



# FAMILY VOICE

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 10/19

11 FEBRUARY 2019

The purpose of this paper is to recommend Members to revive the Family Voice project originally proposed during the Town Council's involvement in the government's Our Place Programme and allocate £3,000 for it in the 2019/20 Budget.

## No. DETAILS

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### 1) BACKGROUND

- a) The Town Council meeting of 2 February 2014 agreed to submit an application to join the Department of Communities and Local Government's *Our Place Programme* by Minute 20/14 of that meeting.
  - b) The programme had been launched in July 2013 to accept up to 160 community organisations – including Town and Parish Councils – as recipients of grants of up to £40,000 over an 18 month period from 1 February 2014.
  - c) In the event, only 123 organisations were accepted on to the Programme and the Town Council was one of them, securing a grant total of £40,000.
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### 2) FAMILY VOICE

- a) The Family Voice Project was one of many developed within the Programme's objectives, driven by the then Town Council's clear focus on the town's deprivation and a commitment to address it.
  - b) A copy of the proposal for the Project is attached to this Report for Members' information.
  - c) It was to be based on Ventnor's Children's Centre but was overtaken by a major re-organisation of the Island's Children's Centre as their management moved from Spurgeon's to Barnardo's with the Ventnor Centre becoming established as a satellite of Sandown's Family Centre.
  - d) The intention in reviving the project is to enter into discussions with St Francis Primary School about the possibility of delivering it with the parents of their pupils and, perhaps, some facilitation by some of their staff on a funded basis.
  - e) It is important to remember that Upper Ventnor was ranked as the fourth most deprived Lower Super Output Area of the Island's 89 and well within the most deprived 10% nationally on the *Income Deprivation affecting Children Scale* of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015.
  - f) The revival of this project is supported by the Town Council's Community Development Working Group.
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### 3) RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to support the revival of the Family Voice Project and agree the inclusion of a budget line of £3,000 for 2019/20.

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# VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

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FAMILY VOICE

A PROPOSAL

27 MAY 2015

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## 1) THE PROPOSAL

- a) As an element of its Our Place programme, and funded by it, Ventnor Town Council is proposing to commission from Ventnor Children's Centre a project to be known as Family Voice.
- b) Its purpose is to ensure inclusion of the experience of life in, and views about Ventnor of families with young children within the data developed through the Our Place programme that are likely to have been only faintly heard within the consultation processes deployed to date.
- c) We recognise that families with young children are likely to be deterred from participation in the customary consultation events by a range of factors including the timing and location of the events, unfamiliarity with or dislike or distrust of the adopted approaches, wider family commitments and the priorities of child care.
- d) We are also very aware of the relatively high levels of poverty among families with children as evidenced in the attached graph supplied to us by the Public Health research team as part of their preparation for us of a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment specific to Ventnor; and of the particular sensitivities of exploring the challenges that represents for many.
- e) We are particularly keen for this project and its participants not to be labelled by actual reference to poverty or deprivation, focusing absolutely on actual life experience.
- f) It is our view that the Children's Centre represents a unique context of established trust and confidence within which their voices can be heard clearly enough to be among those that guide and influence our future planning.

## 2) PROCESSES

- a) We will ask the Children's Centre Staff Team to advise on the details of the structure and processes of the project as well as being centrally involved in its delivery.
  - b) Our early imagining of the project is based on informal, professionally facilitated group meetings of parents held – perhaps weekly? – over a series of up to four sessions.
  - c) Our house-to-house survey has been coded to allow insight into the commonalities and differences in experience and expectations between the householders in each of the town's four Lower Super Output Areas and it would be particularly interesting if it is possible to organise the informal groups on that basis: we have post-code listings for each of the areas.
  - d) Completion by the group(s) of the 6-page questionnaire of the survey at some stage in the process would also provide useful insights into the views of young families and any variances in the particular of their current life experience.
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- e) Although notes of the group sessions will need to be composed and made available to us on a confidential basis, we are clear that they must be anonymised and the participants regularly reassured about that.
  - f) The detail of the subject matter for each group(s) meeting will need to be developed in joint planning between Children's Centre staff and the Town Council's Our Place team - Jason Mack, David Bartlett, Tony McCarthy and Nicky Cox – once the composition of the groups and their working styles are agreed.

### 3) FUNDING

- a) We have identified an initial budget from the Our Place funding of up to £3,000 to fund Children's Centre Staff time, including extra or overtime, external facilitators, room hire, refreshments for each group meeting and travel expenses for participants.
- b) The budget may be revised once the scale of the project is fully detailed.