



11 September 2024

Subject:	Child Friendly Sandwell
Presenting Officer and Organisation	Sally Giles – Director of Children and Education Services James McLaughlin – Assistant Chief Executive Samantha Harman/ Sarah Sprung – Sandwell MBC Samantha_harman@sandwell.gov.uk Sarah_sprung@sandwell.gov.uk
Purpose of Report	Information

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board considers, comments and has regard to the Child Friendly Sandwell update.

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

Healthy Communities	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.
Primary Care	There are no specific links to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for these workstreams
Integrated Town Teams	
Intermediate Care	
Care Navigation	

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 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.
- 3.3 The Expression of Interest application was successful to join the UNICEF UK Child Friendly Cities and Communities programme, and subsequent plans have been underway to officially launch and begin the Discovery Phase of the programme.

4. Engagement

- 4.1 Following consultation and input from partners and officers, the Expression of Interest was signed off by the Reporting Board and submitted to UNICEF UK on 3 April 2024.
- 4.2 Sandwell Council was invited by UNICEF UK on 23 May 2024 to join the UNICEF UK Child Friendly Cities and Communities programme.
- 4.3 Sandwell Council is required to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with UNICEF UK.

This formal agreement outlines the commitment of the local authority to uphold the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It serves as a foundation for the collaborative work between the council and UNICEF UK.

The MOU has been reviewed by our Chief Officer for Law and Governance with minor amends and awaiting signatures.

- 4.4 An External launch date for 19 September 2024 is proposed which will include a webpage; press release and press opportunity with children and young people at the council house.

- 4.5 An official launch event is proposed for the Child Friendly Sandwell programme on 18 October 2024, with a stakeholder and partnership launch event to be held at West Smethwick Park Pavilion.
- 4.5 The Discovery Stage commences in September and will include a 6-month programme of activity. Appendix 1 details further information.
- 4.6 The Discovery Stage will identify the three further thematic badges Sandwell will work towards alongside the foundation badges we are required to work on. Detail on the Badges are in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

5. Implications

Resources:	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 and VFM and exemption reports have been approved. The assignment of a lead officer from each directorate to represent on the Child Friendly Sandwell Officer Working Group is under review, to manage phases and any subsequent related CFS work programmes moving forward.
Legal and Governance:	There are no direct legal implications arising from these recommendations. Robust, transparent governance arrangements will be built into the process.
Risk:	A full risk assessment will be undertaken by the Officer working group as part of the discovery phase of the activity and be monitored by the Officer's working group and reviewed regularly through the Member Working Group.
Equality:	Progressing towards child friendly status would have a positive impact on equality across the borough. As part of the discovery phase of activity a full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken to ensure that the process maximises opportunity to address inequality across the borough.
Health and Wellbeing:	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.
Social Value:	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.
Climate Change:	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.
Corporate Parenting:	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.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 – UNICEF Child Friendly Cities and Communities programme Discovery Stage Activities Road Map.

Appendix 2 - UNICEF Child Friendly Cities and Communities programme Discovery Stage Badges.

7. Background Papers

None.