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| <b>Scrutiny Board :</b>                                   | Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board                         |
| <b>Report Title</b>                                       | Children's and Family Strategy - Outcomes Framework                      |
| <b>Date of Meeting</b>                                    | Monday, 10 November 2025                                                 |
| <b>Report Author</b>                                      | Samantha Harman - Children's Commissioning, Partnerships and Improvement |
| <b>Lead Officer</b>                                       | Executive Director Children and Education                                |
| <b>Wards Affected</b>                                     | (All Wards);                                                             |
| <b>Identify exempt information and exemption category</b> | Choose an item.                                                          |
| <b>Appendices (if any)</b>                                | 1. Add title here<br>2.                                                  |

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The following report seeks to provide further details on The Children and Families Strategic Partnership's (CaFSP) recently developed Strategy and Outcomes Framework. It reviews the strategy's development, its purpose, the rationale for the four priority areas and progress toward the identified objectives.

## **2. Recommendation**

That the Board considers and comments upon the information presented and determines whether it wishes to make any recommendations to the Executive.

## **3. Background and Context**

- 3.1 The purpose of the Children and Families Strategic Partnership is to bring together senior representatives from statutory and voluntary agencies responsible for working with children, young people and families in Sandwell and to ensure that they are working together strategically to improve the lives and outcomes of children and young people in Sandwell. Its terms of reference include the responsibility for producing a Children and Families Strategy.
- 3.2 A local Children and Families Strategy provides a strategic framework through which local agencies and partners work collaboratively to improve outcomes for all children and young people. It establishes a shared vision, clear priorities, and measurable objectives that guide the collective efforts of education, health, social care, police and voluntary sector partners. These complement

Sandwell's corporate ambitions as set out in the Council Plan 2024 – 2027. The outcomes framework that sits alongside it enables senior leaders in the children's system to monitor whether outcomes for children are improving in Sandwell. As delivery progresses and the outcomes framework becomes more embedded, it will enable partners to identify commissioning gaps and areas for further improvement

- 3.3 The development and implementation of a Children and Families Strategy, allows senior leaders in the children's system to ensure that key priorities are being delivered and provides a robust governance framework which consolidates ongoing workstreams within the children's system. This approach establishes clear connections and reporting mechanisms with other key boards and partnerships, in particular the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB). By receiving regular reports from the CaFSP on the Children and Families Strategy, the HWBB will be sighted on key developments for children and whether outcomes are improving.
- 3.4 In April 2024, the CaFSP undertook a significant review which considered whether the membership, governance and strategic direction were effective and relevant in the context of the changing national policy direction.
- 3.5 The review was carried out through several workshops where partners examined data about children's outcomes in the areas of Education, Children's Social Care, Community Safety, SEND, and Emotional Wellbeing. They considered the strategic drivers nationally and locally such as the national reforms of social care and early help and the impact of increased demand in the SEND system. In this way, partners identified the key areas they felt should be the focus of an overarching strategy. In some cases, programmes of work already existed, in others work was being undertaken (and driven by national requirements), but a strategic approach was less evident. The four key areas the partnership identified were: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities; Family Help; Children's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing and Early Years.
  - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities incorporated the ongoing work within the SEND Transformation Programme in response to the Ofsted/Care Quality Commission joint inspection in July 2023 and the recommendations from this inspection and led by the SEND and AP Improvement Board.
  - Family Help incorporated the work in response to national reform in children's social care and early help *Stable Homes Built on Love* and the *Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill* emphasising a whole system approach to helping families and led by the Family Help Board.
  - Early Years incorporated the work in response to national policy change, implementing the National Wraparound Programme and Extended Entitlements Offer improving workforce stability, raising standards and supporting the most vulnerable children and led by the Early Years Partnership Board.
  - Children's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing was developed in response to recommendations from Sandwell's Thrive Board and the national *Future in Mind* policy, which urged transformation of services for

young people. The Thrive Board directed local plans with partners, now the revised Sandwell Emotional Wellbeing Group will lead on delivery.

- 3.6 The Strategy ensures all programmes are working towards common goals which can better support local transformation and national reform within a robust framework for decision making, accountability and resource allocation. It streamlines efforts, improves accountability and supports a whole system approach to delivering improved outcomes.
- 3.7 The Outcomes Framework underpins the delivery of the strategy, setting out clear and measurable goals for all partners. This framework enables progress tracking and maintains a focus on achieving meaningful improvements in the lives of children and young people. By aligning priorities and coordinating activities, the framework helps prevent duplication of effort, supports the identification of successes, and highlights areas that require further attention.

#### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 Consultation has been carried out with stakeholders and partners including Sandwell Children's Trust, Sandwell Council for Voluntary Organisations, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, Black Country Integrated Care Board, and West Midlands Police who all have a shared commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people through a whole system approach.
- 4.2 Officers from across the Council and the wider partnership have been engaged in the shaping of the strategy, assuring alignment to the council plan and related plans and strategies.
- 4.3 Development of the strategy and priority areas coincided with Sandwell's UNICEF UK Child Friendly Communities Discovery Phase. A key element of the Discovery Phase was the engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, primarily our children and young people, parents, community groups, local authority officers and partner organisations. The Discovery Phase involved a thorough assessment of how well children's rights are currently being respected and promoted within Sandwell. This included evaluating areas such as education, health, safety, and participation and identifying gaps and areas for improvement. The areas identified through this process as key areas of focus are Safe and Secure, Family and Belonging, and Equal and Included, with Education and Learning and Healthy following in fourth and fifth place. The Strategy addresses these areas of focus and responds to the priorities identified by children and young people.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 Delivery on the strategy is through a shared partnership approach.
- 5.2 As the plan includes delivery on statutory responsibilities as a core function of the council, facilitation, coordination and monitoring of the strategy will be

conducted by the council using a mixture of existing council core budget and external funding resources.

**6. Legal and Governance Implications**

- 6.1 Governance of the strategy will be delivered by the Children and Families Strategic Partnership jointly chaired by the Executive Director of Children and Education Services and the Chief Superintendent and Local Policing Commander for Sandwell with representation from key stakeholders and partners.

**7. Risks**

- 7.1 A risk register is in place to monitor the risks associated to delivery. Any risks identified will be addressed with a series of actions to mitigate the risk. Risk registers are also included in the individual workstream programmes and monitored at a local board level.

**8. Equality and Diversity Implications (including the public sector equality duty)**

- 8.1 The strategy will ensure that services are accessible and inclusive for children and families with disabilities, including physical, emotional, and social needs. In addition, each of the four priority groups will consider the potential impact on those children and families who have protected characteristics.

**9. Other Relevant Implications**

None

**10. Background Documents**

None

**11. How does this deliver the Outcomes in the Council Plan?**

This report will support the delivery of the following Strategic Themes: -

- Growing up in Sandwell
- Living in Sandwell
- Healthy in Sandwell
- One Council One Team Approach.

- 11.1 The strategy supports a partnership approach seeking to improve outcomes for all children and young people, with a commitment to addressing barriers to access and striving to create an accessible community offer for all families, supporting our Child Friendly Community aspirations.