to develop a Play Strategy for Rossendale which identifies key activities which need to be delivered to achieve Green Flag status for the Council's Parks. The Strategy will focus on the key areas of safety, accessibility, play, transport infrastructure, sports and recreation, youth provision, and the different activities required to meet the different needs of children and young people.

The Council is dedicated to ensuring that children and families benefit from local leisure centres, art, museums, parks and open spaces, and works with partners to achieve this.

10.3 Decent Housing

The Council's Housing Stock has transferred to Green vale Homes, and the Council has entered into a Service Level Agreement in relation to the delivery of its strategy for preventing homelessness. The Council is developing robust monitoring arrangements through the development of its Strategic Housing function. The delivery of the Housing Stock transfer has enabled the Council to build its capacity to deliver improvements in the Standard of Housing across the Borough. Green vale Homes is committed to delivery of the "Rossendale Standard" in relation to Housing, a higher level of Standard than the "Decent Homes Standard" and one which has been determined by local people. By improving the standard of housing, preventing homelessness and by working closely with children's services agencies, the health and life chances for children especially those who are vulnerable are improved. As well as direct activity, the Council works with partners on the Youth Housing

and Support Group, a sub-group of the Housing Theme Group of Rossendale Partnership.

10.4 A Planning Framework which considers the needs for children and Young People

The Council has a key role in relation to its planning function. The Council will ensure that any new developments are child friendly providing appropriate facilities for play in any new housing developments and ensuring that families have access to health and social care services.

The Council can ensure through effective planning policies that contributions are obtained from developers towards local community facilities and towards play equipment/ open when this is related to the development proposal.

This ensures that the Council invests in its facilities and continually improves them to meet the needs of Children and Young people.

10.5 Education and Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles

The Environmental Health Service is concerned with protecting and improving people's health by controlling risks to health and encouraging healthy behaviour and lifestyles in relation to the environment in which people live, work, shop and spend their leisure. To do this Environmental Health staff will visit workplaces, homes, community groups, schools and shops anywhere where people are. In order to obtain changes in lifestyles, attitudes and behaviour. The Team adopts a mix of enforcement activities including education and promotion whereby they provide information and advice on how to make healthy choices.

It has been recognised by the Council that In order to achieve change, it is advantageous to influence people when they are young and still in the process of formulating attitudes. The Environmental Health Team therefore aims to provide information to young people about a whole range of issues which they can use to guide their own behaviour. The issues that they may promote include energy efficiency awareness, food hygiene and safety, importance of hand washing, noise nuisance, home safety, smoking health eating and many other issues. The main focus of the Environmental Health Team however, is to consult children in the development and implementation of promotions and in identifying environmental issues of concern to them so that the Council's services are responsive to their particular needs.

10.6 Effective Community Safety Measures

The Council is an active partner in the delivery of Street wise 2006. This project is in it's s third year and is aimed at all Year 6 pupils from across Rossendale. The project's focus is on a reduction in anti social behaviour, bullying, personal safety, fire safety, and environmental issues. Plans are being developed for a Year 9 Streetwise to which the NEAT will contribute. The Council supports the work of the Lancashire Drug Action Team. The

Team has appointed the new Young People Service Providers for East Lancashire. This will improve drug treatment services to young people in Rossendale and will complement the drugs education work provided under the auspices of the DAT.

The Council recognises that in isolation little can be achieved. However, working in partnership with others it can achieve improvements in the lives of local people. The Prevent and Deter Panel works within Rossendale to identify young people to reduce the risk of offending or committing anti social behaviour. The group is lead by the Youth Offending Team and comprises representatives from other partner agencies including, police, education, GRIP, RBC, youth and community, children and family services, and sports development. Actions and service can be offered by members to reduce risks associated with the onset or of further offending behaviour.

As a Licensing authority the Council is also committed to safeguarding children.

10.7 Partnership and Consultation

The Council's role as a Community Leader within the Local Strategic Partnership will enable a co-ordinated approach in relation to the planning of services for young people.

The Council is a member of the Rossendale Young People and Children's Issues Network, the network is an open forum to bring agencies and services together in order to promote co-ordination of provision of services, the sharing of information and a joint delivery of services. The Council is also a member of the Rossendale Youth Strategy Steering Group. The Group comprises all the major providers of youth programmes and activity in Rossendale. Its purpose is to develop and co-ordinate programmes of activity for young people including the Youth Offer and the Rossendale Youth Provision Strategy. The Group is currently working on a project to run until March 2007 which will include safe and legal access to motorbike training and safety, its purpose being to reduce anti social behaviour.

The Council is a founder member of the new Rossendale Supporting Parents and Families Forum which aims to support the Lancashire Supporting Parents and Families Strategy locally.

The Council's grant allocation process has built the capacity of others to support the Children and Young Peoples Agenda.

Group	Output	Amount	Outcome
Community Action in Rossendale	Improved kitchen and internet access at Mary Hindle Resources Centre	£500	Enjoy and Achieve
Groundwork Rossendale	Fund activities not funded from specific grants but vital to securing funds related to development of Play Strategy	£17,407	Be Healthy and Stay Safe

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Group NW	2 young people to attend residential to develop peer support networks	£500	Make a positive contribution
Positive Start	Three projects for young people. Health matters, Community Cohesion, and Education and Employment	£2000	Achieve Economic Well-Being
Rawtenstall Asian Womens Group	Toys for crèche, materials purchased, CRB checks	£2000	Stay Safe & Enjoy and Achieve
Tor View School	Contribution to cost of Ski Trip to Switzerland for SEN pupils	£800	Enjoy and Achieve
Stacksteads Riverside Park	Community Activities – After School Club for 10-12 year olds	£1000	Stay Safe & Make a positive contribution

10.8 Engaging Young People

The Council is committed to involving children and young people in service planning. Involvement will be in an appropriate way and at an early enough stage to give enough time for discussion. The Council will use a variety of medium to consult and engage with young people, including the Rossendale Youth Council.

A sixth formers question time was recently held at one of the local High Schools involving Council representatives this proved to be very successful and a further event is planned.

The Council is actively involved in Local Democracy Week – encouraging younger people to raise issues.

Rossendale Council and the East Lancashire e-Partnership will be encouraging young people in the borough to have their say on some key issues affecting them as part of the Local Democracy Week 2005 (17 – 23 October).

The Council has established a Mini Mayor and a design a Christmas card competition to engage young people in the democratic process and ensure they have a sense of Civic pride. The mayor will be visiting local schools to explain his role within the Council.

Representative for the Council and the East Lancashire e-Partnership will be working the Haslingden High School sixth form students to make a three minute video diaries telling the politicians and decision makers when they want for the future. Several of the clips will then be uploaded to the Feedback website (www.feedbackonline.org.uk).

The importance of involving young people in local politics has been underlined by a research programme with 600 people aged 16 – 24 which identified that:

- 40% of young people don't think that their Council is interested in their views.
- Less than 40% of 16 – 18 year olds say they haven't had any contact with their Council.
- 42% of young people would like to take part in short polls through texting on their mobile phones.
- Young people would only want to join a citizen's panel if they felt that something useful would be achieved.

The East Lancashire e-Partnership are encouraging young people from across East Lancashire to get more involved in local democracy and giving them a chance to shout out their opinions and ideas about local government.

The Partnership are encouraging the use of innovative consultation methods such as online surveys, sms texting, 'millionaire' handsets, video diaries and pda's to help increase the use of electronic consultation and engagement mechanisms.

Young people between the ages of 16 and 25 are entitled to be on the citizen's panel and we will positively encourage young people to participate in this as a means of consultation as well as working with the community network to ensure a wide representation of young people across the Borough in community activities.

In connection with the Adrenalin Gateway a youth panel has been established to look at how this potential project can benefit young people in all sorts of ways including training, employment and business opportunities.

The Legal Services team recently arranged for a youth work placement in partnership with our Twin Town of Bocholt.

9 Regeneration

The economic regeneration of Rawtenstall has been supported through a number of projects including the Town Centre Master Plan, and Ilex Mill. These activities have combined with a number of further investments and activities in the area through the creation of new supermarkets and proposed further developments at Bocholt Way and New Hall Hey. The regeneration and development of the area will lead to an increase in the number of employment and training opportunities for people, which has indirect benefit in relation to increasing the life chances of young people.

A key aspect of Housing Market Renewal and the town centre redevelopment proposals will be ensuring that local people are given the opportunity to access the opportunities that these generate and the Council is committed to working with the Job Centre and developers and local training providers to ensure that benefits are maximised. Improvements to the business infrastructure will provide greater opportunities for increasing entrepreneurship and self employment for young people as well as the wider population.

Through the Children's Society, the Council provides a range of training placements for "Looked After Children". Within the Street Scene and Liveability Service, young offenders are provided with work experience and the Council also works with local schools to provide training placements and also summer experience placements for graduates.

In the provision of its Benefits Service the Council ensure that children are protected from the effects of poverty and that family income is maximised. Housing Benefit team members have been active members of the Youth Housing and Support Group, involving joined-up working to ensure that young tenants don't lose out on their benefits entitlement on transition at 18.

11. The monitoring and reporting of this strategy

This strategy will be monitored through the Council's Performance Management Framework. Each Head of Service is responsible for producing a Business Plan which shows how the service will overall contribute to the values of the Council in relation to Children and Young People.

The Business Plans include:

A range of actions to be undertaken

Anticipated Outputs resulting from the actions

Who is responsible for the action

Timescales

Risks

Each Head of Service will report to the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive on a quarterly basis.

Monitoring will also take place via the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a six monthly basis