

1. North Haven can provide strong and effective children's services and has all the necessary ingredients to deliver good outcomes for children, young people and their families in line with the ECM change for children programme and the Government's Children's Plan.
2. North Haven will be large enough to plan at a strategic level with sufficient critical mass to support intelligent commissioning & efficient service delivery. It will also have the advantage of being more connected to its communities and therefore better placed to involve local people in shaping services and in moving quickly to respond to deliver their aspirations and priorities.
3. This is vital because the needs of communities within the North Haven area are different from the rest of Suffolk. As one example, the disaggregated number, and rates, of children subject to child protection plans and children looked after for the new unitary is proportionately higher than the rest of Suffolk and its statistical neighbours.

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| CP Plans | 40% of county total of 474 under 18s |
| LAC | 53% of county total of 711 under 18s |

4. The creation of North Haven unitary council will provide the necessary scope to innovate, developing service solutions which better meet this context. It will also benefit enormously from the timing of its creation. We will be able to fashion our own unique solutions to meet local needs through a combination of learning from national ECM best practice and building on the foundation work undertaken by the county.
5. Our whole partnership-working approach will be based on an ethos of promoting social inclusion, wellbeing, maximum personal achievement, and healthy and safe lifestyles. Children and young people will be placed at the centre of service design and delivery and, accordingly, we will agree with them, an involvement strategy that maximises their involvement in planning, commissioning, service design and quality assurance.
6. A key ingredient for successful delivery of our vision will be a sustained shift to preventive, and early intervention, services. This will flow from strong strategic leadership and multi-agency working which reflect integrated governance, strategies, services, systems and processes.
7. We will use business process re-engineering techniques (BPR) to review access, service and care pathways to deliver continuous improvement which will:
 1. Identify and eradicate service overlaps and duplications;
 2. Improve access and care pathways;
 3. Strip out unnecessary transaction processes and costs.
8. The result will be higher levels of productivity, more customer-focused working, and savings which will achieve the financial targets for the new unitary, while ensuring the right investment in and targeting of front-line services.
9. A key thread running through all our work will be the development of a highly skilled and motivated workforce, capable of working within our integrated service model and across organisational boundaries. We will make full use of the "Building Brighter Futures" guidance (2008) to achieve this, thus ensuring that North Haven has the "right people, with the right skills, in the right places at the right time".

10. The resulting achievements of the new unitary council after the first five years will be:
 - Significant improvement in all key stage assessments and GCSE results to above the national average;
 - Demonstrable outcomes from effective partnership working and in particular in respect of integrated preventative services;
 - Integrated Youth Support Services providing excellent information, advice and guidance (IAG);
 - Improved outcomes for vulnerable children and in particular those at risk of significant harm, and children looked after;
 - More imaginative use of available resources and increased value for money.

Leadership and Organisational Arrangements

11. The inspirational leadership from a portfolio-holder, and a director responsible for integrated Children's Service provision, and the Children's Trust, will ensure a clear focus on the ECM agenda across the whole of the new authority.
12. Construction of the new directorate will be focused around the planning, commissioning and performance management functions. We have drawn up a provisional structure which will give us the capacity and clarity to lead and deliver the ECM agenda. This structure has been benchmarked with other high performance authorities for capacity and value for money.
13. We will also seek to make a joint senior appointment with the PCT to ensure the health needs of our children, including those looked after, receive continual attention across all services. This post will assist in delivery of our vision for preventive family support, ensuring the work of child psychology professionals, health professionals and midwives are integrated into the work of all early years settings, children's centres, and primary schools to assist with early identification of need and support packages.

CYP Trust

14. The impact of our CYP Trust will be enhanced by our proposed performance-focused structure. Beneath the main board, will be an Executive of senior officers who can drive the business forward between meetings, co-ordinating the work of standing groups focusing on the five ECM outcome areas, performance monitoring, and use of resources. These standing groups will be supplemented by task-focused groups to develop and implement particular priorities within our CYP Plan.
15. We will forge strong links with head teachers, both to assist in raising standards of attainment, but also to harness their influence around the wider ECM agenda – particularly in shaping the options for provision of extended services through schools.
16. Close collaboration with our Community and Adult Services will be a high priority to ensure:
 - Well-co-ordinated support across the whole spectrum of families' needs;
 - Seamless transition of vulnerable children as they move from children's services support to adult care;
 - Access and solutions to housing needs facing vulnerable children and families (e.g. homelessness, children leaving care).

Children and Young People Priorities

17. At the outset, we will develop North Haven's own Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) to establish our overall priorities, and a set of commissioning strategies.
18. Our determination is that the new authority will work with all those who have an interest in the well being of our children; parents/carers, statutory agencies, the voluntary sector, and faith organisations to maintain an unremitting focus on the achievement and the well being of our children and young people. We are sensitive to the educational implications and complexities of meeting both urban and rural need and will design services that meet the challenges of this diversity.
19. Our goals are: improved individual pupil attainment at each key stage, and in each curriculum subject area; and, improved outcomes for institutions in the service with enhanced environments where staff can teach effectively, and where all pupils are happy, safe and where every child can enjoy learning success.
20. We are passionate about the creation of a distinctive Children's Service. We want to develop services and support which have the full confidence of those we serve and we want to create an authority which enjoys a reputation for consistently ensuring that, in North Haven "Every Child Matters".
21. We are committed to working with key service partners in improving the transfer arrangements for young people from entry to early years education, through each of the key stages of learning, then moving into further and higher education, into work and successful entry to adult life. This commitment extends to working with key partners and providers to secure quality adult basic skills competencies, together with secure progression pathways to post-16 and adult learning and training.
22. To succeed in delivering this ambitious and timely agenda for change we will use best practice models in:
 - Working with our young people and parents/carers with service and voluntary providers to build a robust and relevant Childrens and Young Persons Strategic Plan to cover the initial period of 2010 to 2013. This we will keep under review. We will publish regular, frank and honest progress reports to show both what we are achieving and where we still face challenges.
 - Developing and implementing exemplar consultative and participation processes such as the model developed in Thurrock to ensure that our young people are continuous and active partners in this work.
 - Using authoritative data to inform resource decisions: to monitor progress across our provision, and to enable us to target and differentiate supports and interventions at priority individuals and areas.
 - Providing integrated support to pupils, their parents/carers and to schools from locality-based core teams of professionals enhanced by lead practitioners drawn from across the service and from our partner providers. Where appropriate, we will commission additional capacity and competencies.

Early Years and Family Support

23. Our vision for an integrated Early Years Service rests securely on best practice seen nationally. The gradual move to a single unified service for early years including Sure Start will embrace our parenting strategy and will enable us to build on present good practice and:
- Promote the Children’s Centre and Extended Schools model so that it meets the needs of children and their parents in key areas of North Haven where the Indices of Multiple Deprivation indicate that needs are greatest;
 - Flexibly deploy and redeploy our expert team of lead practitioners to meet both the very significant urban needs which are highlighted in our data, but also to recognise and respond to what can be complex issues of rural deprivation and isolation in early years;
 - Ensure that issues of ethnicity and diversity are reflected in our earliest planning assumptions.

Children’s Centre Strategy

24. The national programme for the development of Children’s Centres offers us a powerful engine to transform the learning, parenting and life opportunities of individuals and families with disadvantaged backgrounds or from challenging social contexts. The North Haven authority will commit fully to fostering and developing this valuable initiative in order that its impact reaches every one of our most needy families.
25. We have been particularly impressed by examples of successful Outreach and Estates work to target key resources into families where the need is greatest and where we believe we can have a dramatic effect in improving life chances. Wide-ranging discussions on this area will form a valuable part of the early work of North Haven.
26. In particular we would wish to carefully audit present arrangements and to use the output from this audit including the views of interested parties to design and implement the full Children’s Centre Outreach programme to reach every priority area in the new authority.

Parenting Strategy

27. Linked inextricably to the early years programme will be our Parenting Strategy. Working closely with our partners, we will develop and deliver good parenting programmes, either directly or by commissioning within an agreed strategic framework for the communities of North Haven. In so doing we will always learn from models of best practice already used in other leading local authorities.
28. We will explore strategic delivery using the skills, resources and infrastructure provided through the governing bodies of the SWISS centre with New Suffolk College and UCS.
29. A key additional dimension of the parenting work will be our strong partnership with the LSC, FE providers and local employers to deliver basic skills and skills progression programmes for adults. We envisage the development of secure learning pathways for adults in North Haven toward skills development, leading to employment and consequent strengthening both of the sense of community cohesion and in the economic wellbeing of our area.

Key Stage Learning

30. The Foundation and Primary phases of pupils' learning are crucial in ensuring their eventual success in secondary education and in later adult life. We will develop and deliver a distinctive North Haven offer to support pupils in achieving excellence in primary education. In order to challenge and overcome the present underachievement at key stages one and two we will:
- Constitute a dedicated primary team of expert advisory staff together with practitioners, both subject specialists and school managers drawn from our most successful schools on a flexible basis to share best practice and to progressively raise standards across the primary phase by focussed and intensive intervention;
 - Draw on the National Strategy methodology and rationale to support and sustain our local work;
 - Embed this innovative work in a new primary Forum where all interested in effective learning and achievement at primary level can regularly meet to review progress, address problems and consolidate service development;
 - Take the opportunity to review and evaluate the primary – secondary deprivation funding arrangements in conjunction with head teachers and to make appropriate adjustments to the funding in the light of the audited local needs of the new authority.
31. Effective Transition arrangements for all young people are essential if they are to succeed in secondary education. Our focus at this key learning point will be on the needs of pupils with particular learning difficulties, special educational needs, behavioural difficulties and pupils whose care background may make them vulnerable to disruption in their learning. We will offer a bespoke transition plan for pupils deemed to be at risk during the primary-secondary transition. This best practice model will be carefully monitored to ensure that it embeds successfully in the service arrangements of the new authority.
32. North Haven will develop a new relationship with schools and providers in the secondary phase of learning. In celebrating the best of our secondary achievement we will want to use best practice from schools, with the national School Improvement Partners programme and the resources from the National Strategies to support school and pupil achievement where standards are judged to be low. The new authority will work with all its partners and will value their input in ensuring that pupil underachievement and poor school performance are eradicated. Specifically, we will:
- Use powerful contextual value -added data to develop understanding of problems and to enable targeting of supports and resources to priority areas with what will be differentiated resourcing and expertise;
 - Use both the national School Improvement Programme and our own local expertise through lead subject practitioners, successful middle managers and outstanding senior managers to take a wider, cross school approach to intervention;
 - Supplement the core team of expert advisers with commissioned expertise specific to issues of particular challenge. We will always follow proven best practice, and will be willing to innovate and to pilot credible learning strategies beyond the standard curriculum model;
 - Discuss with practitioners the development of a powerful matrix model of subject experts with patch responsibilities, and with specific other service-wide responsibilities or portfolios, for example the More Able, Gifted and Talented pupils theme, cross curricular working, integrated IT, accelerated learning and curricular enrichment;

- Welcome and will participate in a joint LEP with Rural Suffolk for the national Building Schools for the Future programme and will actively support the development in North Haven of the Academies initiative. This we see as a valuable opportunity to revitalise school infrastructure and facilities in a context where a school itself may be re-energised and refocused to deliver excellence.

An Education Improvement Partnership

33. With the support and agreement of schools, we wish to consider developing an Education Improvement Partnership, based on two national flagship models. This partnership would:
- Learn from the successful models in Tower Hamlets and Knowsley. It will draw upon the lessons and benefits also of Excellence in Cities and Excellence Clusters. The EIP would enable all schools to share resources and expertise collectively and effectively to raise standards in all schools.
34. The characteristics of the North Haven EIP will be to:
- Forge real continuity, progression and transition by all learners, from Foundation Stage to post-16;
 - Raise subject knowledge of teachers at KS1 and KS2, especially in Maths;
 - Improve further the quality of leadership, management, teaching, learning and assessment for learning;
 - Enable schools themselves, to take forward and develop the assessment and remediation of SEN-further reducing the transaction costs of statementing and placing more resources at the disposal of Schools and learners with SEN;
 - Tackle and remediate holistically in the context of ECM, barriers to learning, i.e. challenging behaviour, poor attendance, family-related problems, mental health problems, unhealthy lifestyles, etc;
 - Replicate within Schools the strategies (e.g. in-house Behaviour Support, Gifted and Talented), which have worked so well in Excellence in Cities;
 - Enable Schools to pool resources, where appropriate, to achieve critical mass in dealing with some of the seemingly most intractable barriers to learning;
 - Work coherently as part of the 14-19 strategy, Youth/Connexions, - changing provision in Further Education and post-16 facilities, to reduce dramatically the number of Ipswich young people who are NEET.

Children with Special Needs

35. The Council is committed to inclusion and understands the resourcing and expert support implications, if schools are to meet the needs of learners with relatively complex needs and to have the confidence of parents/carers that these needs are being met.
36. At present there is a range of provision to meet special educational needs of pupils in southern Suffolk, much of it based in Ipswich. The Council recognises that such provision must continue to serve the needs of learners within and beyond Ipswich, and has no plans to disturb these arrangements.
37. We wish to continue with the trend towards de-statementing, which is bureaucratic and costly, concentrating the work of Educational Psychologists on working directly with Schools and children, with emphasis upon early identification and remediation.

38. We believe that much of the professional support for mainstream schools and learners must come from outreach arrangements from Special Schools, emulating the very successful model of the London Borough of Greenwich and the current service Suffolk County Council supply.
39. We will be particularly interested to adopt the outcomes of the current Special Educational Needs Review to further promote inclusive practices in all of North Haven's schools including, where appropriate, the development of colocated facilities with local schools reflecting best practice in Derbyshire, South Wales and Greenwich.
40. At the point of transition from Key Stage 4 to further or higher education, to work experience and adulthood the new authority will negotiate with students, their parents/carers, service partners and the voluntary providers to offer a Transition Entitlement; the North Haven Guarantee.
41. We see this offer as a bold best practice approach to recognising and addressing the needs of certain young people who need additional and structured transitional support if they are to succeed in life. This vulnerable cadre will inevitably include some young people from a Care background, those who might otherwise join the NEET group and some students with learning difficulties or disability.
42. The new unitary, through its economic development functions, will be ideally placed to forge more and better links with local business, employers and work-based training providers, Economic Development, 14-19, IYDS, and the EBP will work in concert, as a virtual consortium to generate more and better local employment and training opportunities for young people. Ipswich Council already offers Training Opportunities to young people as one of the Town's largest employers and will continue to develop this as part of our 14 – 19 and IYSS. Strong links have already been forged with the LSC, New Suffolk College and University Campus Suffolk in the context of economic development and regeneration. The council will develop these links in order to develop further a highly effective and personalised learning offer for 14-19 year olds and to increase the number within this cohort who continue into Further and Higher education and training.

The CAHMS Strategy

43. We recognise that nationally the CAMHS provisions made are often less effective than we would wish in preventative working and in meeting the mental health needs of some young people. In the new North Haven authority we will work closely with our partners in the Health Trust and in the Third Sector in developing and delivering best practice in our CAMHS provision
44. We envisage:
 - Effective systems for earlier identification and intervention;
 - A strong focus on in-school support wherever possible;
 - Drawing on the capacity and expertise of the Third sector in intermediate intervention;
 - A seamless four-tier service, locally delivered and flexibly deployed with a distinctive but not exclusive schools focus.

Health and Wellbeing

45. Much needs to be done to ensure the health safety and well being of key individuals and groups of young people in our schools and communities. In addition to the initiatives already outlined we will give a particular focus on the more specialised needs of certain of our young people.
46. We will:
 - Commit fully to the Healthy Schools programme ensuring that each of our schools achieves the national standard, and that lead schools are supported toward the higher levels of accreditation;
 - Review the arrangements made for respite care for young people to ensure that we help where pressure on certain families is at its greatest;
 - Work directly to identify our young carers and ensure that they are given worthwhile and appropriate support;
 - Recognise that teenage pregnancy rates can be further reduced by the effective use of appropriate and structured school-based programmes of education and awareness-raising;
 - Engage our best efforts in supporting schools and our partners in the campaign to ensure healthy eating, healthy lifestyles, sport for health and to challenge obesity in our young people.

Commissioning and Performance Monitoring

47. The means to deliver these will be a new outcome-based commissioning and procurement framework which will ensure all commissioning strategies are based on sophisticated needs analysis, clear implementation route maps, and accurate financial costs which are fully embedded in our medium term financial strategies, and those of our partners. This will enable priority outcomes to be delivered, in cost-specific terms. We will use national, reliable benchmarking data to measure and allocate resources
48. The success of our commissioning approach will be supported by:
 - A well-resourced joint commissioning team supporting the work of both Children's Services and the Children's Trust;
 - Embedding a results-driven culture underpinned by effective performance monitoring capacity and processes such as those for quality care monitoring and ICT systems;
 - Maximum use of the freedom and flexibilities available through the Local Area Agreement and existing legal powers to pool funding.
49. Commissioning and procurement strategies will clearly define the outcomes expected from the particular services, and we will use market testing and risk assessments to identify the most appropriate providers. Service arrangements will be benchmarked using reliable performance data, ensuring that they are modelled upon four-star (JAR/APA) criteria and that they represent Value For Money.

Integrated Services

50. Locality based integrated service delivery will be the vehicle for shifting to effective prevention and family support services building on the existing Suffolk model of school clusters, and children's centres, for local commissioning and integrated service delivery for pre-school, and school-aged, children and young people. In developing these we will be sensitive both to the very challenging urban issues we face but also to those issues of rural poverty, disadvantage and rural isolation that can be present. We are aware of centres of professional practice excellence such as that in Worcestershire.
51. We will co-locate staff within these settings and build actual or virtual "teams around the child" bringing together a range of professionals from different disciplines to make available the most appropriate skills and level of support making full use of the "Integrated Working" tools – the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), Lead Professionals to improve case co-ordination and contact point for information sharing.
52. We will expand the range of extended services provided by schools using the opportunities afforded by the "Building Schools for the Future" (BSF) and the Primary Capital Challenge" (PCP) programmes. We will also expand the outreach services from both our children's centres, and schools - for example through the use of more learning mentors and parenting support workers. This will be important to ensure equality of access and coverage for families within our more rural communities.

Safeguarding & Specialist Services

53. The LSCB will drive the local delivery of the Government's "Staying Safe" agenda, and promote vigorously the promotion of a culture that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility within the "Staying Safe" concepts of universal, targeted and responsive safeguarding.
54. As with the CYP Trust, the LSCB, with a well-resourced sub group structure and range of specialist staff, will bring fresh energy to addressing the causes, and the management of, the high levels of child protection within the area.
55. Given the high rates of children subject to inter-agency child protection plans, the LSCB will give priority to examining the thresholds for referral and intervention at all levels of need to identify how more support can be provided to avoid the need for the formal child protection processes to be triggered.
56. From the outset, we will ensure sufficient investment in front-line services to guarantee 100% allocation of all cases where children are subject to a formal inter-agency protection plan, and to ensure the capacity to complete rapid and skilled initial and core assessments meeting the respective seven- and 35-day timetable. We will also ensure all Looked After Children have an allocated worker and that capacity exists for care plans to be implemented proactively to avoid drift in children's lives.

57. However, the LSCB will also be the springboard for taking forward the wider agenda for keeping children safe in all settings, examples of our initiatives will include:
- A zero-tolerance approach to all forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying;
 - Promoting ideas and publicity to reduce the number of children injured in road accidents;
 - Using the Child Death Overview Panel to maximise the learning to prevent avoidable deaths in the future;
 - Safe recruitment and selection processes across all agencies.
58. In summary, our commitment to keeping children safe will be reflected in strong performance on all indicators in the “Stay Safe” national indicator set including the new PSA for children and young people’s safety.

Corporate Parenting / Looked After Children

59. Alongside safeguarding, we will take our responsibilities as corporate parents very seriously, embracing fully the ambition of the Government’s objectives in “Care Matters” which are being enshrined in the Children & Young People’s Bill. Improved outcomes will be obtained by:
- Increasing the choice, quality and stability of fostering and residential placements – ensuring more of these are close to home through commissioning and re-tendering processes;
 - Providing seamless housing and social care services;
 - Increasing the choice of accommodation and support for independent living for young people leaving care;
 - Offering all looked after children the right to tenancy;
 - Delivering better packages of support to enable looked after children leaving care to achieve stability in the adult world through maintaining their tenancies, gaining access to employment and / or training, as well as building new positive social networks;
 - More effective management of transitions, for example, between leaving school and starting work or further education, through engaging effectively with key partners including health services, further education and local employers.
60. We will keep a constant focus on the educational progress of Looked After Children by:
- Establishing a Corporate Parenting Panel (Scrutiny);
 - Making the educational progress of LAC a distinct strand of our School Improvement Strategy;
 - Establishing bursary arrangements to support and encourage LAC who wish to go on to Higher Education (following the London Borough of Ealing’s excellent model).
61. As with all our services, the Voice of LAC themselves will be paramount in the design, delivery and monitoring of services.

Integrated Youth Support Services

62. We will create a new sub-directorate as being the best means of delivering the Government requirement to create an Integrated Youth Support Service by 2008.
63. This division will bring together the following services - Youth Service, Connexions, Youth Offending Team, Drugs Action, Teenage Pregnancy, Young People Leaving Care Services.

64. In future, these services will be commonly commissioned and will be expected to be much more thorough in identifying real impacts and outcomes. Youth and Connexions will operate as an integrated service. In particular, we will:
- Treat its “youth offer” holistically, including expenditure and interventions in other directorates (e.g. Housing, Leisure, Sports Development, Museums and Libraries);
 - Follow “Youth Matters,” ensure there are more places to go and more to do for young people, ensuring that bus companies assist young people to access opportunities and events;
 - Pilot enhanced direct payments for youth work, by transferring Youth Service Budgets to Localities, following the “Youth Opportunities Fund (YOF) model,” enabling Young People and Adult Residents to commission and procure provision that they want and meets their needs. This will ensure that power, choice and influence are shifted to consumers of services rather than providers of services.
 - Integrate Drugs Action and Teenage Pregnancy Work with the work of youth workers and personal advisers, leading to integrated delivery and targeting of coherent outcomes;
 - Concentrate the work of the YOT upon its Court Work with the “youth” element of YOT work, especially diversionary work, discharged by Youth and Connexions, with YOT workers doing their key work within Youth Settings, and by better targeting of specialist personal advisers;
 - Ensure all youth workers and personal advisers will meet the new standards for Independent Advice and Guidance, and gain the appropriate qualifications.
 - Personal advisers will be expected to “door knock” the addresses of young people who are “NEET”. As the excellent Tower Hamlets model has shown, urgency and activity in this area can deliver spectacular results.
 - Ensure there are coherent links where the work of the IYSS intersects with our 14-19 Strategy, in particular ensuring that young people receive genuinely independent careers advice and guidance and that learners are not encouraged to take inappropriate courses of study, from which they later “fall out of the system”.

Leisure & Sport

65. North Haven has excellent leisure and sports facilities (with QUEST accreditation) within easy reach of schools. These, together with sports development, will be commissioned jointly to support the range of activities on offer at Extended Schools and to boost the Council’s youth offer. As a housing authority, all parts of North Haven are already developing Affordable Housing, and will be ideally placed to develop housing for “key workers” (e.g. teachers and social workers) where it is vital that we are able to attract and retain adequate numbers of top class workers.