

### Corporate Parenting Board – 20 January 2014

<b>Title of paper:</b>	<b>Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategic Priorities 2013 - 2015</b>		
<b>Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):</b>	Helen Blackman, Acting Director – Safeguarding	<b>Wards affected: All</b>	
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<b>Other colleagues who have provided input:</b>			
<b>Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> January, 2014</b>		
<b>Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:</b>			
Cutting unemployment by a quarter			<input type="checkbox"/>
Cut crime and anti-social behaviour			<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure more school leavers get a job, training or further education than any other City			<input 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 type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham offers a wide range of leisure activities, parks and sporting events			<input type="checkbox"/>
Support early intervention activities			<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliver effective, value for money services to our citizens			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>In order to fulfil it's obligation as set out in Annex A of Ofsted's 'Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers' (2013), local authorities are required to produce a strategic plan for looked after children that includes corporate parenting objectives.</b></p> <p><b>It is therefore recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board ('Board') agrees the Strategic Priorities and accepts the six corresponding Strategic Priority Statements as 'corporate parenting objectives'.</b></p> <p><b>This report outlines how the strategic priorities were identified.</b></p>			

<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	
<b>1</b>	To agree the Strategic Priorities and corresponding Strategic Priority Statements. By doing so the Corporate Parenting Board will accept the Strategic Priority Statements as 'corporate parenting objectives' (see paragraph 2.1).
<b>2</b>	That the Board takes this opportunity to provide comments on the strategic document so that, where possible, received comments can be incorporated into the final draft of the strategic document (see paragraph 2.6).

## 1. **BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 As Corporate Parents we are committed to ensuring that children, who come into our care, experience safe and positive parenting, are helped to achieve their full potential, and obtain the best possible outcomes. We are also dedicated to securing permanency, as quickly as possible for children who are unable to live with their birth parents or extended birth family network, through adoption or other arrangements.
- 1.2 To achieve this, all agencies involved in caring and supporting children in care and care leavers must work together. To work together effectively, a multi-agency approach is needed. This is only possible when all partners understand and accept their respective responsibilities. This in-turn requires a multi-agency strategy that clearly states the areas that require improvement (i.e. strategic priorities), the activities that will be undertaken to achieve the necessary improvements, and the lead person or agency that is responsible for each activity.
- 1.3 A strategic plan for looked after children, which includes corporate parenting objectives, education and housing priorities, planning for permanence and children's futures forms part of the mandatory documents listed in **Annex A** of the 2013 Ofsted inspection framework.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to sets out our strategic priorities and corresponding strategic priority statements, and to explain how they were identified.
- 1.5 To produce Nottingham's strategic plan it was essential to identify a comprehensive list of strategic priorities which fully represented the assessed and expressed needs of children in care (CiC) and care leavers (CLs).
- 1.6 The strategic priorities described in this report reflect the assessed needs of CiC and CLs as detailed in the Children in Care Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (CiC JSNA) (2013), and the expressed needs of CiC and CLs as detailed in the Children in Care and Care Leavers 'Have Your Say' 2012 Survey Full Report. The strategic priorities also reflect the professional opinion of those involved in caring and supporting children in care and care leavers.

### **Nottingham Children in Care Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – Assessed Needs of Children in Care and Care Leavers**

- 1.7 The CiC JSNA was used in order to ascertain the assessed needs of children in care and care leavers.
- 1.8 JSNAs are local assessments of current and future health and social care needs that 'could be met by the local authority and [partner agencies]' (Nottingham City JSNA, 2012).
- 1.9 JSNAs are used to help determine what actions local authorities and other partners need to take to meet health and social care needs, and to address wider determinants that impact on health and wellbeing. As result, when identifying the strategic priorities, it was necessary to use the finding detailed in the 2013 CiC JSNA.

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<sup>1</sup> Annex A (page 40) of the 'Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers'

1.10 The CiC JSNA (2013) highlighted the following areas as requiring improvement;

- § Educational Attainment
- § Offending Behaviour
- § Substance Misuse
- § Young Pregnancy

### **Children in Care and Care Leavers 'Have your say' Survey – Expressed Needs of Children in Care and Care Leavers**

1.11 It was possible to determine the expressed needs of children in care and care leavers from the results of the 2012 'Have your say' survey. The survey provided children and young people with an opportunity to express what they thought about the quality of care they had experienced. Their individual views were collated for analysis. The analysed data was then interpreted by children in care and care leavers by means of the Children in Care Council.

1.12 The Children in Care Council applied the 'Traffic Light' system to identify areas of care requiring immediate action (red), improvement (amber), and no action as these areas were deemed good (green). Areas identified as red and amber (see below) have been incorporated into the strategic priorities.

(NB: Where 'Our commitment' is stated below, reference is being made to a commitment in the 'Children in Care and Care Leavers' Charter.)

#### **Red**

- § Our commitment: we will give our children and young people enough time and help to understand (and be happy) with their circumstances
- § Our commitment: we will make sure they know about the advocacy and complaints services in case they want help to have their views heard or are unhappy with us
- § Giving them the right support to be as healthy as possible

#### **Amber**

- § Our commitment: we know that a change of home, carer, social worker or school can easily cause problems for a child or young person so we promise to do all we can to prevent such changes unless they are absolutely necessary to keep the child or young person safe and well
- § Our commitment: we will help our children and young people to plan for and achieve a successful journey into independent adulthood (identified as a Green/Amber)

### **Consultation with Relevant Professionals**

1.13 The Children in Care Outcomes Group is made up of representatives from;

- § The Fostering and Adoption Service
- § The Children in Care Team
- § The 15 Plus Team
- § The Targeted Support Team (edge of care)
- § The Disabled Children Team
- § Residential homes
- § The Placement Service
- § Children's Social Care
- § Independent Reviewing Officers

- § Barnardos (providers of our advocacy and Independent Visitors service)
- § Insight and Analysis (performance management)
- § Health
- § Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service
- § Virtual School (education)
- § Youth Offending Team
- § Police
- § Futures (employability service)
- § Business in the Community (provider of the routes into sustainable employment (RISE) programme)
- § Compass (drug and alcohol advice and information service)

1.14 The views of CiC Outcomes Group members were sought as they represented a wide range of support services and agencies who are involved in improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers. Members were presented with a list of priorities based on the 2013 CiC JSNA, 2012 ‘Have your say’ survey and the existing Corporate Parent Promise Action Plan (CPPAP). They were asked to review the list and decide, using their professional judgement and detailed knowledge, whether the list was comprehensive.

1.15 It was determined that the list was not comprehensive as there was no mention of reducing delays in securing permanency through adoption, special guardianship, residence order, or long term fostering. This now features on the list of priorities – see strategic priority four.

1.16 A summary of the strategic priorities and their origin is provided in appendix one.

## **2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)**

2.1 It is recommended that the Board agrees the Strategic Priorities and corresponding Strategic Priority Statements presented in this report. In doing so the Board will accept the Strategic Priority Statements as ‘corporate parenting objectives’.

2.2 Thirteen Strategic Priorities have been identified. The priorities represent areas that require improvement in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for children in care and care leavers, and to meet the commitments set out in Nottingham City Council’s (‘the Authority’) ‘Children in Care and Care Leavers’ Charter’.

2.3 The strategic priorities and corresponding strategic priority statements are as follows:

Strategic Priority		Strategic Priority Statement (SPS)	
1	Reduce substance misuse.	1	To reduce young pregnancy and substance misuse. In addition to ensuring the timely completion of health checks, dental checks, immunisations, and SDQs.
2	Reduce young pregnancy.		
3	To ensure the timely completion of health checks, dental checks, immunisations, and SDQs (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires).		
4	To reduce delays in securing permanency through adoption, special guardianship, residence orders and long term fostering.	2	NCC believes that all children should grow up with their birth families. Where this is not able to happen we will secure permanency through
5	Provide safe environments and stability in		

	placement.		adoption, special guardianship, residence orders or long term fostering.
6	Ensure children in care and care leavers are better able to deal successfully with significant changes in their lives.	3	To ensure children in care and care leavers are better able to deal successfully with significant changes in their lives. This includes improving transition into independence, and ensuring there are consultation and participation opportunities.
7	Improve transition into independence.		
8	Continue to seek the wishes and feelings of children in care and care leavers, and use this information to influence the care and support they experience.		
9	Ensure children in care know about the Advocacy, Independent Visitor, and Complaints service.		
10	Improve educational attainment.	4	To improve the educational attainment of children in care and to ensure care leavers engage in employment, education or training.
11	Support children in care and care leavers into employment, and training		
12	Ensure care leavers have access to suitable accommodation and support.	5	To ensure care leavers have access to suitable accommodation and support.
13	Reduce offending behaviour.	6	To reduce offending behaviour through strong collaborative partnership work.

- 2.4 An action plan has been developed by members of the Children in Care Outcomes Group and is included in our strategic document (see pages 15 – 21 of appendix 2). The action plan provides a summary of the activities that are currently being undertaken, as well as those that will be undertaken by the authority and its partners to improve the areas identified as strategic priorities.
- 2.5 The strategy is yet to be approved by the Authority's Children and Families Leadership Team.
- 2.6 Before its approval the Board is being given the opportunity to comment on the content of the strategy. Where possible comments received from the Board will be incorporated into the final draft of the strategic document. Once approved, the strategy will be made available to Board members.
- 2.7 Upon approval of the strategy, Children in Care Outcome Group members will be required to;
- (a) Communicate the Strategic Priorities as set out in the Authority's strategic document to their respective service areas or agency
  - (b) Ensure agreed actions relevant to their respective area are undertaken
  - (c) Produce reports updating group members on activity

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

- 3.1 As previously stated, as an Authority we are required by Ofsted to produce a document that sets out our strategic plan for looked after children. Therefore no

other options have been considered when making the recommendation presented in this report.

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

4.1 None.

#### **5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (EIAs)**

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out as this report does not include proposals for new or changing policies, services or functions.

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

7.1 Children in Care and Care Leavers 'Have Your Say' 2012 Survey Full Report.

#### **8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

8.1 'Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers' (2013).  
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-and-evaluation-schedule-for-inspection-of-services-for-children-need-of-help-and-protectio>

8.2 'Nottingham City Children in Care Joint Strategic Needs Assessment' (2013).  
<http://www.nottinghaminsight.org.uk/insight/jsna/children/jsna-children-in-care.aspx>

8.3 'Nottingham City Joint Strategic Needs Assessment' (2012).  
<http://www.nottinghaminsight.org.uk/insight/jsna/jsna-home.aspx>