

**A Strategic Vision for Children & Young People in Gloucestershire**  
**(Outline for Consultative Purpose)**

**1.0 Context**

Gloucestershire occupies a pivotal location in the UK, with Birmingham to the north, Bristol to the south, Oxford to the east and Cardiff to the west. It is a large and diverse county combining urban localities, with areas of outstanding natural beauty and sites of Special Scientific Interest. It has a population of 628,139 which, since 2007, has grown at a slower rate than England and Wales over the same period. It is also an ageing population, with a declining number of residents available to work. The population is also becoming more diverse with the proportion of BME residents increasing from 4.6% to 7.6% between 2001 and 2011.

The population of children and young people aged 0-19 years is 141,355. Young people tend to leave the county in their teens and early twenties, with a net loss of around 400 19-25 year olds per year. Although Gloucestershire generally benefits from a higher standard of living, around 3.4% of the county population live in areas that are in the 10% most deprived nationally. It has two tier system of governance with a county council and six district councils.

**2.0 Case For Change**

Whilst there is no longer a statutory duty for upper tier local authorities to have an overarching plan or vision for children and young people, high performing areas tend to have a shared vision for children and young people in their locality. There is also a continuing duty placed on the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services by Section 10 of The Children Act (2004) to promote co-operation between local agencies in order to improve the wellbeing of children in the authority's area. This is distinct from the child safeguarding duties under Section 11.

The previous plan for children and young people – 'Gloucestershire – works well for families: Gloucestershire Early Help and Children and Young People's Partnership Plan 2015-18' concluded in 2018. The multi-agency partnership that oversaw its delivery has also ceased to meet since that time.

The Public Health England (PHE): Child Health Profile (March: 2019) provides a snapshot of child health and wellbeing on a local authority area basis. This evidences that 'overall, comparing local indicators with England averages, the health and wellbeing of children in Gloucestershire is better than England'. While this can be viewed as broadly positive, there are some underlying issues:

- the gap between vulnerable/disadvantaged children and universal peers in Gloucestershire is too large and widening in some key aspects.

- Performance is less positive when compared with statistical comparators – example: take up of 2 year old education offer, which is crucial to children’s subsequent progress, is marginally above England average but poor when compared to statistical comparators.
- there are a greater number of children in high intensity/cost parts of the system – the number of families subject to child protection enquires in Gloucestershire is greater than comparable localities with the implication that agencies are ‘over intrusive’ in family life.
- the levels of exclusion and electively home educated (EHE) children suggest the educational offer is not meeting the needs of all children - Gloucestershire’s EHE rate in March 2018 was 76.2 per 10, 000 4-17 yrs. old, compared to 56.8 for England at that time, and increased to 89.5 in September 2019.

Taken together, these point to a system that is currently under performing in terms of outcomes for children with the capacity to deliver better outcomes through a greater degree of co-ordination of existing activity, along with the potential for greater integration and innovation moving forward.

### **3.0 Proposed Structure for Children’s Plan or Vision**

The dialogue and consultation that has been underway over recent months has led to a broad consensus on how a plan/vision should be constructed. Gloucestershire’s plan/vision for children and young people will:

- place the child at the heart of its ambition and cross sector activity.
- be universal, covering all children and young people aged 0-18 years, and up to 25 years for care leavers and young people with additional needs.
- take a staged approach following the journey of the child from birth (including pre birth activity) to adulthood, based on the following phases:
  - 0-5 years (Inc. pre-birth).
  - 5-11 years
  - 11-16 years
  - 16-19 years
  - 19-25 years (for care leavers and young people with additional needs)
- seek to mobilise multi-agency and cross sector collaboration, within and between these phases in order to maximise impact.
- be aspirational moving from current performance, at or around England averages, to becoming top quartile for key indicators when compared with statistical neighbours.

Within that context, closing the gap for vulnerable/disadvantaged children and young people will be a further feature.

#### 4.0 Progressing the Plan

The consultative events in October last year highlighted the proliferation of statutory and non-statutory plans and strategies for children and young people in Gloucestershire and the wide range of groups involved in oversight and delivery. The development of a single overarching plan provides the opportunity to look again at those arrangements, acknowledging the overlapping needs of the cohorts of children they are concerned with.

It is proposed that progress against the plan will be driven by a multi-agency partnership group, drawing upon senior leads from the voluntary, statutory and commercial sectors accountable in turn to the Health and Wellbeing Board and Leadership Gloucestershire. This will complement the new arrangements for child safeguarding, led by Gloucestershire's Safeguarding Children Executive, recently put in place to meet the requirements of Working Together 2018. Over the longer term it may be possible to merge the arrangements for child safeguarding and those promoting the wellbeing of children and young people set out in this report.

A comprehensive multi agency and cross sector action plan, refreshed on an annual basis, will provide the focal point for delivery activity and a co-ordinating mechanism for the wider range of activity to secure the well being of children and young people in Gloucestershire. An outline planning format is attached below for consultative purposes.

A key aim of the plan will be to ensure that the wider range of plans and strategies contribute towards a coherent 'whole system' approach that maximises the use of resources and ensures children and young people can access support when and where they need it.

The development and delivery of the plan will be informed by an ongoing authentic dialogue with children and young people. How this is delivered will be a matter for further consultation and dialogue.

#### 4.0 Strategic Vision and Priorities

Vision 2050 sets out an ambitious vision for a future Gloucestershire that is:

- **An inclusive county:** we will ensure that the economic and social benefits of growth are felt by all.
- **A magnet county:** we will see a growing working age population, by keeping and attracting more 18-40 year olds with high level qualifications, who want to live and work in the county.
- **An innovative county:** we will see more business starting up, growing and investing in research and innovation.
- **A skilled county:** we will see more people with high-level skills and jobs in skilled occupations.

- **A prosperous county:** we will see rising productivity and household income, offering higher living standards.
- **A healthy, happy and safe county:** we will ensure people have a good work/life balance and see improved health and wellbeing.
- **A connected county:** we will see improved transport and internet connections so that people and businesses can connect with each other more easily.
- **A sustainable county:** we will see more efficient use of resources and more use of sustainable energy.

## 5.0 Priorities for children and young people

Realising the ambition set out in Vision 2050 and working to create a ‘child friendly county’ will require Gloucestershire partners to prioritise and invest in its children and young people.

In a ‘child friendly county’, all partners view children and young people as an asset to be valued and nurtured for the future, with a shared commitment towards ensuring:

- **All children and young people are safe from harm.**

This will involve concerted action to address the concerns about personal safety expressed by young people through the child friendly county and other recent consultation exercises. This encompasses safety, both actual and perceived, in the physical realm, including places to gather and socialise, and within the digital space. Some children also raised concerns about safety in the home.

- **All children and young people are supported to choose healthy lifestyles.**

This will involve purposeful work to ensure we have an accessible health offer that addresses the physical, mental and emotional well being needs of children and young people across the county.

- **All children and young people have access to safe affordable transport.**

This will involve working to develop the capability for children and young people to make safe journeys and travel around the county on an accessible, sustainable and affordable basis.

- **All children and young people do well at all stages of learning and are equipped with the skills for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.**

This will involve purposeful cross sector work to ensure we have a local education offer that is inclusive and restorative in its approach by actively addressing the barriers preventing all young people from engaging in and achieving through learning. This encompasses the skills and knowledge necessary for young people to engage in the dynamic and changing labour market of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

- **All children and young people are happy and able to have fun growing up**

Working to ensure there are a good range of accessible and affordable recreational and cultural activities for children and young people.

- **All children and young people enjoy the economic and social benefits of growth**

Collective work to promote the interests of, and provide opportunities for, the most vulnerable children and young people in the county.

- **All children and young people are able to contribute to making Gloucestershire a sustainable county**

Working to ensure that children and young people in the county are able to make a meaningful contribution towards tackling the climate crisis.

Priority	Name		Priority Lead				
	All children and young people are safe from harm						
Comments about overall status:	•		Overall status			Tick	
			■	On target	Outputs remain achievable		
			◆	At risk	Flagged for Sponsor attention		
Reporting period:		To		▲	Compromised	Significant performance issues with the project. Urgent and decisive action is needed	
				●	Completed		
Objectives	•		Deliverables	•			
Progress made this period:	•		Actions next period:				

Key Milestones														
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May

**Key Metrics**

	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>Jul</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sep</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>