

Corporate Parenting Board – March 31st 2014

Title of paper:	Children in Care Placements – Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy 2014 - 2016	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Candida Brudenell Director of Quality and Commissioning	Wards affected: All
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Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)	06/01/2014	
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority: (you must mark X in the relevant boxes below)		
Cutting unemployment by a quarter		<input type="checkbox"/>
Cut crime and anti-social behaviour		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ensure more school leavers get a job, training or further education than any other City		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Your neighbourhood as clean as the City Centre		<input type="checkbox"/>
Help keep your energy bills down		<input type="checkbox"/>
Good access to public transport		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham has a good mix of housing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham is a good place to do business, invest and create jobs		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham offers a wide range of leisure activities, parks and sporting events		<input type="checkbox"/>
Support early intervention activities		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Deliver effective, value for money services to our citizens		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
<p>Nottingham City Council (NCC) acknowledges that there has been a growing demand for Children in Care (CiC) placements, and changing needs. This, along with local authority financial pressures, legislative changes, learning from Serious Case Reviews nationally and the final year of the Regional Provider Framework, has prompted a Strategic Review into Nottingham City's CiC Placements Market.</p> <p>A draft Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy has been produced to determine the way in which Nottingham City Council commissions CiC placements, informed by current and anticipated sufficiency requirements. The Strategy lays out the City's vision and commitments to all children and young people requiring a care placement and explores the minimum standards, commissioning plans and accelerated strands to signal to the placement market.</p>		
Recommendation(s):		
1	For the Corporate Parenting Board to endorse and provide comment on the CiC Placements Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy 2014 – 2016.	

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 In line with the Nottingham City Council Plan and the Children and Young People's Plan, the overarching ambition of the Strategy is to ensure that all children and young people are given the best start in life and have the opportunity to thrive and achieve.
- 1.2 A Strategy is required to strengthen messages to the provider market about quality standards and gaps in support for Nottingham's CiC. The Strategy will signal a clear direction to stimulate the placement market and shape it to best meet the needs of Nottingham's children and young people.

2. BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

- 2.1 In September 2013, there were 584 children and young people in the care of Nottingham City Council. The cohort has been increasing at an average rate of 3.9% each year, against a national average rate of 2%. Although the rates are higher than both national and regional rates, they are slightly lower than comparator authorities.
- 2.2 The socio-economic factors of the City; deprivation, unemployment, domestic abuse, alcohol and substance misuse, all impact on the volume and complexity of needs presented by children and young people. Legislative changes, including the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO) and the Southwark Judgement have also impacted upon demand. Much of the changes in demographics, such as increasing population, rising birth rate, increasing BME population and international migration, show little signs of reversing in the short term.
- 2.3 Nottingham City Council has actively responded to the increasing demand and financial pressures. In 2011, the Placement Service was restructured to increase dedicated capacity to implement more robust processes and arrangements, review all placement packages and build more effective provider relations. This has led to greater value for money, increased transparency of services and quality delivered, and improved market management.
- 2.4 The East Midlands Regional Provider Framework was implemented in April 2011. The Framework established a formalised agreement between participating local authorities and independent providers and has brought about multiple benefits, including; sharing information about quality, efficiencies, buying power, market influence and resource sharing. The current Framework expires in March 2015. A regional working group is exploring what new arrangements might look like.
- 2.5 The combination of all of these factors; growing and changing demand, CiC outcomes, financial pressures, legislative changes, learning from Serious Case Reviews nationally and the expiring Framework, means that the need for a Strategic Review into Nottingham City's placements market is timely and critical.
- 2.6 Through analysis into Nottingham's City's current and anticipated sufficiency requirements, a draft Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy has been produced to determine the way in which CiC placements are commissioned. The Strategy lays out the City's vision and commitments to all children and young people requiring a care placement and details the minimum standards, commissioning plans and accelerated strands for the placement market. *Please refer to Appendix One for the draft Strategy.*

2.7 **Consultation**

The draft Strategy has been presented to Nottingham City's Council's Children and Families Leadership Team and the Children and Families Big Ticket Programme Board. It is proposed that the governance route continues through to the Corporate Parenting Board and Portfolio Holder for Children's Services.

2.8 Consultation with the internal and external provider market has been undertaken. The consultation process has invited participation, asking colleagues, partners and providers for feedback and comments to help shape the final Strategy and plan for implementation.

2.9 *NB:* The Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy forms only one stage of the Strategic Review into the CiC Placements Market. Further work includes market development to create greater capacity locally to ensure more of Nottingham's children and young people are placed close to home. *Please refer to Appendix Two which provides a timeline and overview of the Review process.*

3. **OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 To not produce a Strategy would result in a reactive market, less well equipped to meet the placement needs of Nottingham City's CiC.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY)**

4.1 There are no direct financial implications or value for money issues arising from this report. Future commissioning decisions made as a result of the Strategic Review will have financial and value for money implications. A further report, detailing these implications, will be brought to the Corporate Parenting Board at the appropriate time.

4.2 The Regional Provider Framework is due to end in March 2015. Provider fees have been fixed up until this point and therefore inflation is a risk. This has been acknowledged through the regional working group which is considering the potential implications of this and exploring how new arrangements may look.

5. **RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS)**

5.1 Risk management processes will be undertaken prior to commencing any procurement or commissioning activity. There are no legal or Crime and Disorder Act implications at this stage. Any future procurement and commissioning activity will comply with EU Procurement Legislation and guidance will be sought through the relevant Legal and HR channels.

6. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

6.1 An EIA is not required at this time as the report does not contain proposals or financial decisions. An EIA will be carried out before any formal decisions are made.

7. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

7.1 Appendix One: Children in Care Placements - Draft Commissioning and Sufficiency Strategy 2014 – 2016.

7.2 Appendix Two: Strategic Review of the Children in Care Placements Market – Timeline

8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

8.1 Nottingham City Council's Children and Young People's Plan

8.2 Nottingham City Council Plan

