

To: Council  
 Date: 5 October 2020  
 Report of: Assistant Chief Executive  
 Title of Report: To provide Council with the annual partnership update report on the Oxfordshire Children’s Trust

### Summary and recommendations

Purpose of report:	To provide members with an update on the work of the Oxfordshire Children’s Trust and how the Council has supported it through its own activities.
Key decision:	No
Executive Board Member:	Cllr Marie Tidball – Supporting Local Communities
Corporate Priority:	Strong Active Communities
Policy Framework:	Council Strategy 2020-2024
Recommendation: That Council resolves to:	
1. Note the report	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Children and Young people’s Recovery Implementation Plan 2020/2021
Appendix 2	Children’s Trust Board Terms of Reference.

### Introduction

1. The Oxfordshire Children’s Trust Board (“the Trust”) brings together the public, private and voluntary sectors to improve outcomes for all children and young people who live in the county.
2. The objectives of the Trust are to ensure that agencies work together effectively and strategically to deliver children’s services.
3. The Trust reports to the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board and influences and supports its work to improve outcomes for children and young people and their families.
4. The Trust meets four times a year. The Trust has continued to meet virtually as planned despite the COVID-19 restrictions.

5. The voice of children, young people and their families contribute to these arrangements through VOXY (Voice of Oxfordshire Youth), and their representatives attending the Trust meetings.
6. This year has included the integration of a parent representative onto the Trust Board

### **Background – membership and purpose of the Oxfordshire Children’s Trust Board**

7. The purpose of the Trust is to:
  - Oversee key areas of multi-agency strategic planning for children and young people
  - Improve outcomes for children in relation to being successful, keeping safe, staying healthy, and being supported
  - Drive the integration agenda where there is evidence that integrated working between partnership agencies and members of the Trust Board will improve outcomes for children and young people
  - Champion the involvement of children, young people, parents and carers in partnership working with senior managers and politicians in the planning and delivery of services
  - Ensure the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board and other partnerships are sighted on the key challenges facing children and young people in Oxfordshire.
8. The Chair of the Trust is Councillor Steve Harrod (Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet member for Children and Family Services) the Deputy Chair, Dr Matthew Gaw (Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group) stepped down from the Trust this year and has been replaced by Jodie-Lloyd Jones (Oxfordshire Youth)
9. There has only ever been one Trust position for an additional councillor. This position represents Oxford City Council and the other Oxfordshire district councils on the Trust. Cllr Marie Tidball has held this position since July 2017. Oxford City Council and the other Oxfordshire district councils’ involvement and engagement in the Trust is supported by the Oxford City Council’s Policy and Partnership Team Manager.
10. The Terms of Reference for the Trust was reviewed this year. Cllr Marie Tidball requested two changes:
  - A strengthening of the equalities paragraph and commitment to this from all of the Trust partners
  - An additional Trust member seat for another district councillor, with continued cross district support, provided by the Policy and Partnership Team Manager of Oxford City Council. This was to ensure that Oxford City Council could keep their membership of the board and this not rotate to other district councillors.
11. Both requests were agreed by the Trust
12. The new terms of reference incorporating Cllr Tidball’s updates can be found in Appendix 1.

## **Areas of work that have been reported on and raised at meetings of the Trust for 2020/21**

13. In 2019-2020 the Trust priorities were:
  - Children missing out on education
  - Social and emotional wellbeing and mental health
  - Protecting children from domestic abuse.
14. The voice of children, young people and their families contributed through VOXY (Voice of Oxfordshire Youth) and their representatives attending Board meetings.
15. The priorities were agreed and supported by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, quality and performance data gathering across partnerships and youth engagement events across the county.
16. A series of workshops were held across the Trust partnership to review the performance, outcomes and impacts against each priority.
17. The main area of concern for the Oxford City Council was the continued poor performance against the “children missing out on education” priority through low attendance, and the significant attainment gap between disadvantaged children in the Oxford and all other children. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated closure of schools to all but children of key workers and vulnerable children (in particular looked after children), is expected to have widened this attainment gap.
18. To challenge and support the Trust Partnership, Oxford City Council has done the following:
19. In December 2019, the Oxford City Council facilitated a unique twinning arrangement between Oxford University’s New College, and Wood Farm Primary School, which has a significant number of disadvantaged pupils in its intake. Under the arrangement, the college will work as a whole to help inspire pupils and provide access to direct support from students and college staff. Initial meetings have already been held, and while like so many other projects this was put on hold during the COVID-19 lockdown, both the college and the school are committed to taking this forward. It is hoped that if this pilot is successful, then further twinning arrangements between other Oxford University colleges and Oxford schools could be established.
20. In March 2020 a detailed 10 page submission was provided by the City Council’s Policy and Partnership team, with detailed input by Councillor Tidball to Oxfordshire County Council in response to a request for comment on its draft document Improving Educational Outcomes Strategic Review. The submission highlighted the need for a more focused approach to addressing:
  - Deprivation attainment/progress/exclusions and attendance gap
  - SEND attainment/progress/exclusions and attendance gap
  - BAME attainment/progress gap
21. In response, Oxfordshire County Council officers agreed to review and update the draft document, work which has been interrupted by the pandemic.
22. The Oxford Strategic Partnership (“the OSP”), chaired by Baroness Jan Royall, is hosting an ‘education summit’ meeting in Oxford next month to seek urgent and decisive action and leadership from city, county, regional and national

stakeholders, to find solutions to the challenges facing those schools that are struggling and the wider educational challenges pupils face across the city of Oxford. The focus for discussion will be addressing the attainment gap and boosting access to skills for the 50% of children that don't go on to further education.

23. The Oxford City Council-sponsored OSP is taking on this convening role in recognition that in the increasingly centralised education system, accountability is fragmented and remote. Oxfordshire County Council has stepped in to offer more support to struggling schools in Oxford, but it has neither the authority nor the means to make significant interventions in academy trust schools, which most state schools in Oxford are. The summit, originally to be held in April, is now taking place on 13 October, with invited representatives from Oxford's schools, the Regional Schools Commissioner, universities, OxLEP, Oxfordshire County Council education team and others.
24. The Oxford City Council's Children and Young People's Strategy ("the CYPS") remains highly complementary to the work of the Trust. The CYPS shows how the Council supports the delivery of its priorities. The CYPS also makes connections between work streams to ensure the most effective use of resource for the Council.

### **Council Achievements 2020**

25. Oxford City Council has invited partners into meetings to present on national best practice in order to improve its offer to children and young people. This included charity Lankelly Chase which fund projects for those with extreme vulnerabilities. The Council is now looking to strengthen relationships with other localities that are supported by the charity.
26. The Council's Communities Team has looked at how the Council assess needs and how the data can be used to improve services on a locality basis to support the needs of that specific area. A survey has been produced for young people that will identify their biggest issues arising from the Covid-19 pandemic and what activities the Council should offer to support them.
27. There has been a discussion about communication and how the Council can improve this both internally and to those outside (stakeholders) The Council is working on a data sharing agreement to ensure that no young person is left behind.
28. It should also be noted that the Oxford City Council worked with the Oxfordshire County Council's education team to ensure that Oxford City Council officers had access to key worker places in local schools, where possible. A number of Oxford City Council staff utilised this opportunity which enabled them to continue supporting vital services during the COVID-19 lockdown, such as the distribution of supplies from the locality hubs.

### **The Council's Youth Ambition Team**

29. The aim of the Council's Youth Ambition Team is to build meaningful relationships with disadvantaged young people aged 11-19 years old, (or up to 25 if they have physical or learning difficulties), who are from Oxford's regeneration areas. The team engages with young people through youth voice activities, school engagement, youth clubs, holiday activities, multi-sports sessions and detached work in a variety of settings. The team also works in partnership with other voluntary, community and statutory organisations.

30. The pandemic has impacted on funding, which is needed to support community resilience. The Oxford City Council has though still funded £30k to groups supporting young people affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in the summer holidays. The summer school involved English, maths alongside non formal education and physical activity. The young people were identified from local primary schools with the focus on reducing the attainment gap. The programme implemented social distancing in the same way as a normal school environment.
31. The Council continues to support and run activities on a localised level, linking more closely with schools and partners to ensure the right level of support is offered to young people and their families through the council youth work and programmes. The Children and Young People's Partnership, represented by schools, the Oxford city Council, Oxfordshire County Council, police, health, and the voluntary care sector, will discuss how to work better together and share messages through local channels.
32. The Council has contacted all young people who attended a youth session in the 6 months leading up to the pandemic and calling regularly to check in. Officers have zoom meetings set up to create a video project on how young people feel now to support an assessment of their individual needs.
33. The Council's Youth Ambition Manager has been a part of the newly formed Early Help Multi-Agency meetings set up by Oxfordshire County Council which allows schools to identify the most vulnerable young people and create a plan to support them.

#### **The Council's Barton Hub**

34. The Council's Barton Locality Hub supported the Barton Community Association, and Bayards Hill and Sandhills Primary Schools to develop a summer holiday scheme to work with young people who may have been left behind as a result of school closures because they are from a vulnerable group. This work has been supported financially through the £30,566 grant that the Council provided to hire a youth worker and deliver holiday programmes; and staff from the Youth Ambition team, the locality hub and community centre are working together with the Barton Community Association to ensure it meets young people's needs, and is also safe.
35. The Council's Barton Locality Hub has worked with Beautiful Barton, the Barton Community Association, the Council's Green Spaces Team and the Barton Allotment Association to organise local competitions called 'Love the Place You Live' which celebrate the local area and encourage young people to enjoy their homes, gardens and green spaces.

#### **The Council's Cultural Education Programme**

36. The Cultural Education Programme (a programme of activities using culture to support learning and educational outcomes) is undertaking a strategic review of governance and branding etc. but is continuing work to provide support to vulnerable young people e.g. funding was provided towards the Kindness Wave project supporting young people in care with creative care packages – see <https://oxfordshirekindnesswave.org.uk/category/project/>
37. An 'Oxford and the Pandemic' display is being created for the Oxford Museum: an online exhibition, where young people will feature. The Museum's Youth Panel is involved in the project and has made submissions (e.g. a homemade cricket

bat). There have also been submissions of several rainbow artworks done by young people and letters written by the Rose Hill Junior Youth Group

38. The Cultural Education Partnership has continued to run all activities it can for young people - e.g. acting, music, dance workshops etc. both online and, more recently at the Pegasus Theatre, in person as part of educational work with schools following social distancing guidelines, Cowley Road Carnival as an 'at home' event, Alice Day etc. online too – see the culture and events section on <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/activityhub> for more details
39. The CEP has achieved £92,445 of external funding.

### **The Council's Locality Hubs**

40. Work undertaken by the Council's locality hubs and the 'Single Point of Contact' customer system set up in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have seen a significant number of interventions that have helped families with children and young people.
41. Case studies have been shared with members within the regular Chief Executive briefings. In addition to the core work distributing food and other essential items and signposting towards health service support, Council interventions have assisting families with accommodation, referrals for children's mental health services support and the distribution of books and toys.

### **Locality Hub 'Working with Communities'**

42. Recently the Council has supported a BAME group (AFIUK) to access funding and issues relating to domestic abuse for their community. The group is also working on partnership work for intergenerational projects including young people drawing pictures for older residents and older residents sharing stories of growing up in the area or from their childhood to local young people.

### **Progress on the Community Impact Zone**

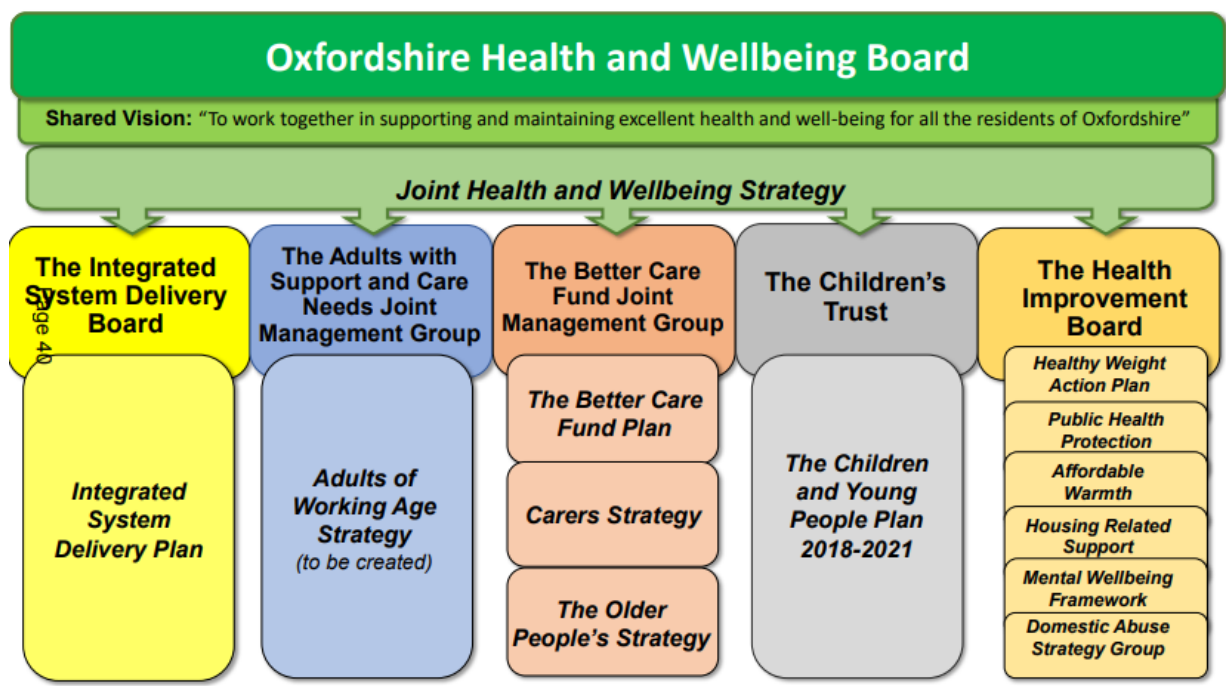
43. The Oxford Community Impact Zone (CIZ) is the result of a partnership between the Oxford City Council, Thames Valley Police and the Oxfordshire County Council who are pooling their data and resources to work together for the benefit of the community. By aggregating granular street-level data in innovative ways focus areas have been identified within the [CIZ](#) in Oxford with high and overlapping inequalities. The partnership is working alongside the Oxford Hub, a centre for social action and collaboration that can broker authentic relationships with the community. Together the partnership and the Oxford Hub are working with residents to shape activity plans based on their interests and needs, facilitated by dedicated funds and participatory grant making.
44. While the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the delivery of the CIZ support for children, young people and families in the zone has continued.
45. The CIZ team has continued to deliver a range of positive activities with community fitness sessions (including Aspire Gym bus, employing a local resident to lead on local outreach). Sports and games equipment has also been distributed to families to encourage physical activity. A bike library has been set up so children can access a loaned bike with lock, lights and helmet, and they can trade it up when they have grown out of it.

46. The CIZ held a successful summer school with 45 children at the Blackbird Leys summer school together with their parents.
47. The CIZ has been recognised as best practice and will be one of 20 projects in a new NESTA publication on New Operating Models for Local Government. This will be launched through an on line series of events.
48. The Council's Youth Ambition Team and the CIZ Team have been part of the Early Help Virtual Networks and developmental evaluation (can be found here).
49. So far the CIZ has obtained £144,000 of external funding alongside financial support from a range of national agencies.

**Other Areas of work**

50. Other areas of work that the Oxford City Council is delivering that relate to the Trust priorities are:

- Play and leisure – positive opportunities / preventative services
  - Arts development – Funding creative education partnerships in the Cherwell District Council area and Oxford
  - Parks / countryside sites
  - Provide Funding Pots (small)
  - Health / active lifestyle promotion
  - Grants – give out and co-ordinate bids
  - Affordable Housing – tenancy support
  - Community Centres / outreach / family support/ intergenerational work
  - Preventative services
- a. Oxford City Council has been represented on the key sub groups of the Trust throughout the year. This has included influencing, challenging and helping to shape services.
  - b. The following diagram shows the connections between the various strategic partnerships for young people and Oxford City Council's Strategy for Children and Young People.



## **The Youth Partnership Board**

51. The Oxford City Council facilitates a Youth Partnership Board. This board is chaired by a secondary head teacher and is made up from the City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, the health sector, business, Mind, Thames Valley Police, Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA) and young people. The Council's Cultural Education Partnership reports into the Youth Partnership Board,
52. The Oxford City Council is represented on the Learner Engagement Board, the Strategic Schools Partnership, the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group and the Early Help Starter Group. This enables the effective sharing of information to protect the safety of vulnerable children and young people.
53. The Council's Community Safety Team provides partnership oversight of anti-social behaviour, child exploitation and county drugs lines and modern day slavery and the Council has used the Safer Oxford Partnership to cascade and inform its own practice in relation to young people's pathways and access to services.
54. This work has enabled the Council to achieve best practice in its safeguarding practice in relation to children this year.

## **Focus for the year ahead**

55. The priorities for the Trust are decided annually by the Board and contained within an Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan for 2020/21 can be viewed in Appendix 2.
56. At the last Board meeting it was agreed that the priorities from 19/20 would continue throughout 20/21 as there was still work to be done in all 3 areas and they remained a priority for young people across Oxfordshire.
57. The Council's Policy and Partnership Team Manager has worked closely with the Head of Communities, the Youth Ambition Team and the current portfolio holder to ensure that key priorities of the Trust and Implementation Plan align with the Council's own corporate priorities for children and young people in Oxford. This has involved participating in task and finish groups over the last 12 month period to develop and shape the Implementation Plan. The progress of this work being delivered through the Oxford City Council's Children's and Young Person's Strategy will continue to report into the task and finish group steer, performance measures and Trust reporting framework.
58. The Oxford City Council will continue to develop and support the work of the Community Impact Zone pilot in East Oxford through the facilitation of the CIZ steering group and reporting on the progress, challenges and learning to the Trust in partnership with the Oxfordshire County Council.

## **Challenges for External Environment and Capacity**

59. There are still shrinking resources across the public sector alongside increased demand for services and complexity of social issues.
60. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and school closures is yet to be seen, however it is predicted that mental health services will see an increased demand this coming year as children return to school.

## **Challenges for Culture**



61. There are still some challenges with ensuring that all partners are engaged in the work delivery of the Children and Young People’s implementation Plan. Oxford City Council remains one of the voices to encouraging this to happen.

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