



Nottingham City Council Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Date: Thursday, 28 September 2023

Time: 10.00 am

Place: Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham,
NG2 3NG

Councillors are requested to attend the above meeting to transact the following business

Director for Legal and Governance

Governance Officer: Jane Garrard

Direct Dial: 0115 8764315

- 1 Committee Membership Change**
To note that Councillor Ethan Radford has been appointed to fill a vacant seat on the Committee
- 2 Appointment of Vice Chair**
- 3 Apologies for absence**
- 4 Declarations of Interest**
- 5 Minutes** 3 - 10
To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2023
- 6 Committee Terms of Reference** 11 - 24
Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer
- 7 Children's Services Improvement** 25 - 34
Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer
- 8 Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People with Special Educational Need and/or Disability and their Families** 35 - 44
Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer
- 9 Work Programme** 45 - 50
Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

10 Future Meeting Dates

To agree to meet on the following Thursdays at 10am:

- 26 October 2023
- 30 November 2023
- 25 January 2024
- 28 March 2024
- 25 April 2024

If you need any advice on declaring an interest in any item on the agenda, please contact the Governance Officer shown above, if possible before the day of the meeting

Citizens attending meetings are asked to arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the meeting to be issued with visitor badges

Citizens are advised that this meeting may be recorded by members of the public. Any recording or reporting on this meeting should take place in accordance with the Council's policy on recording and reporting on public meetings, which is available at www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk. Individuals intending to record the meeting are asked to notify the Governance Officer shown above in advance.

Nottingham City Council

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 30 March 2023 from 11.02 am - 12.58 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Carole McCulloch (Chair)
Councillor Maria Joannou (Vice Chair)
Councillor Shuguftah Quddoos
Councillor Phil Jackson
Councillor Georgia Power
Councillor Cate Woodward
Councillor Samuel Gardiner

Absent

Councillor AJ Matsiko
Councillor Maria Watson

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor Cheryl Barnard -
Ailsa Barr - Director of Children's Integrated Services
Jane Garrard - Constitutional Services
Nicole Harris - Children's Social Care
James Lavender - Governance Officer
John Matravers - Service Manager, Safeguarding Partnerships
Catherine Underwood - Corporate Director for People

35 Apologies for absence

Councillor AJ Matisko – personal reasons
Councillor Maria Watson – unwell

36 Declarations of Interests

None.

37 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

38 Verbal update from the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools on Children's Integrated Services Improvement

Councillor Cheryl Barnard, Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools presented a verbal update on progress with the implementation of the Children's Integrated Services Improvement Plan. She highlighted the following information:

- a) 34 actions for improvements are complete;
- b) the social work capacity has increased through new internal recruitment and agency workers. A new triage system has been introduced to process the number of referrals made to the service;
- c) the Children's Integrated Services consent training has been undertaken across the Council;
- d) bed capacity has increased to support homeless children and a new advocacy contract being agreed for April;
- e) the Missing Children's Team has created new posts, including a Missing Children's Team Manager and two more Children's Workers;
- f) the care service has recently appointed new senior advisors;
- g) the Commissioning Team and D2N2 are working to increase the number of foster homes;
- h) the Council has received the letter following Ofsted's first monitoring visit to check for factual inaccuracies. The findings are embargoed until the first week of April. Initial indications show that the visit's findings are favourable;

In response to questions from the Committee and during subsequent discussion the following points were made.

- i) there were 10 posts created and recruited to with the Multi-Agency Safeguard Hub (MASH). Some of the posts are currently filled by agency workers to ensure sufficient resourcing within the Team. There are challenges in retaining social workers as there is a high turnover rate within the sector. The Council has links with universities in the area and use them to promote the Council's social worker recruitment through graduate job fairs;
- j) care leavers have access to support when they transition into adults around the 21-25 age bracket;
- k) the Council also offers a social worker apprenticeship programme. Under this programme, an individual does their three year degree and is also employed by the Council to be trained as a social worker. These programmes have been taken up by the Children's Integrated Services and Adult Social Care Services;
- l) a Committee member suggested that case studies from care leavers about how they have engaged with the service would be very beneficial in identifying opportunities for improving the service;

- m) the first monitoring visit following the Inspection took place between 28 February and 1 March 2023. The inspectors met with the Corporate Director for People (Children and Adults) and the Director for Children's Integrated Services on 27 February and also spoke with social work practitioners. They also spoke to children and young people using the service, as well as their families;
- n) a 28 day embargo for Ofsted reports is standard practice. A letter containing the initial findings is sent to the organisation or service being inspected. That organisation or service then has 5 days to respond to any inaccuracies within the report/letter. Any agreed changes are then made by Ofsted and then the final report/ letter is sent and put under the 28 day embargo;
- o) the letter detailing outcomes from the first monitoring visit will not be published by Ofsted, but letters from second and subsequent monitoring visits are published.

Resolved to request that the letter from the recent Ofsted Monitoring Visit is provided to Committee members as soon as it is available.

39 Child Exploitation

Councillor Cheryl Barnard, Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools, John Matravers, Head of Service for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, and Nicole Harris, Head of Service for Fieldwork Services presented the report on the actions taken by Nottingham City Council (NCC) and its partners in identifying, safeguarding and supporting children who have gone missing from home and are at risk of exploitation. They highlighted the following information:

- a) exploitation is a form of child abuse which involves coercion and deception to get children to do things that they do not want to do. Examples include sexual, criminal and financial exploitation. Children can be exploited to be involved in criminal activities such as modern slavery and county lines. Multiple types of exploitation can occur alongside one another or as part of other forms of abuse;
- b) one of the key tasks of Children's Integrated Services Team is to train staff at the Council and partner organisations to identify and respond to child exploitation;
- c) the use of language is an effective tool in raising awareness of child exploitation, for example, the legal definition of 'children' is anyone under the age of 18, so even if a 15 or 16 year old consider themselves a young person, they are classed as 'children';
- d) the methods used by perpetrators to draw children into exploitation involve not just tangible things such as giving them money, alcohol or drugs, but appealing to a child's emotions through giving them status, attention and love. They then use these to indebt the child and keep them under their control;

- e) perpetrator groups and individuals can be hard to track down as they tend to move around the country;
- f) children who are being exploited are more likely to be arrested and criminalised than the abusers;
- g) local protocols and national statutory guidance are used by Children's Integrated Services when a child goes missing from home or care;
- h) officers examine the factors about what has kept them away from home and what has attracted them to leave home;
- i) the 2022 Ofsted inspection into the Council's Children's Integrated Services identified improvements needed to the timeliness and effectiveness of Return Home Interviews. The Missing Children's Team has increased resources since January 2023 with the recruitment of a Team Manager in addition to the existing two Children's Workers. Recruitment to two more Children's Worker posts is underway to double the capacity of the team. These workers will be in place by April 2023;
- j) safety planning takes place for children after they have received their Return Home Interview;
- k) a multi-agency response is required when identifying and protecting children from exploitation. Partners include other Local Authority Children's Services, education institutions, the police, community groups and the voluntary sector;
- l) once perpetrators have been identified, it is important to hold them to account;
- m) all referrals go through the MASH team. The staff within MASH gather information and evidence from the children, their families and partner agencies. The outcome of this screening could be signposting for Early Help services or for a detailed Children and Family Assessment to be completed by a qualified social worker. An exploitation toolkit will be completed as part of this process to consider evidence of exploitation and inform risk analysis;
- n) if a child is at a medium or high risk of exploitation, an Exploitation Risk Assessment Meeting (ERAM) is held between the police, health and education colleagues, and the child and their family to identify and rate the risks to the child and any other children who are at risk of exploitation. The meeting is chaired by an independent Child Protection Coordinator. For children identified to be at high risk, the meetings take place every eight weeks minimum. For those at medium risk, they will take place every twelve weeks minimum and for those at low risk, a review meeting can be convened in response to changing risk levels or significant incidents;
- o) the exploitation toolkits and risk ratings are reviewed on a regular basis;
- p) Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meetings are held monthly to provide clear and consistent identification and assessment of children at risk of exploitation. They involve senior representatives from partners including social

care, the police, health, education, substance misuse services, voluntary sector and mental health services. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss children (or groups of children) identified to be at the highest risk, identify hotspot areas of the city where there is heightened activity increasing the risk of exploitation, and identify targeted action which can be taken to disrupt the exploitation of vulnerable children;

- q) there are many cross-cutting themes regarding exploitation in Nottingham that require close working with Nottinghamshire County Council. Therefore, both Safeguarding Children Partnerships have established the Cross Partnership Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Management Group. Key partners from Health, Police and Education are members of the group. The main areas addressed by the group include:
- problem identification;
 - workforce support;
 - service design;
 - quality assurance;
- r) areas for development as part of the wider child exploitation strategy include partnership training and learning events, the introduction of practical guidance for frontline practitioners, a review of MACE meetings and a review and refresh of exploitation toolkit, as well as the expansion of the Missing Children's Team;

In response to questions from the Committee and during subsequent discussion the following points were made:

- s) MACE meetings have helped identify key areas where children are vulnerable to exploitation. Once these areas have been identified, then the police can patrol the areas to identify perpetrators and take subsequent and appropriate action;
- t) improvements to the reporting and recording of children going missing may show an increase in the number of missing children in Nottingham compared with other cities and local authorities, but the actual number of children being reporting missing in Nottingham has gone down;
- u) the message of "Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility" needs to be communicated throughout the community. Members will be taught this when the Children's Integrated Services undertake their induction sessions after the local elections in May 2023;
- v) preventative work regarding child exploitation takes place in schools with visits from the police and youth services. All schools have a programme of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education and child exploitation is covered as a part of that curriculum. The police undertake three preventative programmes a year in areas where there is a high risk of child exploitation. These events have included community barbeques;

- w) a Committee member highlighted the importance of clear communication to children about the dangers of exploitation;
- x) the Council does not own any unregulated children's homes;
- y) there are clear mechanisms for social workers and officers from Children's Integrated Services to meet at risk children twice a week;
- z) there is no current Council strategy specifically for tackling child exploitation, but a strategy is being developed and will be launched in the summer. Partner organisations that are not part of the official multi-agency group will be notified that they can inform the strategy. The strategy will be communicated to Council departments that do not officially work with children, but do come into contact with children;
- aa) mechanisms for recording the exploitation of children from other local authorities who have been sent to live in Nottingham and vice-versa are in place;
- bb) practitioners are confident in using the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) to recognise exploitation and make referrals;
- cc) there are opportunities to work collaboratively across the Council, especially with Community Support Officers and youth workers, to support families who are struggling and with children who are vulnerable to exploitation;
- dd) the data gathered from Home Return Interviews is used to identify measures to reduce the risk of re-referral;
- ee) frontline workers need the confidence to identify exploitation if they believe they see it;
- ff) the target for a completed Return Home Interview is 72 hours after the child has returned home;
- gg) children who are excluded from school are more at risk of exploitation from perpetrators. The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools will raise this issue in her meeting with the Regional Director for the East Midlands;
- hh) previous prosecutions of perpetrators were brought about through the work of the Council's Head of Children's Services with Nottinghamshire Police;
- ii) a further investigation is needed between the connections between children with certain disabilities who were more likely to be excluded from school and those children who have been exploited;
- jj) youth ambassadors should be involved in the review of the service and recommend improvements.

Resolved to:

- 1. Recommend that the Child Exploitation Strategy is co-produced with partners and that it seeks to embed trauma informed practice and engagement with all frontline workers who may have contact with children and young people;**
- 2. Review implementation of the Child Exploitation Strategy and, when it does so, invite representatives of Nottinghamshire Police to attend;**
- 3. Request that the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools provides feedback regarding exclusions to the Committee from her forthcoming meeting with the Department of Education's Regional Director for the East Midlands.**

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Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Terms of Reference

Description

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee (the Committee) is a politically balanced Non-Executive Committee of Council. It is established to discharge functions conferred by the Localism Act 2011 and other relevant legislation in relation to matters affecting children and young people. The Committee is accountable to Council and will report annually to Council on its activities during the previous year.

The Committee will offer constructive review, feedback and challenge to the Council's Executive and other relevant local decision makers on their decisions, actions, policy, strategy and performance.

Purpose

The purpose of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is to:

- (a) hold local decision-makers, including the Council's Executive and relevant Boards of the Council's group of companies, to account for their decisions, actions, performance and management of risk
- (b) review existing policies and strategies of the Council and other local decision-makers where they impact on Nottingham children and young people
- (c) contribute to the development of new policies and strategies of the Council and other local decision-makers where they impact on Nottingham children and young people
- (d) explore any matters affecting Nottingham and/ or its children and young people
- (e) make reports and recommendations to relevant local agencies with respect to the delivery of their functions, including the Council and its Executive
- (f) review decisions made but not yet implemented by the Council's Executive in accordance with the Call-in Procedure.

Objectives

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee will:

- (a) develop and manage a work programme to ensure all statutory and other roles and responsibilities are fulfilled for matters relating to children and young people to the required standard and which covers review and development of key strategic issues, policies and strategies relevant to Nottingham and its residents, and which adds value through the examination of issues of local importance and concern, in accordance with the scope and approach set out in Article 11 – Overview and Scrutiny.
- (b) to work with the other scrutiny committees to support effective delivery of a co-ordinated overview and scrutiny work programme
- (c) monitor the effectiveness of its work programme and the impact of outcomes from overview and scrutiny activity
- (d) regularly review the decisions, actions and performance of the Council's Executive and other relevant local decision makers, including the Council's group of companies, in order to fulfil its role in holding those decision makers to

account. Where relevant this role will be co-ordinated with those of the Audit Committee and the Companies Governance Executive Committee.

- (e) receive petitions relating in accordance with the Council's Petitions Scheme
- (f) consider any relevant matter referred to it by any of its members and consider any relevant local government matter referred to it by any Nottingham City Councillor.

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has no decision making powers but has the power to:

- (a) require members of the Council's Executive, and certain other local decision makers, to: provide information to the Committee, to attend meetings, and answer questions posed by the Committee in relation to their Executive role
- (b) invite other persons to attend meetings of the Committee to provide information and/ or answer questions
- (c) make recommendations and provide reports to relevant decision makers, and in particular the Council's Executive, on matters within their remits. The Council's Executive and other relevant decision makers have a duty to respond in writing to such recommendations within two months of receipt.

Further detail on the rules and procedures relating to Overview and Scrutiny can be found in Article 11 - Overview and Scrutiny.

Membership and Chairing

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has 8 members.

Members of the Executive are excluded from membership of the Committee.

Executive Assistants responsible for assisting on a Portfolio within the remit of this Committee are excluded from membership of this Committee.

The Chair of the Committee will be appointed by Full Council at its Annual General Meeting. The Chair cannot be a Chair of the Board of a company in the Council's Group of companies that relates to matters within the Committee's remit.

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee may choose to appoint co-opted members to the Committee. Voting arrangements for co-optees will be in accordance with the scheme of voting rights for co-opted member of overview and scrutiny committees set out in Article 11 – Overview and Scrutiny.

When the Committee plans to consider a matter that relates to an education function which is the responsibility of the Executive, the statutory education co-optees* must be invited to be full and equal members of the Committee with voting rights for that specific item.

*Church of England Diocese representative (if the local authority maintains one or more Church of England schools)/ Roman Catholic Diocese representative (if the local authority maintains one or more Roman Catholic schools)/ Parent Governors representatives (if the local authority maintains one or more schools).

Substitutes

Substitute members are permitted for this Committee.

Quorum

The standard quorum for Council committees applies to this Committee.

Frequency of Meetings

The Committee meets between six and eleven times a year.

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Overview and Scrutiny Protocol

Vision for Overview & Scrutiny in Nottingham

Overview and Scrutiny in Nottingham will ensure effective democratic accountability and support effective scrutiny. This will support and add real value to decision making. This will be achieved by a Councillor-led Overview and Scrutiny function which is held in high regard by its partners and stakeholders and which will add value for the citizens of Nottingham.

This vision recognises that Overview and Scrutiny is a core component of the governance structure of the Council, and that Scrutiny Councillors, the Executive and senior officers will all work to create the right culture and lead the way in making the vision a reality. Ensuring good Scrutiny in Nottingham is a whole council responsibility.

To achieve this Scrutiny will follow the nationally agreed 'Four Principles of Good Scrutiny';

- a. Provides constructive "critical friend" challenge;
- b. Amplify public voice and concerns;
- c. Be led by 'independent minded people' who take responsibility for their role
- d. Drives improvement in public services;

<https://www.cfgs.org.uk/revisiting-the-four-principles-of-good-scrutiny/>

Conditions for Success

To succeed, the Council recognises that the following conditions need to be present:

1. Parity of Esteem between the Executive and Scrutiny

Scrutiny is a whole Council responsibility. The Council recognises that Overview and Scrutiny Committees have an important role to play in supporting high quality decision-making and policy development. There is collective responsibility to enable Overview and Scrutiny to function effectively.

Parity of Esteem means that the value and benefit of Overview and Scrutiny is recognised and held in high regard. This means creating a strong organisational culture that recognises the critical role of independent Scrutiny in the governance process is essential to adding value and creating efficient and effective services. Without recognition of this, Councillors and officers involved in Scrutiny are not empowered to exercise their duties as they should, resulting in poor accountability.

The Council will strive to encourage and support a mix of more experienced and new Councillors as members of the Overview and Scrutiny committees.

2. Clear Purpose and Focus

Scrutiny activities should be well planned and timely. The focus of items coming before the Overview and Scrutiny Committees should be sufficiently focused so that the Committee are clear what they are looking at and there is an understanding about what they are hoping to achieve. There must be clarity on what Scrutiny wants to do and confidence in it being a good use of the Committees' valuable time, that it can add value, that it can influence outcomes and make an impact.

The Council recognise that good topics for Overview and Scrutiny to consider are those that;

- are critical to the effectiveness of the Council
- are a big priority or concern to their communities
- pose a significant risk or threat to the Council and the community
- present a significant opportunity for Overview and Scrutiny to make a meaningful contribution

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, the Statutory Scrutiny Officer and a Senior Governance Officer will meet with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Chief Executive on a monthly basis to identify new and emerging areas where Scrutiny can support Executive decision making in relation to emerging priorities and policy. Where appropriate meetings with Portfolio holders and other relevant stakeholders will be convened to support and inform the development of matters that have come to the attention of the Committee or are on the work programme. This will ensure that the Overview and Scrutiny Committees are focussing their attention on matters where they can add most value and provide valuable support to policy development and executive decision making.

The Statutory Scrutiny Officer will attend CLT on a monthly basis to update Senior Leadership team on the work being undertaken by the Committees and to receive suggestions on future areas that the Overview and Scrutiny committees may wish to factor in to their work programme.

When considering and setting the work programme, including making changes the Committee will have regard to the flow chart attached at appendix 1 to ensure that the Committee's work is prioritised effectively.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees are in charge of its own work programme and there will occasionally be times when Scrutiny and the Executive do not agree on which items the Overview and Scrutiny Committees should consider but with meaningful engagement such occasions will be rare.

Scrutiny Committees must review work programmes to identify a clear order of priority for all topics being considered. It is acknowledged that it is not possible for Scrutiny to look at all items of interest, and it is important that committees do not overreach.

The Chair is responsible for ensuring that that the Committee remains focussed on the items in the work programme and that prioritisation is appropriately apportioned.

Once the work programme is established it must be published and shared with internal and external organisations, so they are clear on upcoming topics and have plenty of time to prepare.

3. Evidence Based Questioning, Conclusions and Formulating Recommendations that Add Value

The Scrutiny process should be impartial and driven by the evidence. Scrutiny should focus on the big issues facing the Council and the Communities they serve. Items before the Overview and Scrutiny Committees should not be politically motivated, parochial, repetitious or used as an opportunity to showcase. At the conclusion of an item the Chair should summarise the representations made and draw together the conclusions of the committee based on the evidence available to it and, where appropriate, set out the recommendations of the committee based on those conclusions and evidence that are clear, feasible, deliverable and provide value for money by securing benefits that outweigh the costs of implementation.

It should be noted that the Scrutiny process is not meant to be an “expert” review. If expert input is required that should be sought by the Committee as part of their evidence gathering process.

When Scrutiny is making recommendations, it must consider the impact that they will have and the resource implications, obtaining advice from relevant Executive Councillors and officers where necessary.

Recommendations will be sent to the relevant decision maker and I

Recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be recorded to enable it to be reviewed, tracked and assurance sought about what action has been taken as a result. In accordance with the spirit of the legislation when asked the individual or body who the recommendation has been directed to is responsible for responding with reasons for why they have/have not accepted recommendations and if the recommendations are accepted to provide evidence of how the recommendations have been implemented.

Scrutiny must add value and not duplicate the other forms of performance management, review or inspection. Equally, decision-makers must seek to ensure that Scrutiny is involved in a timely manner, at a point where the outcome can be influenced, to ensure and to ensure any involvement is meaningful. Decision makers should give meaningful consideration to recommendations made by Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

4. Councillor Leadership and Engagement

Councillors have a unique perspective to bring to the Overview and Scrutiny process, a different point of view which brings something distinct to both policy development and scrutiny of Executive decisions.

Committee Members set their own work programmes, work on a cross party basis and can look at things from angles that might not be apparent to Executive Councillors or senior officers.

To be successful, Councillors and officers must engage with Scrutiny in a positive way. In order to support this presentations and supporting information should be provided to the Committee at least 48 hours in advance so that committee members can come fully prepared and ready to ask questions/explore issues.

5. Reflecting the Concerns of Residents

When carrying out its work Scrutiny should take into account the concerns of residents, and where they can add value and make an impact. This may include, if appropriate and at the discretion of the Chair, speaking at a formal meeting of a Committee, or by way of an informal meeting, visit, submission of written information etc established for the Committee to gather evidence to inform their thinking and scrutiny.

The views and ideas of citizens, service providers and other agencies with an interest in the subject under review are all valuable in effective Scrutiny. Scrutiny should involve stakeholders and take account of views of service users and the public, with particular efforts to engage groups that are harder to reach. Constructive engagement and clear lines of communication should enable a two-way flow of information between Scrutiny and all those involved, including feedback of results.

Reflecting citizens' concerns will entail Scrutiny taking a wider view than Council policies and services. In particular, Scrutiny has a legitimate interest in scrutinising organisations and projects that receive public funding to deliver goods and services, including Council owned companies. This should be recognised by the Council and, where relevant, consider the need to provide assistance to Scrutiny Councillors to obtain information from organisations the Council has contracted to deliver services.

6. Mutual Respect and Good Faith

While Scrutiny should be constructive and challenging, it will only be successful if all partners work together considerately, within a climate of non-partisan working. To support non-partisan working political groups should respect the independence of Scrutiny and must not seek to influence its work.

Scrutiny must be forensic and challenging but Councillors must also collaborate to support decision-makers to do their work better. Councillors must listen and engage constructively, irrespective of political group, putting the values of Scrutiny into practice.

Decision-makers have to be open to scrutiny and create a culture which enables effective scrutiny to happen.

7. Clear Roles, Responsibilities and Relationships

To facilitate good Scrutiny, the roles of all participants in the scrutiny process must be clear and understood by all.

In summary:

Overview and Scrutiny Chairs are responsible for leading and co-ordinating the work of the Scrutiny Committee so that Scrutiny functions in a positive, constructive and

non-partisan manner which provides a good environment for the constructive challenge of decision-makers.

Overview & Scrutiny Councillors must contribute time and effort to the development of the Scrutiny work programme to ensure that the items selected adequately reflect of the needs of the Citizens of Nottingham, focus on the bigger picture, and are prioritised effectively.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee members are required to attend Committee meetings, come prepared and be ready and willing to contribute to committee meetings by asking meaningful questions; they must be independent minded and not pre-judge issues coming to Scrutiny nor use the meeting to promote narrow or parochial interests. Overview and Scrutiny Committee members are also expected to prioritise associated training, briefing and evidence gathering sessions.

The senior political leadership of the Council set the tone of how successfully Overview and Scrutiny will be able to work. Executive Councillors should act as a champion for the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees both within and outside the organisation. They will create a culture which enables effective Scrutiny to happen, and will ensure that any recommendations of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee are responded to and agreed recommendations implemented. In accordance with the legislation Executive members, and executive assistants on sufficient notice will provide requested information and prioritise and make themselves available to attend Overview and Scrutiny Committees and come prepared and willing to answer questions.

Officers should provide impartial and high quality advice and evidence to Scrutiny Committees and may be asked to provide information and/or attend Overview and Scrutiny Committees to explain policies or to answer questions on service delivery. Where officers are asked to appear at Overview and Scrutiny Committees they are there to answer questions and their evidence should, as far as possible, be about questions of fact and explanation relating to policies and decisions.

All Councillors are expected to act in accordance with the highest standards of probity in public life, and in accordance with the Councillor Code of Conduct at all times.

8. Transparency of the Scrutiny Process and Access to Information

Scrutiny should be a transparent process and encourage open and honest discussion. Processes and reports should be clear and accessible to the public. Formal meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committees are subject to Access to Information Procedure Rules as set out in Article 13 of the Constitution.

All formal Committee agendas published on the Council's website. Work programmes are published on each O&S Committee's agenda.

An annual Scrutiny Report will be presented to Full Council outlining Scrutiny activity in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee terms of reference, as set out at Article 9 of the Constitution. The Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees

may by exception request additional reports be taken to Council to highlight areas of specific concern or make recommendations about particular issues.

To be effective, a Scrutiny Committee must receive relevant information in a timely manner. This is supported by legislation which gives the Committee rights to access information that relates to Scrutiny work, even where information is exempt from publication. The legislation is attached at Appendix 2 and reference in Article 13 of the Constitution.

9. Training and Development

All Councillors and Senior Officers will be required to attend training in relation to Overview and Scrutiny to ensure that the role of Overview and Scrutiny is understood and the role and value that Overview and Scrutiny plays in supporting good decision making and policy development.

If training for specific matters due to come before the Overview and Scrutiny Committees is required and sufficient notice is provided this will be arranged.

**Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
28 September 2023**

Ofsted Monitoring Visit

Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To scrutinise progress in improving outcomes for children and young people through delivery of the Children's Integrated Services Improvement Plan.

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked:
- a) if it wishes to make any comments or recommendations regarding the approach to, or progress in improvement of Children's Services; and
 - b) to consider its approach to future scrutiny of improvement, including focus and timescales.

3 Background information

- 3.1 In November 2022, the Committee considered the findings of the inspection of children's services carried out by Ofsted in July 2022, and the action being taken and proposed to be taken to address the arising issues. The Council has been judged to be 'Requires improvement to be good' in the domains of the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families and the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers; and 'Inadequate' in the domain of experiences and progress of children who need help and protection. As a result, the overall outcome of the inspection judgement was 'Inadequate' and Ofsted identified eight specific areas for improvement. At that time the Committee was assured that work had already started on addressing the issues raised by Ofsted, alongside reviewing its pre-existing Improvement Plan to ensure that it reflects the specific areas identified for improvement by Ofsted as well as wider development of the Service.
- 3.2 In January 2023, the Committee reviewed the development and delivery of the Improvement Plan, including speaking to the Independent Advisor appointed by the Department for Education to provide support and challenge who is the Chair of the Improvement Board. He expressed the view that the Corporate Director, Director and Portfolio Holder have a real grip of the issues that need addressing and that a lot had already been achieved in relation to the 'front door' to services, but that there was more to do, for example in relation issues of consent and ensuring consistent thresholds across the service. The Committee was informed

that the most significant risk to delivery of the Improvement Plan was workforce.

- 3.3 The Committee also received a detailed update on progress in addressing the issues relating to the 'front door' to services (the multi-agency safeguarding hub [MASH] and duty and assessment services). At that time the Committee commented that this update was well-evidenced and reassuring.
- 3.4 In March 2023, the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools updated the Committee on progress and the first Ofsted Monitoring Visit that took place between 28 February and 1 March. The letter summarising the findings of the Visit was subsequently circulated to Committee members.
- 3.5 The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools and the Director of Children's Integrated Services will be attending this meeting to provide an update on progress in delivering improvement and the impact of this on outcomes for children and young people, including the findings of the second Ofsted Monitoring Visit.

4 List of attached information

- 4.1 To follow

5 Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information

- 5.1 None

6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

- 6.1 Ofsted Inspection of Nottingham City local authority children's services July 2022
- 6.2 Reports to, and minutes of meetings of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 3 November 2022, 26 January 2023 and 30 March 2023.

7 Wards affected

- 7.1 All

8 Contact information

- 8.1 Jane Garrard, Senior Governance Officer
jane.garrard@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Meeting Title	Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee
Report Title	Ofsted Local Authority 2 nd Monitoring Visit of Nottingham Report
Meeting Date	28 September 2023

Corporate Director(s)/Director(s):	Catherine Underwood, Corporate Director for People Ailsa Barr, Director for Children’s Integrated Services
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Cheryl Barnard
Report author and contact details:	Ailsa Barr, Director for Children’s Integrated Services Sam Morris, Head of Strategy and Improvement

<p>Summary of issues:</p> <p>Children’s Services represent some of the most important responsibilities of a council and as a result are subject to a very robust regulatory regime. In July 2022 Nottingham City Children’s Services received its full Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS), which led to an inadequate judgement. As a result, Children’s Services have now entered a monitoring visit regime.</p> <p>On 25th and 26th July 2023 a second monitoring visit with a focus of Children in Need and Children with a Child Protection Plan (including disabled children) took place. This report provides some context to the monitoring visit regime and presents the findings of the narrative letter published by Ofsted of its second monitoring visit of Nottingham’s Children’s Services. It reflects the findings, the journey of improvement in the services and the next steps to secure sustainable improvements for children.</p>
<p>Recommendation(s):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee consider the findings of Ofsted’s 2nd Monitoring Visit of Children’s Services. 2. Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee confirm its commitment to improving Children’s Services and its ambition for Nottingham Children’s Services to be delivering consistently good social care services to children and young people. 3. Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee note the progress made since the full inspection and the next steps

1. Background

Delivery of children’s services is a significant statutory duty for the council and a priority for the whole Council. It is essential that the council takes the actions necessary to achieve sustainable good outcomes for children. In July 2022 Nottingham City Children’s Services received its Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS), at which the authority was judged to be inadequate. This means that the Local Authority has entered a series of monitoring visits – short 2-day inspections focussed upon areas where inspectors feel improvements are most needed, based upon the priority areas identified within the ILACS report.

The first of these visits took place on 28th February / 1st March 2023 and was focused on the immediate response to children in need of help and protection. Inspectors on that occasion reviewed the authority's 'Front Door' (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, Duty and Assessment and Brief Intervention Teams, as well as our response to 16/17-year olds presenting as homeless). The first letter is not published on the Ofsted website, but local authorities can disseminate the letter at their discretion. A report was presented at that time to Corporate Leadership Team and the Executive Panel and was shared with the Scrutiny committee members, detailing the findings of that visit. In summary, Inspectors noted that there had been improvements since the July 2022 ILACS visit:

- Senior leaders had taken appropriate action, identified the things that need to change, and some actions had been taken swiftly. They noted that senior leaders had clear oversight and knowledge of performance in the first response service and had appropriately invested resources, including an increase in workforce capacity and management oversight.
- This was noted to have had a positive impact on staff morale as their workloads have become more manageable, which in turn had led to recent improvements in the timeliness and quality of responses to children when they present as being in need of help and protection at the 'front door'.
- In particular, inspectors noted that there has been a strong improvement in the service response to children aged 16 and 17 who present to the MASH as homeless since the previous inspection.
- Inspectors acknowledged that senior leaders recognised that work needs to continue to sustain and continue the early progress and there are further areas for improvement, such as continuing to improve the timeliness in visits to children and the consistency of the quality of children's assessments.
- Inspectors reinforced the importance of partnership and wider council responsibilities in ensuring that children receive an appropriate and timely response is also a partnership and wider Council responsibility. The inspection confirmed that we have further work to do with our partners to ensure the timeliness of response to children presenting in need of help and protection is not delayed, such as partner agencies obtaining consent from families before they submit an email or multi-agency referral form (MARF) to request support for children and ensuring the quality of information submitted by partners on the MARFs is consistent. We will also need to work with the police to improve their response to children who have experienced incidents of domestic abuse – in terms of timeliness of information shared and attendance at the daily multi-agency high-risk domestic abuse meetings to consider the risks to children.

Those findings were a positive first step and acknowledgement of the progress that was starting to be made. Since then Children's Services received their second monitoring visit on 25th and 26th July 2023. This report presents the findings of that visit.

2. Findings of the second monitoring visit

On 25th and 26th July 2023, Nottingham City Children's Services received its second monitoring visit under the Ofsted inspection framework for children's services judged inadequate. This visit was focused upon Children in Need and Children with Child Protection Plans, including disabled children. As a result, the visit was primarily focused upon our

Fieldwork and Whole Life Disability Services. A copy of the letter detailing the monitoring visit findings is attached at appendix 1.

Inspectors noted that there are early signs of tangible improvements in both the fieldwork practice and the environment in which staff work as a result of a committed and stable leadership team and investment in agency staffing to stabilise the workforce and reduce caseloads. This means that children can build strong relationships with their workers, who have a good understanding of children's needs. Children are visited regularly, and often more frequently than the minimum amount set out in their plan, meaning visits are based upon needs and support positive progression of the plan for children. It was noted that the quality assurance and performance framework had been strengthened and is being embedded and is supporting leaders to focus upon further strengthening practice and learning. Supervision is taking place regularly and staff feel supported.

Inspectors found that there are some areas of continued challenge around retention of social workers leading to a change in worker for some children. This impacts upon their ability to build trusting relationships with their worker. Inspectors also noted the need to develop consistency in practice across the workforce in areas such as the quality of recording, planning, reviewing actions routinely to evidence progress, ensuring parents receive reports in good time, as well as ensuring a consistent use of the supervision tool to provide evidence of challenge and progression of children's plans. It was also noted that waiting lists for services impacted upon children's plans progressing.

The inspection team observed that senior leaders were aware of the areas for further development and have a focus on the wider areas of transformation across the service and wider partnership.

These findings provide an important benchmark in our journey of improvement and taken together with the first monitoring visit demonstrate that improvements in our response to children in need of help and protection have been made.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that there are some significant risks to sustaining the progress made and continuing to make the necessary improvements. As noted within the findings, the leadership team acknowledge that improvements need to be sustainable, which is set against a backdrop of workforce instability and reliance upon agency staffing – a nationwide challenge for children's services. Maintaining staffing levels remains challenging, not just locally but nationally, where the recruitment and retention of experienced social workers is difficult, and services rely heavily upon agency staffing.

The service is also making practice improvements at the same time as its wider Children's Services Transformation programme, which presents a risk to maintaining focus on the 'at pace' improvements that need to be made. Whilst both work programmes are working closely and in tandem, the capacity, ability and pace of change required means making and sustaining changes as well as sustaining staff energy and morale is challenging, especially when a stable workforce is challenging to achieve. It is also important to acknowledge that the Children's Service's Improvement and Transformation programmes also sit within the significant wider Council change programme and the budgetary pressures that the authority faces.

3. Next Steps

Although Ofsted's findings were in line with the service understanding of its progress, there will be a further review and update of the Children's Services improvement plan to ensure

that areas for improvement are addressed and strengths are built upon. As noted within the findings the improvement plan has regular oversight and governance from the Children's Executive Improvement and Partnership Boards and these Boards will continue to provide ongoing governance. A copy of the Monitoring Visit letter has been shared with the Boards and with the Improvement and Assurance Board via Sir Tony Redmond.

As noted above the service has entered a period of monitoring visits - and can anticipate between 3 – 4 visits a year until our next full ILACS inspection in approximately 18- 24 months' time. The focus of the next 2 visits is anticipated to be to our Children and Care and Care Leavers Services, with the first of these expected before the end of the year.

Similarly, to the Fieldwork Service the Children in Care teams are undertaking a significant piece of transformation work in tandem with its improvement work, notably around ensuring we have the right care settings for children when they need these. Ensuring sufficiency in placements for children feeds into the wider medium-term financial plan and Council budgetary pressures. This is therefore a key focus for the service and wider Council.

Whilst the service is working hard to deliver tangible improvements to outcomes for children in care and care leavers, the service is facing a number of vulnerabilities to delivering sustained and consistent improvements, which the leadership team and wider Council are seeking to address. The service has invested in additional Personal Advisor capacity to reduce caseloads to allow care leavers to build trusting and meaningful relationships with care leavers. However, recruiting to these posts has taken longer than desired, due to a lack of suitable candidates.

Within the children in care service the turnover of staff has had a negative impact on caseloads and children, with some children experiencing a change of social worker too often. Senior leaders have attempted to mitigate this through the recruitment of agency front line staff and agency service managers, to enable greater oversight of outcomes for children and young people, but this remains a challenge for the service, similar to the national picture.

In addition, the service has been successful in obtaining some Department for Education funding to support its improvement journey and to support additional capacity around its improvement journey.

30 August 2023

Catherine Underwood
Corporate Director of People
Nottingham City Council
Loxley House
Station Street
Nottingham
NG2 3NG

Dear Catherine

Monitoring visit to Nottingham City children's services

This letter summarises the findings of the monitoring visit to Nottingham City children's services on the 25 and 26 July 2023. This was the second monitoring visit since the local authority was judged inadequate in July 2022. His Majesty's Inspectors for this visit were Julie Knight and Margaret Burke.

Areas covered by the visit

This visit reviewed progress made in support for children in need, including those subject to a protection plan and disabled children. Inspectors reviewed:

- The quality of children's assessments plans and reviews.
- The quality of visits and work with children.
- The quality of management oversight and supervision.
- Stability and sustainability of the safeguarding service workforce, including the impact of current caseloads on practice.
- Performance and quality assurance oversight of senior leaders.

This visit was carried out in line with the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework.

Headline findings

Since the previous monitoring visit, a committed and stable leadership team has continued to progress the 'Changing Lives, Changing Futures' improvement programme for children's services. Senior leaders have an accurate and realistic understanding of the quality of frontline practice, which is supported by a revised quality assurance and performance framework. There are early signs of tangible improvements in field work practice and the environment in which staff work. A reduction in caseloads has been supported by investment in additional agency social

workers. However, this is a temporary arrangement and senior leaders know that improvements need to be sustainable. There continues to be inconsistency in the quality of practice for children in need and those subject to a child protection plan, compounded by challenges in achieving greater workforce stability.

Findings and evaluation of progress

Some children with a child in need or protection plan have the opportunity to develop strong and meaningful relationships with their social workers. This helps children to feel confident in sharing their views and wishes so that workers understand what their daily life is like. This knowledge enables workers to assess and analyse children's needs and identify risks to inform planning. Disabled children's social workers in the whole life disability service have a sound understanding of the needs of children and the impact of children's disabilities on them and their family's day-to-day lives.

Some children have too many changes in social worker. When a change in social worker happens, necessary work to progress children's plans is delayed. As a result, some children and families find it difficult to begin a trusting relationship with a newly allocated social worker and for a small number of children it means risks can increase. Senior leaders know this and have an ambitious workforce offer and delivery plan that is leading to some stability in staffing. However, this continues to be an area of significant challenge, and the sustainability of a stable workforce is an area of priority for children's services.

Children are visited regularly by social workers, and when children need extra support, this can be more often than is specified in their plan. Visits to children are often supported by children and family practitioners, co-working with social workers, when involved with larger family groups. Children appropriately have the opportunity to see workers alone or at school. Children's records reflect some children's views and wishes well, and some are sufficiently detailed about the purpose of visits. This is an area of gradual progress, but the quality of recording is not consistent in all children's records. Some children's records provide limited information about children's views, and there can be a lack of information about children's presentation and their home environment.

Some children and families do not receive support quickly enough, due to waiting lists for services which support families experiencing domestic abuse or mental health difficulties. This can also lead to delays in children's plans progressing. Social workers try to be creative and find alternative support for children and their families. While many disabled children receive appropriate intervention and help, there are often long waiting lists for some short breaks services and there are challenges in finding direct payment and outreach workers.

Recent child and family assessments in the whole life disability service appropriately include children's and parents' views. Disabled children's social workers are skilled in

seeking children's views when children use alternative methods of communication. Assessments include a clear analysis of children's family history, their needs and current risks, which helps to inform decision-making at child protection review conferences for children with a child protection plan. Disabled children with child-in-need plans do not always benefit from having an up-to-date assessment of their needs. This reduces the quality of information in their child-in-need plan, so progress is not easy to monitor.

When assessments identify reduced risks to children on a child protection plan, social workers provide a recommendation to step down support to a child-in-need plan, and this receives appropriate oversight from the team manager. Child protection coordinators make appropriate efforts to ensure that parents and carers receive social work reports in time before meetings are held. Audit activity has identified that parents and carers do not always receive reports in good time, and this is something that senior leaders are sighted on as part of service improvements. Interpreters are appropriately used in review meetings to ensure that families can be fully engaged and understand the child protection process.

The majority of review meetings for children in need are held regularly and at a frequency which meets the needs of children and their families. Most child in need meetings are attended by the right professionals, who share up-to-date information about children's needs, or, if they cannot attend, they submit a report to update on progress. Child-in-need meetings do not always review the actions from the original plan, which makes it difficult to evaluate what difference intervention and support are making for children.

Most child protection core group meetings are held regularly and are attended by relevant partner agencies. Some children, about whom there are concerns of neglect, do not always have a health representative attending. This reduces the effectiveness of meetings and does not ensure that all risks are shared and known or that the family and professionals are fully updated about all of children's needs.

Children's plans do not always identify individual children's needs and refer generically to all the children in the family. The quality of plans is not consistent across the service and not all urgent actions have specific timescales or are prioritised so that families and professionals are really clear about what needs to change and when. Some plans are specific and clearly show what progress is being made to improve children's circumstances.

Senior leaders have strengthened the quality assurance and performance framework, and this is beginning to be embedded across the service. Audits identify the right areas for improvement and development, which helps focus senior leaders' work to strengthen practice and learning. Stability of the workforce and the quality of supervision and management oversight are high on senior leaders' agenda and are appropriate priorities as part of the transformation programme.

Senior leaders have focused on ensuring that social workers have the right tools to help them do their job well. Social workers are consistently positive about the direct work toolkit bags which they have all been provided with to help support their direct work with children. Children are beginning to benefit from the improvement in the quality of direct work completed with them. There has been a recent re-launch and revision of a neglect toolkit. This is very early in its implementation, so it is too soon to see its impact. However, staff are aware of this, and children's records demonstrate that it is beginning to be used in practice.

Senior leaders have taken appropriate action to reduce the caseloads of social workers and child protection coordinators so that children have the best opportunity to build a relationship with workers involved with them. This has been supported by investment in the additional resource of additional temporary agency social workers. Senior leaders have an appropriate focus on the wider areas of transformation across the service and across the partnership. They acknowledge that improvements need to be sustainable in the longer term.

Supervision for social workers is mostly taking place regularly, and the format of the supervision tool, when used well, is making the supervision process a reflective and focused discussion with a clear sense of risks and needs for the child. This includes a review of previous supervision actions that have been agreed. However, not all managers use the tool effectively. Some actions are not always followed through, and in some supervision records, there is no evidence of appropriate challenge or questioning by the manager to help progress children's plans. Senior management oversight of children on plans for a long period of time is not always visible in children's records.

Social workers are positive about working for Nottingham City and about the support they receive from line managers, who they describe as accessible, approachable and calm. Staff can access a comprehensive range of training opportunities, which is also available to agency social workers, and this appreciated and valued.

I am copying this letter to the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Julie Knight
His Majesty's Inspector

**Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
28 September 2023**

Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) and their Families

Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To scrutinise progress in improving support and services to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/ or Disabilities and their families, with a particular focus on communication, engagement and co-production with parents and families to improve outcomes for those children, young people and their families.

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked:
- a) if it wishes to make any comments or recommendations regarding the approach to, or progress in improving SEND provision; and
 - b) to consider its approach to any future scrutiny, including focus and timescales.

3 Background information

- 3.1 In November 2021 Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) carried out an inspection of how well the City carried out its statutory duties in relation to children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The inspection did not identify any significant weaknesses that required a Written Statement of Action to be issued but, in addition to areas of strength, it did identify some areas for development. In January 2022, the Committee spoke to representatives from the Council and the then Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group about how they were responding to those findings.
- 3.2 Based on the evidence available to it, the Committee welcomed the largely positive findings of the inspection and the planning taking place to address areas identified for improvement. The Committee felt that the theme relating to effective communication and engagement with parents was particularly important and decide to review whether, 18 months later, communication, engagement and co-production with parents and families of children and young people with SEND has improved.
- 3.3 The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools and the Director for Education have submitted a paper (attached) summarising the outcome of the Local Area Inspection, legislative and inspection

changes that have happened since then including the introduction of a new inspection framework and priorities going forward. They will be attending the meeting to discuss this with the Committee.

4 List of attached information

- 4.1 'Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Update' from Corporate Director for People, Director of Education and Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education

5 Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information

- 5.1 None

6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

- 6.1 Outcome letter from the Joint Area SEND Inspection in Nottingham 2021
- 6.2 Report to and minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 27 January 2022
- 6.3 Children and Families Act 2014
- 6.4 SEND Code of Practice 2015

7 Wards affected

- 7.1 All

8 Contact information

- 8.1 Jane Garrard, Senior Governance Officer
jane.garrard@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Meeting Title	Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee
Report Title	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Update
Meeting Date	28 September 2023

Corporate Director(s)/Director(s):	Catherine Underwood, Corporate Director for People Nick Lee, Director of Education
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Cheryl Barnard
Report author and contact details:	Janine Walker, janine.walker@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Summary of issues:

This report provides information and an update to the Scrutiny Committee of the services and support available to meet the needs of children and young people in Nottingham City and an update on legislative and inspection developments.

The report highlights the strengths and areas for development from the last SEND Local Area inspection in Nottingham City and highlights learning and risks from national inspections undertaken during 2023 under the new inspection framework.

Recommendation(s):

1. Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee note the content of the report and advise of areas for future discussion and challenge.

1. Background

A child or young person is said to have a special educational need and/or disability (SEND) if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age.
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

The four areas of need are:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and Learning
- Social, emotional and mental health

- **Sensory and Physical**

For children with SEND, this can mean that they find it harder to learn than their peers, they may have difficulties in accessing community activities and require additional support to be more independent, have difficulty finding employment and have poorer health outcomes.

Families of young people with SEND tell us that they find the SEND system overly complex and difficult to navigate. They often feel that they have to 'fight' to get the services that they feel their child needs. The additional pressures of supporting a child with SEND can impact on a parent's career and income and impact of other family members including siblings.

2. The Nottingham picture

There are around 47,000 children and young people in Nottingham schools, 7,418 (15.7% of school population) of whom have a SEND, this is a similar proportion to last year, but a small drop in terms of absolute numbers. (Data, Census January 2021)

In January 2023, there were 1411 Education Health and Care (EHC) plans maintained in Nottingham City. Locally, as nationally, the number of EHC plans issued and maintained continues to rise steeply. Since the introduction of the Children and Families Act in 2014 the numbers in Nottingham City have risen by over 200%.

Nottingham's strategic direction is to work with all stakeholders to adopt an inclusive approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND. There are a range of services available to schools and settings including Educational Psychology, specialist teaching teams and mental health support teams.

Additionally, significant funding is made available to all mainstream schools and early years' settings to enable them to support young people with SEND without the need for an EHC plan. Over 1000 young people are in receipt of high level needs funding in settings in Nottingham.

Nottingham has 5 special schools all of which are good or outstanding. Additionally there are 6 enhanced provisions in mainstream schools which provide for deaf learners or for young people with autism with more in development.

3. Legislation and inspection framework

The Children & Families Act 2014 introduced a series of reforms relating to supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities which local authorities and their partners were required to respond to. The Act introduced a number of significant changes which included:

- Introduction of education, health and care plans
- Extending the age range for young people with SEND from 3-16 to 0-25
- Placing a duty on local areas to publish a local offer
- Right to a personal budget for young people with education, health and care plans
- Co-production and involvement of children, young people and their families in decision making

- Placing a duty on local areas to make available independent advice, dispute resolution and mediation services
- A clear focus on improving outcomes in the areas of academic attainment, health, social participation and employment
- A requirement for local areas to jointly commission services for children and young people with SEND

The SEND Code of Practice was published May 2015. It set out the legal requirements and duties of local authorities, health bodies, schools and colleges to provide and improve outcomes for children and young people from birth to 25 years with SEND and their families.

In addition to the Children and Families Act 2014, there are other legislative frameworks that place duties on the local area to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. These include:

- The Care Act 2014
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Education Act 1996

4. SEND Local Area Inspection

The original Inspection Framework and Handbook was launched in 2016 and set out the inspection regime to be conducted by Office for Standards in Education Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and Care Quality Commission (CQC) to externally evaluate how well a local area carries out its statutory duties in relation to children and young people with special education needs and/or disabilities in order to support their development.

The local area is the geographical area of the local authority. However, the responsibility of the local area for children and young people who have SEND extends to those who are residents of the local area but attend educational establishments or receive services outside the local authority's boundaries.

The Inspection Framework evaluates the local area's provision through the inspection of the following domains:

- How effectively does the local area identify children and young people with SEND?
- How effectively does the local area assess and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND?
- How effectively does the local area improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND

The inspection looks at the contributions from all partner agencies in particular education, health, social care and gathers the views of children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers. The local area includes the local authority, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), public health, NHS England for specialist services, early years' settings, schools and further education (FE) providers.

The local area has a responsibility to write a **self-evaluation** to assess the effectiveness of its implementation of the SEND Reforms. Nottingham City local area SEND Reforms Board started this process in 2016 and annually review the self-evaluation in partnership

with education, health, social care and parent and carers. The self-evaluation informs an action plan. It is particularly crucial that areas have a realistic evaluation of their local progress and an active plan to drive change.

The inspection leads to a published report letter that gives an assessment and narrative judgement about how well the local area has implemented the SEND Reforms and is performing in its delivery of services for children and young People with SEND and their families. The report identifies strengths and areas for development.

The SEND Local Area inspection in Nottingham took place between Monday 8th November and Friday 12th November 2021. The inspectors' schedule included:

- meeting with children and young people
- meeting with parents and carers including Rainbow Parent & Carer Forum
- a focus group with a range of early years providers
- visits to seven nominated education settings and Nottingham College
- visits to a range of health providers
- a number of focus groups with officers from early years, education, health, social care, Futures, and community providers

During the visits to education settings inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of education provision and talked to children and families about their day to day experiences and aspirations.

Inspectors used the evidence gathered through their meetings with stakeholders to test out how accurately the local area have assessed they are meeting their responsibilities and understand their strengths and areas that require further development.

5. SEND Local Area Inspection Outcome

The initial SEND local area inspection did not create a graded outcome. However if there are significant areas for improvement then a Written Statement of Action is made. This is a formal requirement for improvement with Ofsted and CQC oversight.

The formal outcome letter is published on the Ofsted website and the Local Authority and CCG are also required to publish it on their websites. Nottingham's inspection outcome letter was received on Tuesday 4th January 2022 and published by Nottingham City Council on Monday 10th January 2022.

The letter set out the strengths and areas for development on each of the three inspection themes: identification, assessing and meeting needs, and improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

The key findings were:

- "Area leaders were quick to respond to the SEND reforms. They undertook significant and timely actions when the reforms were introduced. Education, health and social care leaders and professionals share a common ambition for Nottingham to be a truly inclusive place to live."

- “Leaders understand the current strengths and areas to improve in Nottingham’s SEND arrangements. They know the shortcomings in SEND provision. There is an appropriate strategy in place to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.”
- “Recent, significant changes in the area’s leadership have resulted in some disruption to the strategic oversight of the SEND strategy. Leaders are managing substantial organisational changes across services. They are beginning to overcome these challenges.”
- “An external review has made recommendations to improve commissioning arrangements. Leaders have responded to these recommendations by establishing structures to strengthen joint commissioning arrangements. Appropriate plans are in place to develop a joint commissioning strategy in the near future. The current absence of an overall joint commissioning strategy limits the area’s ability to use commissioning as a tool for improvement.”
- “Leaders have developed a coherent plan to support children and young people with SEND to prepare for adulthood. The plan identifies what should happen at each stage of a child or young person’s school life. The pandemic delayed implementation of this new consistent approach. The partnership with ‘Futures’ strongly supports young people with SEND to transfer from schools into further education, employment or training.”
- “Area leaders have not communicated their strategy for identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND clearly enough. A large proportion of parents do not understand or appreciate the strategy. Many do not know where to find information and guidance to improve outcomes for their children.”
- “The online local offer for children and young people with SEND is not well publicised. It does not capture all the services and activities. There is no effective oversight of the local offer website to ensure that it is well maintained and accessible to all parents and carers.”
- “The neurodevelopmental pathway is not communicated well enough to parents. As a result, some parents have unrealistic expectations of what support their children will receive once diagnosis has been confirmed.”

The inspection did not identify any significant weaknesses in Nottingham City that would require them to issue a Written Statement of Action.

It was pleasing that the inspection team recognised Nottingham as an inclusive city and that found evidence of strong inclusive practice in the seven educational settings that they visited. The settings talked positively of the strong partnership working in Nottingham and identified being well supported by local area SEND services.

Children and young people in these settings told the inspectors that they feel safe and well supported in schools and are proud of living in Nottingham. They also told inspectors about their aspirations for the future. At the final feedback session the inspection team described our young people “as a credit to Nottingham City”.

It is clear from the report that Nottingham City local area does not communicate its SEND strategy and services well enough with parents and carers. Parents and carers told inspectors they find it hard to understand the SEND system and that the pathways to access services are too complicated. They also told the inspectors that they do not know where to go to find information and the awareness of local offer is very limited. This is a key priority for the local area to address through its self-evaluation framework and action plan.

Whilst the inspectors acknowledged that outcomes for children and young people with SEND in Nottingham are improving they identified that further work to analyse performance data and outcomes was required to target services and interventions effectively and to measure their impact.

The inspection team highlighted that the current absence of an overall joint commissioning strategy limited the area's ability to use commissioning as a tool for improvement.

Whilst the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have a long standing partnership in working together to meet needs of children and young people with SEND and their families, new partnership structures are being developed with the emerging Integrated Care System (ICS) which will see Nottingham City Council (NCC) working alongside colleagues in the County and CCG to take a system view to commissioning arrangements, identifying opportunities to improve services together by placing the needs of families and children at the heart of commissioning.

6. Legislative and Inspection updates

In 2019, the Government began a review of the current SEND system which culminated in the issuing of the SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement plan in 2023.

The SEND and AP Improvement plan has identified a number of key objectives which it is anticipated will be rolled out over a number of years. The government priorities include:

A single national special educational needs and disabilities and alternative provision system

- Establish a national SEND and AP system with nationally consistent standards for every stage of a child's journey
- Establish local SEND partnerships across education, health and social care to develop a local inclusion plan setting out how national standards will be met
- Standardised and digitised Education, Health and Care plan
- Streamline the redress process making mediation mandatory
- Review and update the SEND Code of Practice to reflect new national standards and systems

Excellent provision from early years to adulthood

- A new mandatory national professional qualification for school SENCO's
- Improve provision in mainstream schools
- Additional respite placements alongside a network of family hubs
- Invest in and improve quality of alternative provision

A reformed and integrated role for alternative provision

- Alternative provision to be integrated into SEND systems with a focus on early intervention
- Funding stability for alternative provision through LA's creating and distributing a specific budget for these settings
- All alternative provision schools to be part of a multi-academy trust
- Development of a bespoke performance framework for alternative provision focussed on progress and reintegration

Clarity of system roles, accountabilities and funding reform

- Deliver clarity in roles and responsibilities – each partner having a clear role to play
- DfE new Regions Group to hold LA's and MAT's to account for delivery through new funding agreements
- Statutory guidance to ICB's to set out how their SEND duties should be discharged
- Inclusion dashboards for 0-25 provision with the aim of demonstrating how the system is performing at a local and national level
- Banding and pricing tariffs for funding set out at a national level

6.1 The New SEND Local Area SEND Inspection Framework

A new inspection framework came into effect in January 2023 and the first inspections of local areas under the new framework have been undertaken.

Under the new framework, Inspectors will evaluate the impact of the local area partnership's SEND arrangements on the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND, including the extent to which:

- children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way
- children, young people and their families participate in decision-making about their individual plans and support
- children and young people receive the right help at the right time
- children and young people are well prepared for their next steps, and achieve strong outcomes
- children and young people are valued, visible and included in their communities

Inspectors will evaluate how the local area partners work together to plan, evaluate and develop the SEND system, including the extent to which:

- leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND
- leaders actively engage and work with children, young people and families
- leaders have an accurate, shared understanding of the needs of children and young people in their local area
- leaders commission services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people, including commissioning arrangements for children and young people in alternative provision
- leaders evaluate services and make improvements
- leaders create an environment in which effective practice and multi-agency working can flourish

A key difference in the new framework is that local areas will now receive one of 3 graded judgements:

1. The local area partnership's SEND arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership is taking action where improvements are needed. Local areas receiving this judgement will normally be re-inspected within 5 years.
2. The local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership must work jointly to make improvements. Local areas receiving this judgement will normally be re-inspected within 3 years.
3. There are widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND, which the local area partnership must address urgently. Local areas receiving this judgement must submit a priority action plan and will receive a monitoring inspection within 18 months of the publication of the full inspection report with a full re-inspection within 3 years.

Of the inspections completed to date under the new framework, the majority fall into judgement 2. Key areas of weakness common in all of the inspections have been identified as:

- Timeliness of issuing of EHC plans and annual reviews of EHC plans
- Children waiting too long for access to health services in particular speech and language, CAMHs and neurodevelopment pathways
- The use of data across partnerships to understand young people's needs and implement a robust joint commissioning approach to services
- The effectiveness of the Local Offer

7. Nottingham City Strategic priorities and next steps

1) Implement strengthened governance arrangements for SEND (proposed structure co-produced with parent and carer forum)

2) Widen co-production and engagement opportunities with parents and young people

3) Develop and implement revised SEND strategy in collaboration with parents, young people and wider stakeholders.

4) Joint work with Nottinghamshire County Council and the ICB on improving timeliness of access to health pathways/services

5) Digitisation of EHC process and EHC quality assurance processes

6) Embed joint Nottingham/Nottinghamshire/ICB EHC plan QA process

**7) Review of Local Offer platform and update of current content
Co-production with parents and young people in development of revised SEND strategy**

**Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
28 September 2023**

Work Programme

Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To set the Committee's work programme for municipal year 2023/24.

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to identify its priorities for its 2023/24 work programme and schedule items accordingly.

3 Background information

- 3.1 The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has been established to carry out the statutory overview and scrutiny functions in relation to matters affecting children and young people. This includes:
- a) holding local decision-makers, including the Council's Executive and relevant Boards of the Council's group of companies, to account for their decisions, actions, performance and management of risk
 - b) reviewing existing policies and strategies of the Council and other local decision-makers where they impact on Nottingham children and young people
 - c) contributing to the development of new policies and strategies of the Council and other local decision-makers where they impact on Nottingham children and young people
 - d) exploring any matters affecting Nottingham and/ or its children and young people
 - e) making reports and recommendations to relevant local agencies with respect to the delivery of their functions, including the Council and its Executive
 - f) reviewing decisions made but not yet implemented by the Council's Executive in accordance with the Call-in Procedure.
- 3.2 The Committee is responsible for setting and managing its own work programme to fulfil this role. This work programme must have a clear link to its roles and responsibilities and take into account the resources available to deliver it.
- 3.3 In setting a programme for scrutiny activity, the Committee should make sure that each item included on the programme has clear objectives and desired outcomes from its work that add value to the improvement of the Council. To help prioritise items for inclusion, it is suggested that the Committee considers the questions within the Council's Scrutiny

Prioritisation Process, which is attached at Appendix A. Once items have been identified, the scheduling of those items should be timely; sufficiently flexible so that issues which arise as the year progresses can be considered appropriately; and reflect the resources available to support the Committee's work. It is recommended that there is a maximum of two substantive items scheduled for each committee meeting.

- 3.4 A proposed work programme for the municipal year 2023/24 is attached at Appendix B. This is based on areas of work identified at previous scrutiny committee meetings, horizon scanning of relevant issues, discussions at informal meetings of Committee members to scope its work programme and feedback from relevant Portfolio Holders and Directors.
- 3.5 On the work programme, some items have already been scheduled with space for further items to be added to later meetings. This is because some potential issues require further scoping and consideration as to the appropriate timing – once this has been done they will be proposed for scheduling accordingly – and this also allows for flexibility to accommodate issues that arise as the year progresses.
- 3.6 At this meeting the Committee is asked to consider this proposed work programme and any further suggestions raised at this meeting. Any new suggestions should be appropriately scoped prior to their inclusion on the work programme.

4 List of attached information

- 4.1 Scrutiny Prioritisation Process
- 4.2 Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

5 Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information

- 5.1 None

6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

- 6.1 Nottingham City Council Constitution

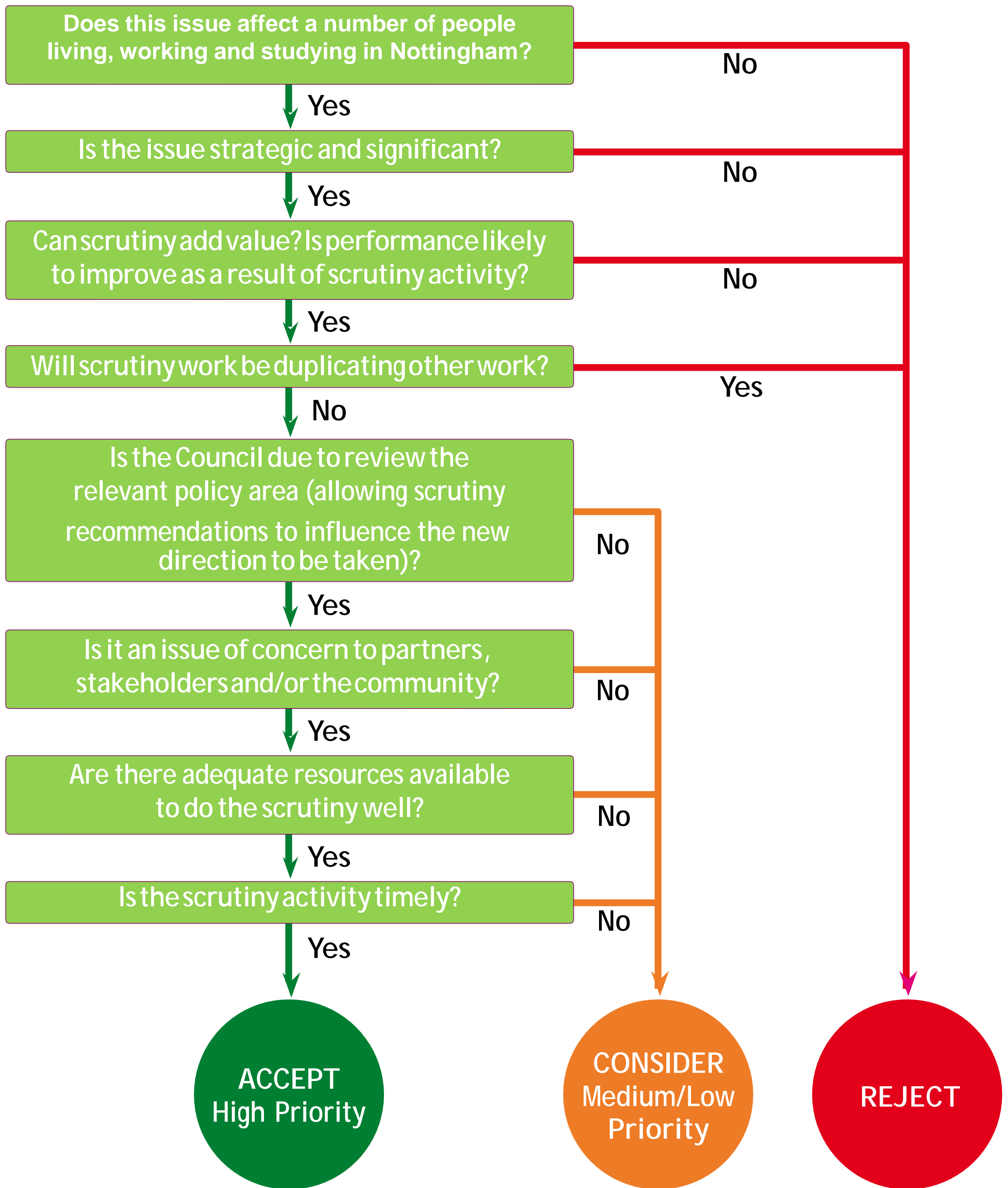
7 Wards affected

- 7.1 All

8 Contact information

- 8.1 Jane Garrard, Senior Governance Officer
jane.garrard@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Nottingham City Council Scrutiny Prioritisation Process



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Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee 2023/24 Work Programme

Date	Items
28 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p>• Children’s Services Improvement To scrutinise progress in the improvement journey, including the findings of and response to the second Ofsted monitoring visit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Workforce challenges – recruitment and retention <li> <p>• SEND Improvement To scrutinise progress in addressing areas for improvement identified following the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission Local Area Inspection of SEND Provision in 2021, with a particular focus on communication with parents and families</p>
26 October <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); position: absolute; left: -40px; top: 50%; font-size: small;">Page 49</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p>• Youth Justice Service To scrutinise response and progress in improving areas identified for improvement following HMIP Inspection in 2020 and Peer Review in 2022.</p> <li> <p>• Nottingham City Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report To consider the Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Child exploitation <li>- Children out of school kept safe
30 November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p>• Education Investment Area To hold partners to account for delivery of the action plan</p>
25 January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p>• Child Exploitation To scrutinise current arrangements in preventing child exploitation including cross partnership working and potential strategy development</p> <li> <p>• Children’s Services Improvement To scrutinise progress in the improvement journey</p>

Date	Items
28 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support for Young Carers (possible task & finish group session)
25 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Impact of the Budget and MTFP on Children's Integrated Services and Education<li>• Review of Early Help Strategy