



1 executive summary

Overview

Making London Better for All Children and Young People sets out a vision for a more child-friendly London, developed within the framework of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It also sets out a range of policies and priorities for action to help move this vision towards reality. While the Mayor has no responsibility for the delivery of key children's services, such as education, health and social care, he does have a range of important strategic planning powers in relation to transport, planning, culture, the environment, regeneration and policing. The Mayor also has a general power under section 30 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 to do anything to further Londoners' health and the achievement of sustainable development.

Growing up in London: A strategic framework for London's children

This document sets out a broad strategic framework to ensure children's best interests are built into all the other strategies and policies of the GLA and the GLA group organisations, and to better support the work of the London boroughs, voluntary and community organisations involved in the provision of services to children, young people and families. By providing a regional framework for the development of policies, services and facilities for children and young people, *Making London Better for All Children and Young People* will contribute to the ambitions set out in the recently published national Green Paper for children, *Every Child Matters*.

Ensuring positive change will require ambitious and sustained action together with a willingness to listen to, and celebrate, the diversity of London children's lives and experiences.

Work is therefore focused around three strategic objectives:

- ensuring we listen to and provide a voice for London's children and young people
- developing a better understanding of the diversity of young Londoners' lives
- delivering improvements for London's children and young people in a number of priority areas.

The strategic framework has also been shaped by three core themes:

- reducing poverty and social exclusion
- promoting inclusion and equality
- making the case for the delivery of quality services and facilities.

A voice for London's children

Children are seen and heard in a child-friendly city. Their active participation as citizens and rights-holders is promoted, ensuring them the freedom to express their views and making sure that their views are taken seriously.

This strategic objective aims to ensure that all young Londoners are provided with a voice in matters that affect them; and that their views are given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.

There was widespread support in the consultation – from children and from adults – for the meaningful and appropriate involvement of children and young people in all aspects of the work of the GLA. The Mayor's Action Plan will:

- promote the systematic participation of young Londoners in decision-making in all areas of their lives
- ensure that all young Londoners are provided with equal opportunities to exercise their rights of participation
- support the development of appropriate advice, support and advocacy services and complaints procedures for young Londoners
- ensure that measures to promote children's participation are properly monitored and evaluated
- promote mechanisms and structures to enable children and young people to have a proper voice in the democratic process.

Understanding the diversity of London's children's lives

This document is well grounded in research – including the *State of London's Children Report* (2001) – and it has been developed through a process of extensive consultation. However, there is a clear need to develop and maintain a more coherent understanding of the position, circumstances and detailed needs of children and young people in London.

This strategic objective aims to ensure that the strategy implementation continues to be informed by research and consultation and that appropriate systems are developed for ongoing monitoring and evaluation. The Mayor's Children and Young People's Unit (CYPU) will take forward the ongoing development, implementation and monitoring of the Children and Young People's Strategy.

In terms of monitoring, evaluation and reporting on progress, work will be taken forward in a number of areas, including:

- a biennial State of London's Children report
- an audit of children's participation projects across London
- a programme of Child Impact Assessments of the Mayor's strategies
- audits of expenditure on children in and across London's key children's services
- undertaking evaluations
- developing key outcome indicators.

Delivering improvements for children

All the action points and policies are summarised in Appendix 1.

Being healthy

The Mayor believes that all young Londoners should be able to enjoy the highest possible standard of physical and emotional health and well-being. Work towards this goal will require actions across a range of areas, including developing more child-friendly and health-promoting neighbourhoods; tackling inequalities in child health; improving access to health services, including mental health services; and developing initiatives to tackle smoking, drug and alcohol use.

Enjoying and achieving

The Mayor believes that all young Londoners should have the best possible opportunities to enjoy what their city has to offer and to achieve their full potential. Work towards these goals requires actions to promote the access of young Londoners to play, recreational and cultural activities and opportunities; actions to improve the child-friendliness of London's attractions, facilities and services; actions to tackle inequalities in education; and actions to promote the access of disadvantaged groups to education and training.



Staying safe

The Mayor believes that all young Londoners should be brought up in a safe and secure social and physical environment. Work towards this goal requires actions to promote children's safety and security in London's streets and parks; and actions to ensure protection from crime, bullying, discrimination, racism and abuse.

A positive contribution

The Mayor believes that all young Londoners should be involved, in ways that are appropriate to their age and experience, in decisions about environmental and public realm issues, as well as in decisions about specific facilities and services. The Mayor also believes that strategies to

address youth crime and youth offending must be guided by the framework of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Work towards these goals requires actions to promote the active participation of young Londoners in planning for their play, recreational and leisure services and spaces; in planning for transport and road safety; and in the development of local crime reduction strategies. It also requires actions to promote more positive images of young people and actions to ensure that responses to youth offending are compatible with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Economic well-being

The Mayor believes that all London's children should have a standard of living which supports and promotes their optimal development; and, in line with government policy, it takes the view that parents should have the support they need to enable them to care for, and protect, their children. Work towards this goal requires actions across two key areas. Firstly, it requires actions to tackle child poverty and income inequality. Secondly, it requires a range of actions to minimise existing inequalities in families' and children's access to key services, including promoting the development of more affordable childcare, measures to ensure that funding streams are targeted at areas of greatest need, and measures to improve the access of key disadvantaged groups to high quality, affordable housing.

Making it happen

This concluding section outlines the structures and mechanisms to be put in place to:

- ensure the strategy's implementation across the GLA group
- facilitate partnership working with the boroughs, national and regional government and external children's networks
- ensure children and young people's ongoing input into the implementation and development of the strategy
- monitor, evaluate and report on strategy progress.

The role of the Mayor's CYPU includes co-ordination of the implementation of the Children and Young People's Strategy via work on priority cross-cutting issues and championing children's interests, including maximising their involvement in GLA decision-making.

To facilitate this process, strategy heads and the GLA group organisations will identify a lead officer on children's issues to ensure all Mayoral strategies address the identified needs of London's children.



Effective partnership working will be key to the successful implementation of the strategy at local, regional and national government levels. In addition, the community and voluntary sector is increasingly recognised as a key partner in the delivery of services for, and participation work with, children and young people.

The Mayor is committed to greater involvement of children and young people in the strategic decision-making processes at the GLA. There is also a need to sustain good practice in effective participation at a local level, and to ensure that the work is mainstreamed across health, education and community regeneration.

Initial monitoring and evaluation work by the Mayor's CYPU will include:

- an audit of children's participation projects in London
- the production of a second State of London's Children Report
- a programme of child audit and impact assessments.

Making London Better For All Children and Young People sets out how the Mayor's vision for a child-friendly London can be realised as an integral part of the Mayor's overall vision for a sustainable London.

The Mayor will continue to champion London children's interests at a national and local level and work together with parents and local communities, service providers and children and young people themselves to move our vision of a more child-friendly London closer to reality.

Appendices and child-friendly version

Appendix One is an 'Action Plan' of policies and action points within the strategy, *Making London Better For All Children and Young People*.

Appendix Two is a summary report of responses from the consultation on the draft strategy (April-July 2003).

This strategy is also produced in a child-friendly version and will be distributed to all primary and secondary schools in London: Summary and leaflet versions are also available.