

**13 March 2024**

<b>Subject:</b>	Child Friendly Sandwell
<b>Presenting Officer and Organisation</b>	Sally Giles Assistant Director Childrens Commissioning Partnerships and Improvement James McLaughlin Assistant Chief Executive Samantha Harman/Sarah Sprung Sandwell MBC <a href="mailto:Samantha.harman@sandwell.gov.uk">Samantha.harman@sandwell.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Sarah.sprung@sandwell.gov.uk">Sarah.sprung@sandwell.gov.uk</a>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	Decision and Information

## 1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board confirms its status as the reporting Board for both the submission and each of the phases within the application process of the UNICEF UK Child Friendly Cities and Communities programme.

## 2. Links to Workstreams Set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy

<b>Healthy Communities</b>	Placing children and young people at the heart of the shared public realm is a moral, economic and public health imperative. Only by engaging consistently with children and young people, considering the evidence and highlighting what works, can we begin to influence policy to give these issues the priority they deserve. By doing this we can then take the steps necessary to create genuinely child friendly communities, towns and neighbourhoods, which will deliver benefits felt by the community as a whole.
<b>Primary Care</b>	There are no specific links to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for these workstreams
<b>Integrated Town Teams</b>	
<b>Intermediate Care</b>	
<b>Care Navigation</b>	

### **3. Context and Key Issues**

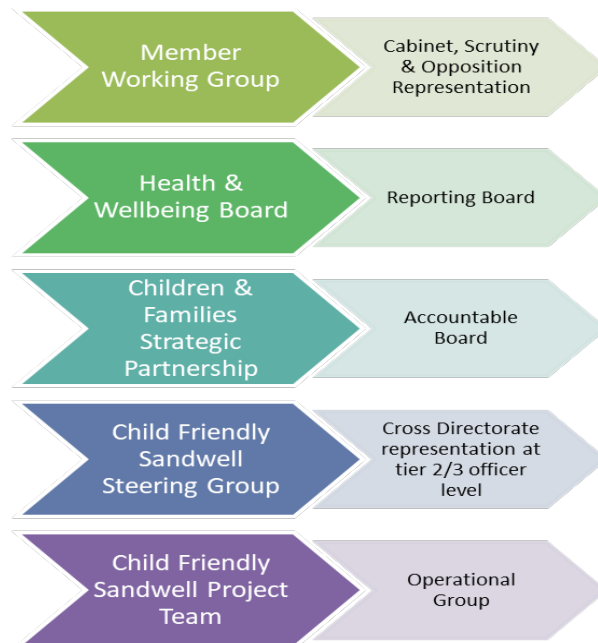
- 3.1 A child friendly city is a city, town, community or any system of local governance committed to improving the lives of children within their jurisdiction by realising their rights as articulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history and has helped transform children's lives.
- 3.2 The challenges for children and young people post-pandemic are greater now than ever. Adopting a child friendly framework puts children centre stage and encourages a conversation about what the future for children and young people living in Sandwell should look like. This requires a commitment to ensuring that every child has the best possible childhood, regardless of where they live, how much their parents earn, their cultural heritage or their complex needs.
- 3.3 Formal expressions of interest to join the Child Friendly Cities and Communities programme are by invitation only from UNICEF UK and a Cabinet decision was approved on 17 January 2024 to:

Approve the preparation and submission of an expression of interest and application for Sandwell to become a UNICEF Child Friendly Borough.

Establish a Member Working Group comprising of members of the Cabinet, scrutiny and the opposition, to oversee both the submission and each of the phases within the application process of the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities programme.

That lead officers from across all council services be appointed to sit on the Child Friendly Sandwell Officer Steering Group, to manage both the expression of interest and the application processes for a Child Friendly Sandwell.

- 3.4 Before joining the programme we must evidence that across the council and wider partnership arrangements, we have confidence in our ability to implement an ambitious programme of change which includes evidencing a commitment at all levels, cross council buy in and a robust, transparent and accountable local governance structure we therefore request that the Board confirms its status as the reporting Board for both the submission and each of the phases within the application process of the UNICEF UK Child Friendly Cities and Communities programme.



## 4. Engagement

- 4.1 Following the research phase of the work the two options were taken to Leadership Team on 26 September and then to a Leaders meeting on 11 October 2023.
- 4.2 Officers attended a meeting of the SHAPE Youth Forum on 30 November to determine whether progressing towards a child friendly borough was something that young people living in Sandwell would support.
- 4.3 A Vision 2030 event was held with partners from the Sandwell Business Ambassadors and the five statutory partnership boards (Safeguarding Children's Partnership, Safeguarding Adults Board, Safer Sandwell Police and Crime Board, Health and Wellbeing Board and the Corporate Parenting Board) on 30 November 2023.
- 4.4 The Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board also considered the proposals at its meeting on 8 January 2024. The Board supported the proposals and will be monitoring progress and supporting the Council on the journey to becoming a child friendly borough.

## 5. Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	<p>The cost to the Council for each year of undertaking the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities programme would be £35,000. Funding has been identified for 2024/25 from redirect of Covid recovery fund in future years it will be sought from corporate sponsorship and any additional built into the base budget.</p> <p>The assignment of a lead officer from each directorate to represent on the Child Friendly Sandwell Officer Working Group, to manage both the Expression of Interest, application processes and any subsequent related CFS work programmes moving forward.</p>
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	<p>There are no direct legal implications arising from these recommendations. Robust, transparent governance arrangements will be built into the process.</p>
<b>Risk:</b>	<p>A full risk assessment will be undertaken by the Officer working group as part of the application phase of the activity and be monitored by the Officer's working group and reviewed regularly through the Member Working Group.</p>
<b>Equality:</b>	<p>Progressing towards child friendly status would have a positive impact on equality across the borough. As part of the expression of interest phase of activity a full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken to ensure that the process maximises opportunity to address inequality across the borough.</p>
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	<p>Children's capability to generate well-being is shaped through relationships they have with other people and the spatial conditions of their everyday life adopting a child friendly way of working can improve health and wellbeing not only for our younger population but also wider communities and residents.</p>
<b>Social Value:</b>	<p>Sandwell Business Ambassadors were engaged in the consultation as part of the Vision 2030 event. Embarking upon a child friendly journey aligns well with their priority around raising aspirations. CFS will provide opportunities for children and young people to influence procurement processes, policies and cultural change across the Council and wider partners.</p>
<b>Climate Change:</b>	<p>Adopting a child friendly approach requires the council to analyse the impact decisions have on the lived experiences of children and young people in Sandwell which includes the commitment to our climate change targets.</p>

<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	Embarking upon a journey to being a child friendly borough will require extensive consultation and engagement with children and young people across the borough. This will include our care experienced children and young people.
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## **6. Appendices**

Appendix One – Child Friendly Sandwell options Appraisal

Appendix Two - UNICEF UK Participation Criteria

Appendix Three - UNICEF UK Prospectus

## **7. Background Papers**

[The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child  
Child Friendly Cities and Communities](#)