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**Nottingham
City Council**

Nottingham City Council Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Date: Wednesday, 11 September 2024

Time: 9.30 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

Scrutiny & Audit Support Officer: Damon Stanton

Direct Dial: 0115 87 64345

- 1 Appointment of Vice-Chair**
- 2 Apologies for Absence**
- 3 Declarations of Interest**
- 4 Minutes** 3 - 12
To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2024
- 5 Children's Services Improvement** 13 - 38
Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer
- 6 Children's Services 2024/25 Budget Savings and Transformation,
and Education Services 2024/25 Budget Savings - Progress Update** 39 - 50
Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer
- 7 Recommendation Tracker** 51 - 52
To note the latest responses received to the Committee's
recommendations
- 8 Work Programme** 53 - 60
Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

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.

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Nottingham City Council

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held in the Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 10 July 2024 from 9:32am to 11:47am

Membership

Present

Councillor David Mellen (Chair)
Councillor Georgia Power
Councillor Michael Savage
Councillor Maria Watson
Councillor Adele Williams

Absent

Councillor Maria Joannou
Councillor Fozia Mubashar
Councillor Naim Salim

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Liz Anderson - Priority Education Investment Area Education Consultant
Councillor Cheryl Barnard - Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education
Kathryn Bouchlaghem - Head of Early Years
Nick Lee - Director of Education
Adrian Mann - Scrutiny and Audit Support Officer
Kate Morris - Scrutiny and Audit Support Officer
Sarah Nardone - Interim Director of Children's Integrated Services
Samina Ring - Priority Education Investment Area Project Lead

1 Appointment of the Chair

As Councillor Naim Salim was absent and no Vice-Chair had yet been appointed, the Committee agreed to appoint Councillor David Mellen as Chair for this meeting.

2 Appointment of the Vice-Chair

Resolved to defer the appointment of the Vice-Chair to the next meeting of the Committee.

3 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Maria Joannou - on leave
Councillor Fozia Mubashar - personal reasons
Councillor Naim Salim - unwell

4 Declarations of Interests

None

5 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2024 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

6 Committee Terms of Reference

The Chair presented a report on the Committee's Terms of Reference, the Council's structure for the Overview and Scrutiny function and the Overview and Scrutiny Protocol to provide clarity on the Committee's purpose, objectives and terms of operation so that it can work efficiently and contribute effectively to the good governance of the Council. The following points were discussed:

- a) The Committee queried how it could hold the Chief Executives of Academy Trusts and other external partners to account effectively, given that the Council was not responsible for the management of many schools in the city. It was explained that, although the Committee cannot require the attendance of external partners, officers engage closely with Nottingham's Academy Trusts and they have often been glad to attend Committee meetings in relation to relevant topics. There are good operational relationships in place with partners across the city and a number of joint working parties are in place, with good representation from the Academy Trusts.
- b) The Committee noted that the Terms of Reference referred to Executive Assistants, which were roles that were not being used in the current municipal year.

The Committee noted the report.

7 Priority Education Investment Area Update

Nick Lee, Director of Education, Liz Anderson, Priority Education Investment Area (PEIA) Education Consultant, and Samina Ring, PEIA Project Lead presented a report on the work of the local PEIA programme. The following points were raised:

- a) Nottingham was named one of 24 PEIAs and is receiving funding to support work around three key areas: writing at Key Stage 2, reading across all ages and school attendance. Funding from the Department for Education runs through to March 2025. At the start of the project, a Partnership Board was established with representatives from the Council, many of the Academy Trusts established in the city and the local universities. Discussions have already started about the sustainability of the Partnership Board beyond March 2025 and Nottingham Trent University, as the existing Chair, has confirmed it is happy to continue hosting, ensuring better cohesion moving beyond the life of the programme.
- b) The Programme is now about halfway through, and attendance is improving faster than the national average at both primary and secondary level, and primary levels are now in line with the national average. Children who have an attendance between 40% and 70% are considered to be persistently absent. There are still a significant number of children within this cohort and there has been less impact on this number than on the cohort with higher overall attendance.

- c) As part of the work, the language used was altered to articulate the number of days' absence, rather than as a percentage. This allowed families and children to more easily understand the impact of their absence. A focus has also been to ensure a good start to the term, and not missing days at the start of the school year so that they do not remain in the persistent absent cohort for the rest of the year. Rather than highlighting schools with lower attendance, the programme is looking at data on a ward basis, identifying that attendance has been lowest in Bulwell, Aspley, Clifton East and Bestwood. Schools within these areas were targeted first for support and, over the Autumn and Spring terms, overall attendance improved.
- d) The launch event had attendance from 95% of Academy Trusts, and a recent meeting of Designated Safeguarding Leads had the highest turnout since the Coronavirus pandemic. A network event took place in May which saw 150 attendees, so it is clear that across the city enthusiasm and passion for this programme remains high. A focus on safeguarding and seeing attendance as a big part of safeguarding has moved to make this a wider responsibility and, of those who joined the network event in May, around 78 schools now have funded access to specialist resources around improving attendance.
- e) A total of 388 cases have been triaged by the PEIA team in both primary and secondary schools across the city, with 249 being accepted – mostly where other services were not involved with the family already. Where other services such as Social Workers and Family Support Workers were in place, the team has opted to not involve an additional Support Worker, but offer advice and signposting to existing workers in touch with the family.
- f) Of 96 cases where the initial six week cycle of work has taken place, 81% of families show improved attendance. This also has knock-on impacts that are not recorded formally, such as changed attitudes to attendance and learning, and better safeguarding for children whose location would otherwise not be known. These families continue to be monitored by the Attendance Support Worker, who can intervene again should it become necessary. Feedback from families the Attendance Support Workers have been engaged with has been positive. Research has shown that fining families around attendance is not effective and work with the Support Worker has improved attendance. However, where families have refused other intervention, then there is no other recourse than to issue fines as required by law.
- g) There are many reasons reported to Family Support Workers for non-attendance, a main one being mental health issues affecting both children and their parents and carers. This has become more prevalent since the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. Unmet needs is the second highest reason stated by parents and carers, with significant numbers of children waiting specialist provision. Data around reasons for non-attendance has been helpful to ensure that resources are targeted for each family to ensure best outcomes. Other reasons cited included domestic violence issues, which are referred to a specific task force, and problems with school uniforms. Schools are becoming much more responsive to issues with uniforms and many primary schools use a less strict policy to ensure inclusivity.

- h) Through the project so far, there has been a number of learning points. The way the project uses language has changed since it started and now talks to families about days of education missed rather than percentages and reducing and revising use of legalistic jargon as it is more easily accessible and relatable. The way in which data is recorded at schools and then reported has been updated and developed, and schools now record that children that have left when appropriate rather than keeping them on roll.
- i) The voice of the child has become one of the most important factors in working with families, establishing from the child why they are not attending in their words and working towards resolving issues and barriers. The narrative from schools has shifted to working more closely with the Support Workers around attendance. For the last two terms of the project, the team will be returning to the schools where attendance has not shown as much improvement and will be undertaking targeted working with families to help improve attendance moving forward.

The Committee raised the following points in discussion:

- j) The Committee asked whether there was a link between low attendance leading to fines and the increase in home-schooled children. It was explained that there has been a national increase in the numbers of families opting for home-schooling, which has risen since the pandemic. There does appear to be a link between families who are being fined and the choice to home-school, although there is more work needed to confirm the link. The legal process does not stop if a child is withdrawn from school for home-schooling, and if families wanted a child to return to mainstream education they would need to go through the application process for places.
- k) The Committee asked how the project linked the data-driven work with the actual outcomes achieved for children and families. It was set out that the data is used to report back to the Department of Education on the progress and impact of the programme so is the main metric used to communicate the effectiveness of the programme, however, behind the data is a wealth of information around how the work has positively impacted the lives of children and families across Nottingham and the work of the project remains outcome-driven.
- l) The Committee asked how the project was helping to address the significant rise in mental health issues in children since the pandemic, which had impacted attendance. It was reported that there is an proposal being developed to increase provision of mental health support in schools resourced through the Higher Needs Block funding. This will be driven forward from September with a focus on young girls and the impact of the rise of misogynistic content on social media. Schools are also working hard to tackle to impact of social media on pupils who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. The Government has made a number of pledges around mental health in schools, but there has been no formal announcement as yet.
- m) The Committee noted that school exclusions were not being addressed specifically as a piece of work within the programme. It was explained that, at the very start of the programme, there was discussion around whether exclusion

should be considered as a workstream in its own right, but the programme leads felt it sat better within the attendance workstream as many of the facts impacting exclusion numbers were the same as those impacting attendance numbers. Schools continue to work on ensuring children feel welcomed and valued in the classroom, and the Attendance Support Workers engage with families to build confidence in pupils to attend school. Many schools have strategies in place to help pupils feel comfortable, with quiet break-out areas, reflection areas and opportunities to step away if they are feeling overwhelmed.

- n) The Committee asked what support would be available to schools and families after this project ends in March 2025. It was reported that it is important that the services and support offered by this project are integrated into the Early Help Strategy currently under development, with a focus on preventative work. The Council is keen to build on the work of the Family Support Workers and helping to reinforce the learning and good practice across the schools involved in the project. The Council has a statutory obligation to pursue fines and would be in breach of its legal duty if it did not enforce fines where thresholds of attendance were not met. However, a focus will be on support and working with families and schools to avoid having to go down that route wherever possible.
- o) The Committee asked what impact the cuts in the Household Support Fund had been on families in terms of affording uniforms, and what was being done to support families with the cost of uniforms where it was a barrier to attendance. It was set out that various options for support for families whose children attended maintained schools were being considered. In some cases, Academy Trusts are introducing their own measures and many schools are far less prescriptive around branded items, which has helped to reduce the cost of uniforms. Many schools have introduced schemes that allow families to donate and receive uniform items. Access to a uniform is not one of the main reported barriers to attendance, although it is mentioned occasionally speaking to families the project is working with.
- p) The Committee asked what support was available to children and families who were waiting for a special needs assessment within schools, whether schools had the resources and strategies in place to support families in this situation, and how Fair Access was being supported. It was explained that there is extensive training in schools around supporting children and families awaiting an assessment for additional needs support. Schools within the programme are very good at working together to share learning and best practise. Additional needs have increased significantly, especially within Early Years and primary schools. Work is taking place in partnership with Special Educational Needs and Disability professionals to establish better pathways and practice. Work is also taking place with the NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board to commission a joint strategy around this.

The Chair thanked the Director of Education and the representatives of the Priority Education Investment Area programme for attending the meeting to present the report and answer the Committee's questions.

Resolved:

- 1) To request that further information is provided on the delivery planning underway for the implementation of the Early Help Strategy (particularly on how there will be effective integration with other support services to reduce barriers to attendance, including for children attending schools outside the City Council area).**
- 2) To recommend that all possible partnership work is done to grow inclusion activity, and the development of schools as welcoming environments to all needs (including through the effective training of teachers and the resourcing of their professional development), to overcome barriers to school attendance in a proactive way that is directly informed by the voice of children and their families.**
- 3) To recommend that the Council maximises its engagement with all schools to seek to avoid the need for their issuing of a fine for non-attendance wherever possible.**
- 4) To recommend that there is close partnership engagement with the provider organisations that deliver mental healthcare services to ensure that early intervention activity connects children and young people to the support that they need to break down potential barriers to school attendance.**

8 Early Years Entitlements and Wraparound Childcare Provision

Councillor Cheryl Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education, Nick Lee, Director of Education, Sarah Nardone, Interim Director of Children's Integrated Services, and Kathryn Bouchlaghem, Head of Early Years, presented a report on the implementation of the national childcare reforms designed to support early education and help parents return to work. The following points were raised:

- a) The changes outlined in the Chancellor's Spring Budget are a national requirement and there are additional statutory duties for the Council to deliver:
 - working parents of 2-year-olds being able to access 15 hours of childcare from April 2024;
 - working parents of children aged 9-23 months being able to access 15 hours of childcare from September 2024;
 - working parents of children aged 9 months to primary school age being able to access 30 hours of childcare from September 2025; and
 - all primary school-aged children being able to access before and after-school provision from 8:00am to 6:00pm, during term time, from September 2026.
- b) This represents an opportunity for the Council to establish robust childcare infrastructure across the city that not only complies with these new statutory duties, but also helps to support people and business in the city. Looking at the current infrastructure, there is a rich provision already in place that can be built on to develop the further measures. There is already good, collaborative and partnership working in place to take learning from and established links into the voluntary sector. Developing this work links into the activity being done around developing Family Hubs, and Health visiting partnerships. Work has been done

with health visiting colleagues throughout the pandemic and after to improve communication and signposting for families.

The Committee raised the following points in discussion:

- c) The Committee asked what understanding of capacity of provision by area of the city the Council had, as there was less provision available in some places – and even local provision was not necessarily easily accessible by public transport. It was reported that a Childcare Sufficiency Audit had been carried out in 2023 and there were some areas emerging that need a boost to provision, primarily in the Bestwood, Aspley, Clifton and Dales areas. Work is being done with the schools in these places to look at how provision can be developed, with an emphasis that the school does not have to make the provision directly. There are established and successful operating models that can be replicated and adapted that have worked in other areas of the city that will ensure provision is in place at no extra cost to the school.
- d) The Committee asked what the timescales were for ensuring that the new requirements were put in place effectively. It was explained that the Government have stated that September 2024 is when most of the new places should be delivered to allow them to embed and the market to settle before the start of the 2025/26 term. The Government's ambition being that, by 2026, all parents will be able to access childcare between 8:00am and 6:00pm. The September 2024 timescale is tight and a great deal of work is being done to meet it, so it is likely that most places will be made available within the 2024/25 year.
- e) The Committee asked about the status of the current market and whether there were sufficient providers currently, and what the Council could do to improve the market. It was set out that there are many different types of provision that are all valid under these new requirements, including breakfast and after-school clubs, private childminders and other types of service. There are direct providers who are willing and able to expand within the city that are able to offer provision tailor-made to local communities' needs. The challenge is to ensure that parents have enough information to ensure they are able to access the provision. Conversations are planned between Education, Economic Development and Children's Services, amongst others, to develop the provision to ensure it brings about the planned benefits to families.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education, the Director of Education, the Interim Director of Children's Integrated Services, and the Head of Early Years for attending the meeting to present the report and answer the Committee's questions.

Resolved:

- 1) To request that further information is provided on the outcomes of the 2023 Childcare Sufficiency Audit.**
- 2) To recommend that a 'One Council' approach is used to establish a solid childcare and early education infrastructure that is accessible to everyone in the city, with proactive work carried out to engage with wider Council**

teams and foster collaborative working to ensure a comprehensive childcare offer.

- 3) To recommend that work is done to ensure that the needs of individual communities within wards are fully understood, to ensure that everyone does have access to childcare and that there is a full equity of outcomes for families across the city.**

9 Children's Services Improvement

Councillor Cheryl Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education, provided an update on the progress of the work on Children's Services Improvement. The following points were raised:

- a) There has been no further formal inspection since the report to the Committee meeting in May, but a further inspection is due before the end of July. The next monitoring visit is likely to focus again on front-door services, which was the subject of the first monitoring visit. Since then, there has been steady progress in improvement work, with a peer review completed with Lincolnshire County Council.
- b) There has been improvement in the quality and timeliness of contacts, but there are still large number of contacts taking place. Work has been undertaken with recruitment funding through the Small Steps Big Changes programme, with the launch of the Early Help Strategy to ensure that more families get the support that they need earlier.

The Committee raised the following points in discussion:

- c) The Committee asked what was being done to mitigate against reduced funding when implementing the Early Help Strategy, support schools with capacity and that there was enough resourcing for training teachers in inclusion. It was explained that work is taking place within the Family Hubs to engage with partners and ensure the right service are in place to support families sooner. There is a strong focus on consistency in relation to the approach of practice and there is a push to ensure that partners, particularly schools who notice issues early, are well-informed to ensure effective signposting.
- d) The Committee welcomed the focus on partnership working and asked how the effectiveness and impact of that work would be tracked and demonstrated. It was set out that work with Lincolnshire is taking place to establish a system to track impacts that will work locally. Lincolnshire's Early Help Strategy is robust and well-established, with a wealth of good practice to draw on, and it also has a good example of how to record and recognise work that partners (and schools in particular) are already doing.
- e) The Committee noted that the effective provision of support to Nottingham children either not in school or in school outside of the city area was extremely important.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education for attending the meeting to provide the update and answer the Committee's questions.

The Committee noted the update.

10 Draft Work Programme

The Chair presented the Committee's proposed Work Programme for the 2024/25 municipal year. The following points were discussed:

- a) The Committee asked where the needs of and services provided to children in care were considered, and whether this should be a future topic for review. The Committee also considered that protecting children in schools from the influence of misogyny was an important issue.
- b) The Committee noted that there was a coming item to the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee on savings proposals within the NHS as part of the NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board's current and future budgets, which could have some impacts on the health services accessed by children and young people.
- c) The Committee asked whether it would be possible to see information relating to the establishment of the Council's 2025/26 budget at an early stage of the development of proposals.

Resolved to agree the proposed Work Programme for the 2024/25 municipal year.

11 Future Meeting Dates

Resolved to meet on the following Wednesdays at 9.30am:

- **11 September 2024**
- **13 November 2024**
- **15 January 2025**
- **12 March 2025**

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**Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
11 September 2024**

Children's Services Improvement

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 if it wishes to make any comments or recommendations regarding the approach to, or progress in improvement of Children's Services.

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 multiagency 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 In September 2023, the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education updated the Committee on progress and the second Ofsted Monitoring Visit that took place between 25 and 26 July 2023. The visit focussed on children in need and children with a Child Protection Plan in place. The letter summarising the findings of the visit was subsequently circulated to Committee members.
- 3.6 In January 2024, the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education updated the Committee on progress and the third Ofsted Monitoring Visit that took place between 22 and 23 November 2023. The visit focussed on care leavers aged 18 to 25. The letter summarising the findings of the visit was subsequently circulated to Committee members.
- 3.7 In May 2024, the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education updated the Committee on progress and the fourth Ofsted Monitoring Visit that took place between 3 and 4 April 2024. The visit focussed on support to children in care (planning and achieving permanence). The letter summarising the findings of the visit was subsequently circulated to Committee members.
- 3.8 The fifth Ofsted Monitoring Visit took place on 31 July and 1 August 2024. The visit focused on the Front Door (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Duty and Emergency Duty Team (EDT). The outcomes of this visit will be presented to Committee members at this meeting.

4 List of attached information

- 4.1 Children's Services Improvement Report from the Directorate
- 4.2 Monitoring Visit to Nottingham City Children's Services July/August 2024
- 4.3 Inspection of Nottingham City Local Authority Children's Services 2022

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 Ofsted Monitoring Visits February/March 2023, July 2023, November 2023, April 2024, and July/August 2024
- 6.3 Reports to, and minutes of, meetings of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 03 November 2022, 26 January 2023, 30 March 2023, and 28 September 2023

7 Wards affected

- 7.1 All

8 Contact information

- 8.1 Damon Stanton, Scrutiny & Audit Support Officer
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Meeting Title	Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee
Report Title	Children's Services Improvement
Meeting Date	11 th September 2024

Corporate Director(s)/Director(s):	Ailsa Barr, Corporate Interim Director Children's and Education Sarah Nardone, Interim Director for Children's Integrated Services
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Cheryl Barnard
Report author and contact details:	Sam Morris, Head of Children's Strategy and Improvement Sarah Nardone, Director for Children's Integrated Services

Summary of issues:

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.

On 31st July and 1st August 2024, a fifth monitoring visit with a focus on the Front Door (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Duty and Emergency Duty Team (EDT)) 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 fifth monitoring visit of Nottingham's Children's Services.

- Recommendation(s):**
1. Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee consider the findings of the Ofsted's 5th Monitoring Visits of Children's Services.
 2. Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee note the progress made and further areas for focus since the full inspection and the next steps
 3. 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

1. Background

- 1.1 Committee will be aware that Nottingham City Children's Services received an Ofsted ILACS inspection in July 2022, at which it received an inadequate judgement with the report being published in September 2022.
- 1.2 As a result of the inadequate judgement the Local Authority entered a period of Monitoring Visits. These are 2 day on site visits focused upon a specific area of practice. Judgements are not provided, but a narrative letter of findings is produced. The first letter is not published, but all subsequent letters have been published on the Ofsted Website. To date the service has received 5 Monitoring Visits:
 - The Front Door (MASH, Duty and EDT) – February 2023.

- Children in Need and Children with a Child Protection Plan – July 2023
- Care Leavers aged 18+ - November 2023
- Children in Care – April 2024
- The Front Door (MASH Duty and EDT) – July 2024

1.3 A full report detailing the progress the service is making in its improvement and transformation journey was presented to Scrutiny Committee in January 2024. The information below will detail the key themes from the previous 4 monitoring visits before detailing the findings of the current visit.

2. Themes from previous monitoring visits

2.1 Inspectors have noted that there has continued to be evidence of progress being made at each of the monitoring visits and can see evidence of improvements to the services offered to children and families. They have reflected that despite the significant challenges facing the Local Authority and partnership, there is a clear commitment from elected members and the senior leadership team to invest in children's services. Inspectors have consistently fed back that senior leaders know the service well and are driving improvements at pace. They have reflected the commitment and tenacity of the front line workforce in their work with children and families to secure good outcomes.

2.2 There have been some common themes of progress made across the previous four visits:

- Evidence of tangible improvements being made.
- Investment in posts to increase front line and management capacity, which has helped manage workload and demand, increase management oversight, reduce caseloads and improve staff morale.
- The workforce feels supported by managers and can feel the positive impact that reduced caseloads are having, this is resulting in better practice being more consistently delivered.
- Staff develop strong and meaningful relationships with their children and young people, know them well and act as good parents. This enables them to assess children and young people's needs to offer good support, particularly to our more vulnerable children and care leavers (such as disabled children, care leavers with additional needs and 16- and 17-year olds who present as homeless). Processes (such as child in need review meetings, visits etc) often take place sooner than the statutory minimum to meet the needs of the child, young person or family, meaning that children and young people are seen or have their circumstances reviewed in timescales appropriate to them.
- There is a committed senior leadership team who have clear oversight and knowledge of performance within service areas, and recently developed dashboards are enabling managers and front line staff understand performance and prioritise tasks that need to be completed, leading to timelier responses for children and families.
- The quality assurance framework has been strengthened and is being embedded. This is correctly identifying areas for improvement and development to help further strengthen practice and learning.

2.2 Inspectors noted that there were further common areas for development, which aligned with the service's self-evaluation of practice:

- Inconsistency in quality of assessments or plans.
- Inconsistency in the frequency and quality of supervision to help progress outcomes for children in a timely way.
- Some children and young people experience too many changes of social worker – due to difficulties around recruitment and retention of staff – an issue being experienced not only in Nottingham but nationally.
- Further work with partners needed to reduce delays in assessment and intervention which some children and families continue to experience.

3. Summary of findings from the 5th Monitoring Visit

- 3.1 As with all Monitoring Visits no grading is given but findings are presented in a narrative report. This was published on 2nd September 2024 and is attached at appendix 1.
- 3.2 Inspectors reported that they have seen a continued strengthening of the Front Door since previous visits, with evidence of stability and maturation leading to increased consistency of work with children and families.
- 3.3 Inspectors noted that despite the financial challenges and changes to the senior leadership team structure, they could see that elected members and senior leaders were committed to improving children's services. They felt that the changes to the senior leadership team have been well managed and served to ensure consistency so that improvements continue to progress at pace. They felt that leaders knew the services well and understood the areas of strength and the areas for further development.
- 3.4 Inspectors saw that decision making was appropriate and timely and ensure that children received support when they needed it. Strategy meetings were timely and attended by relevant partners with appropriate sharing of information. Assessments and plans are timely and proportionate to children's needs.
- 3.5 The out of hours response had been strengthened and was appropriate and timely. Police use of powers of protection was also appropriate and there was evidence of joint working to keep children safe.
- 3.6 Seeking of consent has improved, although inspectors noted that there was some further work to do to ensure that children received appropriate support when parental consent was refused.
- 3.7 Further work is needed to ensure that there is a well-coordinated and consistent early help offer for families not meeting statutory thresholds or stepping down from statutory services. Inspectors noted that work is actively underway to progress this area of work.

4. Next steps

- 4.1 As noted in the inspection letter, work is underway to streamline and strengthen the system wide early help offer to ensure that families can access services appropriate to

their needs when they need it. This will build upon the Early Help strategy and website that was launched in Autumn 2023.

- 4.2 The findings will be incorporated into the service improvement plans with clear actions and timelines for completion set.
- 4.3 The Children's Improvement Board will continue to meet monthly and will review progress made across the service.
- 4.4 One further monitoring visit is anticipated to take place by the end of the year which we expect will be a re-visit the Children in Care Service. It is anticipated that the next full Inspection of Local Authority Children's Service (ILACS) will take place at some point during 2025.

2 September 2024

Ailsa Barr
Interim Corporate Director for Children and Education Services
Nottingham City Council
Loxley House
Station Street
Nottingham
NG2 3NG

Dear Ailsa

Monitoring visit to Nottingham City children's services

This letter summarises the findings of the monitoring visit to Nottingham City children's services on 31 July and 1 August 2024. This was the fifth monitoring visit since the local authority was judged inadequate in July 2022. His Majesty's Inspectors for this visit were Margaret Burke and Rodica Cobarzan.

Areas covered by the visit

Inspectors reviewed the progress made in the 'front door' service that receives contacts and referrals, where decisions are made about:

- child protection enquiries – such as strategy discussions or section 47 enquiries
- emergency action – liaison with police to use powers of protection or applications for an emergency protection order
- child in need assessments
- decisions to accommodate
- step-up from and step-down to early help
- no further action/signposting.

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

Headline findings

Elected members and senior leaders in Nottingham City Council remain committed to improving children's services despite ongoing financial challenges and changes in the senior leadership team. Transitions have been well managed and interim leadership arrangements provide consistency and ensure that improvement plans continue to be

progressed at pace. The separation of adults and children's services has enabled greater energy to be focused on developing services for children.

Senior leaders have a good oversight of children's services and are aware of the strengths and areas for development. They have strengthened many of the areas highlighted on previous inspection visits relating to front door services for children. The multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) processes and partnerships have matured and are now increasingly more responsive to requests from families and professional agencies for support. Management oversight of practice in the MASH and duty services now provides more appropriate steer and direction. The workforce in these services has started to stabilise, resulting in greater consistency in the quality of social work practice and work with families. Leaders recognise that working with partners to optimise its early help services is a fundamental area for development. Work is under way to create a system-wide partnership approach, to coordinate and streamline how early help services interface with statutory services.

Findings and evaluation of progress

The MASH responds appropriately to most requests for support. The quality of information from partner agencies is improving but there remains some variability in the clarity and the timeliness of information sent when requesting support for children. Threshold decision-making in the MASH is mostly appropriate to enable children and families to receive support consistent with their level of need. Urgent requests for support that require immediate interventions are quickly responded to and progressed through to the duty team to coordinate a swift response.

Parental consent is appropriately requested in the MASH and throughout the service. When concerns are high and risk imminent, consent is appropriately considered and overruled if required. When risk of harm is not imminent, attempts are not routinely made to encourage parents to engage with services to ensure that children get the support they need. At times, the lack of consent is too readily accepted by practitioners without them being assured that children will receive support.

Referrals which require further assessment of children's needs are passed in a timely manner from the MASH to the receiving social work team to determine actions to meet the needs of children and families.

The progression of children's cases from the MASH and the duty and the fieldwork services to access early help services, however, is inconsistent. When social workers identify needs that could be best met by early help services, families do not benefit from an early help response that is organised and coordinated with a team around the family approach. This means that despite the range of early help services available there are often delays for children accessing appropriate support. Ongoing support often involves services working specifically to one element of the family's needs rather than a coordinated multi-agency holistic response. Step-down meetings from social work teams to early help occur for a small number of children, but for

many children step-down transitions and referrals to early help are not well supported. Families are simply provided with signposting information, which for some children is not followed through to ensure ongoing support materialises. Leaders recognise they still have more to do to ensure families benefit from effective early help support before their needs escalate and require a statutory response. They are actively responding to these challenges.

Some children are the subject of repeated requests for support through contacts, referrals and assessments. This is often a result of support and intervention being closed too early before children and families have all their identified needs assessed or addressed, or due to missed opportunities for effective transition to early help or other professional support services. For some repeat referrals, including those which have recently been closed and are re-referred directly to the duty and fieldwork teams, the new information is not carefully evaluated in the context of the child's history. The new request for help is often closed without any further intervention or assessment.

The response to children out of hours by emergency duty social workers is appropriate. The recent investment in this service has strengthened the management structure, oversight and support to workers, which has resulted in improvements to the effectiveness of this service. The members of the team are all suitably experienced and the vast majority are permanent employees. There has been work undertaken with the team which is driving a positive change in culture and practice in the team. Out-of-hours contacts are promptly passed on and responded to by day social work services.

Multi-agency strategy meetings take place when required. Effective information-sharing informs the analysis of risk and the decisions taken to conduct further investigations to help keep children safe. Child protection enquiries are appropriately conducted when necessary, including out of hours. They take place in a timely manner and include relevant information from professionals who work with the family. Effective information-sharing informs the analysis of risk and decisions concerning plans to keep children safe. Decisions to progress to the multi-agency coordination of an initial child protection conference are timely and proportionate to the level of risk.

The response to the police's use of powers of protection to keep children safe is appropriate. Joint working and the prompt follow-through of actions enables children to move from situations of harm to safety. When required, appropriate legal safeguards are obtained to support children to remain safely with carers who meet their needs.

Most children have an assessment of their needs completed within a reasonable timescale proportionate to the level of risk. Most assessments include a succinct analysis of the child's history and previous interventions to help inform decision-making for children. Information from partner agencies and children and family's

views are considered to provide a wider understanding of children's needs. Through these assessments, social workers demonstrate an understanding of children's experiences of parental mental ill health, neglect and their exposure to risks and vulnerabilities that result from these. As a result, children's needs are recognised and identified for support. Many assessments are sensitively written and are conducive to establishing positive working relationships with parents and children. Initial visits by workers to see children are not always completed in a timely way, leading to some delays in a start of the assessment of children's needs.

Child protection and most child in need plans are proportionate to children's needs as identified in the assessment and have realistic expectations of parents. For a small number of children, plans do not sufficiently articulate, identify or coordinate effective support for parents.

Decisions for children to come into care are appropriate and reflect the level of risk to children requiring immediate intervention to keep them safe. All placement decisions have effective senior management oversight.

Quality assurance processes in children's services have been strengthened, and a refreshed audit framework is now more firmly embedded in practice. Leaders have commissioned peer reviews to further challenge themselves on the quality of practice, and on ensuring their focus remains on things positively influencing outcomes for children. The improvement agenda includes monitoring through the Executive Children's Improvement and partnership boards. An independent chair provides both support and constructive challenge on the progress of the work in delivering improvements in children's services. All areas identified for improvement by inspectors on this visit were known and understood by leaders, with developments already under way to strengthen them. This includes strengthening partnership working, early help and front door services. However, the pace of change and progression to achieve the desired impacts for children in some of these areas has been protracted.

Leaders have refreshed and relaunched the Nottingham City learning academy. A broad range of training is available for staff at all levels, is easily accessible and feedback from staff about the learning offer is positive. Practitioners on the assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE) value the support they are offered. Some experienced practitioners in the MASH and duty service have, however, struggled to benefit from the training offer due to competing priorities.

The council has been successful in its recruitment to many posts across all social work teams. Social work career progression pathways have been consolidated, experienced practitioner roles created and ASYE numbers have increased. While caseload numbers in the duty service are reducing, there are still some social workers in the service with high workloads. Workers and managers attempt to juggle and balance continuing workload pressures. At times, this has impacted on a small number of children, affecting the quality and timeliness of work with them.

Workers report that they enjoy working for Nottingham City Council. Many have been employed by the city for several years; some have returned to the council as they appreciate the culture and working environment. All workers are positive about the support from their line managers, their visibility and availability to support them. Workers also describe senior managers as approachable. Practitioners reported that supervision takes place regularly to provide direction, support and steer. Inspectors could see evidence that the quality of this oversight is steadily improving.

I am copying this letter to the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Burke
His Majesty's Inspector

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Inspection of Nottingham City local authority children's services

Inspection date: 11 – 22 July 2022

Lead inspector: Andy Waugh, Her Majesty's Inspector

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Requires improvement to be good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Inadequate
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Requires improvement to be good
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate

Services for children who need help and protection are inadequate because there are serious failures, leaving children at continued risk of harm when they are first presented as in need of support.

In February 2020, a focused visit found there were areas for priority action in Nottingham around support for children with child protection or child-in-need plans. Since that visit, progress has been slow and uneven, hampered by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the tragic death of a senior manager. There has been some improvement in the areas identified for priority action, although practice remains too inconsistent. Other services have deteriorated, particularly responses when children are first presented as potentially in need of help and protection. These services are too slow to identify and respond to risks of harm to children. Management oversight and supervision remains inconsistent and is not supporting social workers effectively. There has been a high level of staff turnover for children in care. Children aged 16 and 17 who present as homeless do not always have their needs met by the local authority.

In the last six months, a new senior management team has been established for children's social care. This team has a sound understanding of the challenges it faces and has already delivered some improvements and positive culture shifts. Senior management oversight of vulnerable children has been strengthened through a

range of panels and monitoring systems. A quality assurance framework is embedded across the service, with an understanding of what constitutes good practice. Early permanence for children through adoption is a significant area of improvement. The recruitment and retention of workers is being appropriately prioritised.

What needs to improve?

- Effectiveness and timeliness of responses to children’s needs when first presented to the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH).
- Management oversight and direction of front-line work and the local authority designated officer (LADO).
- Social work capacity, so that social workers and first-line managers can respond effectively to children in need of help and protection, and that children in care have greater consistency of social worker.
- Placement sufficiency for children in care and those with complex needs.
- The service response to care leavers aged 21 and over.
- The service response to young people who are aged 16 and 17 who present as homeless.
- The quality and timeliness of return home interviews.
- Oversight of children missing from education and those who are electively home educated.

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection: inadequate

1. Weaknesses in the MASH are significant, widespread and systemic. Risk of harm is not always recognised, leaving too many children with insufficient protection. Some children who have met the threshold for social care intervention wait up to six weeks to be seen by a social worker. The majority of contacts in the MASH are delayed and not processed within timescales appropriate to the risks and needs of children.
2. Management oversight is not effective when applying thresholds to safeguard children, and it is not providing social workers with direction or overseeing how quickly contacts are progressed. However, once children are allocated, most social workers understand thresholds well and apply them appropriately for the majority of children.
3. Parental consent is not consistently obtained by partners in order to allow safeguarding information about children to be shared. Complicated systems in the MASH contribute to delays because partners do not respond to social workers’ requests for information in a timely way. For some children, this takes up to 16 days. A significant number of children experience repeated contacts and referrals before they get the help they need.

4. Where allegations of significant harm are first presented, decision-making within the MASH is not as timely as it needs to be, leaving some children in situations where they are at continued risk of harm and without safety plans.
5. The emergency duty service social workers do not have consistent management oversight and supervision. Social workers mostly respond effectively to the needs of children out of hours, but on occasions lack professional curiosity in order to ensure children are protected.
6. Most children and their families benefit from a comprehensive offer of early help services. However, not all children receive early help support at the right time, with many waiting too long for targeted support. Managers are not consistent in applying thresholds for children to step up and down between early help and children's social care.
7. Despite the delays in transferring from the MASH to duty teams, when children are allocated a social worker, strategy discussions take place when required and assessments are completed in a timely way. Strategy discussions are well recorded, with the right thresholds applied. Multi-agency discussion leads to effective information-sharing and analysis of risk. This includes consideration of family history and the next steps for intervention.
8. Most children are visited at levels relating to need. Outcomes following Section 47 enquiries are appropriate, leading to decisions and actions that reduce risks and ensure children are protected. Safety planning takes place for most children.
9. The majority of assessments have a clear purpose and rationale for intervention. Assessments address the risks and concerns and explore the impact for children. Direct work provides valuable insights into children's experiences. Where children are part of a large family, they are considered individually. Parents' views and family history are understood. Analysis of all the information addresses the concerns and risks and informs what needs to change. For some children, the neglect toolkit informs assessments. However, it does not always result in an overall analysis or contribute to actions.
10. The threshold decisions to proceed to the initial child protection conference are appropriate. Partner agencies contribute to analysis of risk, resulting in a clear rationale for decisions. Most plans are comprehensive, with immediate actions to improve children's circumstances, and are consistently reviewed and updated at core groups.
11. For children who are supported through child-in-need planning, where concerns are escalating, child protection enquiries are appropriately initiated. Children's needs are well considered in child-in-need and child protection plans. These plans include wishes and feelings, and they are written so that the child can understand them. Families have a clear understanding of the support they will receive and how it needs to be sustained. Most plans are reviewed within timescales. However, for some children, delays in circulating initial plans and meeting minutes impact on the new plans being progressed in a timely way.

12. Arrangements to manage allegations against professionals by the designated officer are overcomplicated. The service has an area of vulnerability because non-social work qualified staff are involved in gathering information in respect of child protection referrals in a complex and specialist area of safeguarding. This is further compounded by an absence of management oversight and effective tracking of referrals.
13. The overall quality and frequency of supervision is variable in duty and fieldwork teams. Team managers provide oversight and guidance at the point of allocation. However, for some children, written records are copied from previous supervision sessions, with no reflection on children's circumstances. Actions lack timescales to monitor progress and effectiveness of assessment. Where supervision is better, it is more reflective, detailed and focused on the needs and experiences of children.
14. When children's lives are not improving, children benefit from early authoritative decisions to escalate into pre-proceeding and care proceedings. Senior managers ensure effective review of the pre-proceedings stage of the Public Law Outline (PLO) through panels, which provides tight tracking to minimise drift and delay for children. Letters before proceedings are mostly clear and identify effectively the individual risks to children, as well as their needs.
15. Social workers establish positive working relationships with children and their families and have a good understanding of their needs. They are persistent when engaging parents to build relationships, which enables better participation with plans and improved outcomes for children. Social workers are skilled at gathering the views of children, using a range of age-appropriate tools.
16. The daily domestic abuse triage meeting is well attended by most partners, enabling effective information-sharing and prompt decision-making in respect of next steps. This ensures clear direction as to what needs to happen immediately in order to safeguard children. However, the absence of information from midwifery and schools prevents a full assessment in respect of some children.
17. Workers in the whole life disability team are committed to the children they work with. Child protection work is effective in making disabled children safer and improving their circumstances through multi-agency working, including regular core groups which monitor the progress of the child.
18. Arrangements for children who are privately fostered are managed effectively. Once in placement, children are visited regularly. A dedicated panel provides effective oversight of privately fostered children. This ensures that children continue to live with carers who can meet their needs.
19. Children who are aged 16 and 17 who present as homeless are not consistently provided with appropriate advice or options. Once children have been assessed, there is a lack of urgency from both the social housing provider and the local

authority in providing suitable accommodation that meets their needs. This lack of accommodation increases some children's existing vulnerabilities.

20. Children who are at risk from criminal and sexual exploitation receive detailed assessments in which risk factors are identified and effective analysis of the impact of criminal and sexual exploitation on young people and their families is provided. Multi-agency meetings and subsequent planning lead to plans that effectively reduce risks to children. Plans are reviewed regularly, with actions being updated in recognition of changes in children's circumstances. For some older children who are at risk of exploitation, there are issues of placement sufficiency, which has an impact on the ability of workers to keep them safe. This means that some children are left too long in situations when they have been assessed as needing to enter care.
21. For children who have been missing, return home interviews are not held consistently, or in good time. Return home interviews have often been recorded without sufficient analysis of the circumstances and with outcomes that are not specific to the child. Hence, return home interviews do not contribute effectively to children's safety plans. Children currently do not have access to a wide range of adults who they can relate to and share their experiences.
22. The local authority does not have suitable oversight for all children who are missing from education. Staff are unclear about the whereabouts of young people when attending part-time timetables. There has been a significant rise in the numbers of children being electively home educated, and the local authority has oversight of all these children. However, for some children, risks are not fully understood because safeguarding is not routinely considered when completing assessments.

The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers: requires improvement to be good

23. Most children only come into care when it is necessary and in a timely way. For others, however, there has been some delay, meaning that some children had been living in neglectful circumstances for too long.
24. When children are unable to live with their parents or wider family or friends, alternative permanence options are considered concurrently. As a result, children who require permanence through adoption are being matched more quickly than they previously were. Brothers and sisters have been successfully adopted together, and the use of fostering for adoption placements has given some babies stability and security from the earliest opportunity. Sensitive direct work with children and their prospective adopters is helping to ensure positive and smooth transitions to permanence. Some children also achieve permanence through long-term fostering. These children are receiving consistent care from committed carers, and they are experiencing the quality of support as they would from a good parent.

25. Some children are living with their parents under care orders, where there has been drift in planning for the discharging of care orders. Consequently, children have been living with statutory intervention and with a level of uncertainty about their future for too long.
26. Too many children in care have experienced too many changes of social workers, including times when they are visited by duty workers. This has affected children's opportunities to form trusting relationships with their social worker and complete meaningful direct work. Some children have been able to develop positive and trusting relationships when their social worker has remained consistent.
27. Too many children who are in long-term foster homes do not have an up-to-date assessment of their needs, thus hindering effective planning to ensure that children are receiving the right support at the right time. There is not sufficient life-story work being undertaken with children who do not have an adoption plan to help them to understand their journey into care, develop their sense of identity or help them to feel proud of who they are.
28. The review of children's plans mostly takes place within statutory timescales, and minutes are sensitively written to children to help them understand the outcomes and plans. Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) do not consistently monitor children's circumstances in between reviews. Escalation processes are currently not effective in demonstrating impact or positive change for children because of concerns raised by the IROs.
29. Family time is carefully considered, and takes place based on children's views and an analysis of risk. Children are supported to take part in a range of leisure and social activities. Children told inspectors about the range of fun activities and social experiences they enjoy while living in their foster placements, which have enhanced their confidence and self-esteem.
30. The virtual school is ambitious in ensuring that most children in care make good educational progress at school or other provision. Most children achieve well relative to their starting points. The virtual school works in close partnership with schools to ensure that vulnerable children receive the right provision. For a small number of children, learning takes place full-time in unregistered provision. Sometimes, low levels of attendance are not prioritised as concerns and the voice of the child is not captured fully enough.
31. The emotional and mental health needs of children in care are appropriately met in Nottingham. Many children in care and their carers are benefiting from both direct support and consultation to help improve their emotional and mental well-being.
32. The help and support provided to children in care who go missing and who are at risk of exploitation is variable and is impacted by the quality and consistency of social workers relationships with children. In stronger work, multi-agency

packages of support are safeguarding children effectively. For some children, when practice is weaker, there is a lack of clarity in respect of safety planning and a lack of opportunity to learn and plan from return home interviews.

33. Support for children who arrived in the UK as unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) is tailored, supportive and recognises their need for a range of practical and emotional support. This includes a specific looked after children's nurse to support UASC.
34. Most children in care live in stable placements that meet their needs. There are sufficiency challenges, particularly for children with the most complex needs. This has resulted in a small number of children under 16 living in unsuitable and unregistered children's homes while placement searches continue. These placements are unlawful. Senior leaders are aware of these children and maintain effective oversight.
35. High staff turnover in the fostering service has impacted on the quality of work, resulting in foster carers having limited training opportunities and inconsistent support from supervising social workers. There is a shortfall in the number of foster carers being recruited, which affects the local authority's ability to be able to provide care for children within the local area.
36. There is effective working together with the regional adoption agency (Adoption East Midlands), which enables effective matching of children to adopters. Adopters are provided with the required training throughout their adoption journey, and post-adoption support is organised and specific to individual need. Adopters are provided with life-story books, which will help them and their children to understand their adoption journey.
37. The Children in Care Council provides some children and care leavers with an opportunity to share their views on services they receive. However, the council is underdeveloped, with only nine children attending regularly. This limits the capacity for children and young people to influence service development and co-production in Nottingham city.
38. Care leavers are allocated a personal adviser (PA) six months before they reach the age of 18, enabling them to begin to build a relationship before they leave care. Care leavers, some of whom have complex needs, are reassured when they transition into adulthood that there is a trusted person who can help and to whom they can turn, if needed. Most care leavers benefit from long-standing relationships with dedicated PAs who establish enduring relationships with them.
39. The majority of care leavers are informed of their rights and entitlements. The offer of support and entitlements are outlined for care leavers, although it has not been updated since 2018. The local offer does not confirm the statutory requirement to provide a PA to support care leavers post-21 years of age. The

local authority is not consistently fulfilling its duty to care leavers post-21 years of age.

40. Risk assessments for care leavers are not consistently reviewed. Some PAs are managing high-risk situations without the benefit of regular supervision, or appropriate staff care, including lone worker health and safety risk assessments.
41. Pathway plans are regularly updated. A new pathway plan template enables the engagement of care leavers in planning next steps, but this is not consistently happening. Some pathway plans are, therefore, completed without the benefit of co-production, and sometimes language lacks sensitivity and empathy.
42. Care leavers are supported to access accommodation that meets their needs. A significant number are benefiting from living in staying-put arrangements. Managers work closely with the housing department, providing appropriate identity documents to create accounts for care leavers to bid for, and, where necessary, they are facilitating direct housing offers. Care leavers can move into their own tenancies; if they encounter challenges, they are supported to return to semi-independent provision, allowing them access to further support.
43. Some care leavers are successfully undertaking university courses. The care leavers team works closely with specialist employment officers to enable care leavers to meet with local employers to discuss their futures. The processes to support young care leavers in post-16 education are inconsistent. For many, the review of their personal education plans does not happen frequently enough, including for those most vulnerable to not being in education, employment or training.

The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families: requires improvement to be good

44. In response to the areas for priority action identified in the focused visit in February 2020, leaders and senior managers developed a service-wide improvement plan as well as a plan to manage the subsequent pandemic. The service and its members then experienced the impact of the sad passing of their Director of Children's Integrated Services (DCIS). Corporately, the local authority also faced significant financial challenges with the council, being the subject of a section 114 notice (Local Government Finance Act 1988) in December 2021. Within this challenging context, slow progress was made against the areas for priority action and, while some services improved, others deteriorated.
45. A new, knowledgeable DCIS, along with a committed new leadership team, is beginning to have a greater impact on practice. There is clarity on the expectations of all staff, and leaders are developing a culture that promotes good practice through high support and high challenge. However, the scale of required improvements remains substantial, and the pace of change needs to

quicken for all areas of the service to provide safe and consistently good services for children.

46. In November 2021, significant shortfalls were identified in the MASH following a diagnostic report. Backlogs in the system meant that children's needs had not been responded to for significant periods of time, and some children were not appropriately safeguarded. Senior managers responded by altering some systems to improve the timely response to all children referred to the service. This, in effect, created a further backlog in the MASH, as more children were identified whose circumstances needed to be assessed. In May of this year, senior managers responded further by recruiting a team of qualified staff to manage the continuing demand at the front door. However, inspectors found the additional resources, alone, have not been effective in ensuring a timely and safe response to children who have met the threshold for a service. This includes some children who are at risk of significant harm.
47. During the inspection, leaders acknowledged that the level of delay and impact for children was unacceptable at the front door. In response, managers completed a significant amount of audit activity to ensure children's needs had been appropriately assessed. In addition, structural and systemic changes in the MASH, planned for August 2022, have been brought forward.
48. The quality of supervision and management oversight remains inconsistent across services and is not an effective process for the timely progression of children's assessments and plans. The poor application of threshold decisions by some managers leaves too many children in situations of unassessed risk, with their needs not fully understood.
49. Elected members and the chief executive remain committed to improving the quality of children's services, despite the local authority's financial challenges. Further investment has been agreed to increase capacity to manage the demand and improve outcomes for children.
50. There are positive working relationships with partners at a strategic and practice level that work together to achieve the best outcomes for children. The judiciary and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service reported effective working relationships with the local authority, which ensures timely court proceedings and enables children to achieve permanence at the earliest opportunity. The application of the PLO has improved significantly.
51. The corporate parenting board is attended by social care staff and elected members, with partners only attending to share specific information. It is difficult to measure the impact the board has on service delivery and development because children's views are not consistently recorded. Leaders have acknowledged that the board is underdeveloped, and they are currently reviewing its functions to ensure that there is a greater commitment from partners to children in care and care leavers.

52. Senior managers understand the ongoing challenges regarding sufficiency of placements for the most complex children and young people. An ambitious sufficiency plan is in place, with funding secured to recruit more foster carers, along with block commissioning residential and semi-independent placements to increase placement capacity. However, the plan is at an early stage of implementation and is yet to demonstrate the impact it might have for children.
53. Senior managers welcome scrutiny from partners and peers in order to provide opportunities to reflect on current service delivery and make improvements to frontline practice. The chosen model of a strength-based approach has been implemented but requires further embedding for it to be consistently effective in supporting families. A career pathway has been developed for social workers through mentoring with heads of service and encouraging peer support.
54. A performance and quality management framework is beginning to provide managers with an effective oversight of the service. Consequently, managers have an improved grip on the service and a better understanding of practice. Audit activity provides evidence that managers and staff have an understanding of what good practice looks like. However, audits are not consistently used to improve individual practice or learning for the whole service. The local authority's self-evaluation mostly demonstrates a sound understanding of the service's effectiveness and impact on children. However, there remained shortfalls at the front door that were not fully understood.
55. The improvement plan implemented in response to the areas identified as requiring priority action has resulted in incremental improvements in the services delivered to children and families. The pace of change is slow, and practice in some areas of the service remains variable.
56. Senior managers are appropriately focused on the need to drive forward recruitment and retention, motivating current staff with an enhanced financial package, and reducing the reliance on agency social workers in order to stabilise the workforce. Although recently reducing, workloads for some social workers remain too high. For less experienced social workers, they have manageable workloads.
57. Team managers do not provide consistent oversight of key decision-making. Supervision is too variable, and there are gaps in frequency. The level of reflection and ability to consider impact on children is inconsistently recorded.
58. The staff that inspectors have spoken to are positive about working in Nottingham City and show a commendable loyalty to the children of Nottingham. Some social workers told inspectors that they feel valued and expressed their pride in working for Nottingham City and their drive to improve children's experiences. Workers remain committed to doing their best to support children in Nottingham.



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**Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
11 September 2024**

Children's Services 2024/25 Budget Savings and Transformation Programme, and Education Services 2024/25 Budget Savings – Progress Update

Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide a progress update to the Committee on the Children's Services 2024/25 budget savings and transformation programme, and Education Services 2024/25 budget savings.

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked if it wishes to make any comments or recommendations on the information provided at the meeting.

3 Background information

- 3.1 As a result of significant budgetary challenges faced by the Council, all departments were asked to identify savings proposals. The Council Budget, which included savings proposals within Children's Services and Education, was agreed at City Council on 04 March 2024. The savings were also in addition to a major programme of transformation in Children's Services that was agreed at Executive Board in February 2022.
- 3.2 Consultation on the saving proposals within Children's Services and Education ran from 19 December 2023 to 16 January 2024. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee were presented with a paper that set out the proposals at its meeting on 25 January 2024.

4 List of attached information

- 4.1 Progress Report outlining the savings proposals and transformation programme within Children's Services.
- 4.2 Progress Report outlining the savings proposals within Education Services.

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 [Report on the budget proposals submitted to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 25 January 2024.](#)
- 6.2 [2024/25 Budget and Council Tax Resolution report at City Council on 04 March 2024.](#)
- 6.3 [Children's Social Care Service Redesign Report submitted to Executive Board in February 2022.](#)

7 Wards affected

- 7.1 All

8 Contact information

- 8.1 Damon Stanton, Scrutiny & Audit Support Officer
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0115 87 64345

Meeting Title	Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee
Report Title	Children’s Integrated Services: Implementation of agreed Budget Savings
Meeting Date	11 th September 2024

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

Summary of issues:

Providing services for Children and Families is a key statutory responsibility for the local authority and a priority for Nottingham City Council.

As a result of the significant budgetary challenges faced by the Council, all departments were asked to identify savings proposals. The council budget and savings proposals were signed off at Full Council on 3rd March 2024. Included within this are savings commitments within Children’s Services.

These savings are in addition to the major programme of transformation in Children’s Services that was agreed at Executive Board on 22 February 2022. The funding for this programme forms part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

This report provides an update on the implementation of the agreed budget savings, delivery plans and summary of progress on each budget savings heading.

Recommendation(s):

1. Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee notes the summary of progress on the budget savings relating to Children’s Integrated Services.

1. Background

- 1.1 Providing services for Children and Families is a key statutory responsibility for the local authority. The Strategic Council Plan sets this out as a priority reflected in outcome Child Friendly City. The plan sets out the vision that:
- 1.2 “Every child in Nottingham will get the best start in life, regardless of their circumstances. We will redesign our services to local children supporting them to thrive academically, emotionally and physically, ensuring equality of opportunity for all.”

- 1.3 The plan notes that the Council will “prioritise our statutory duties which protect the most vulnerable children in our city by acting as corporate parent to children in care and care leavers, and by helping families to overcome difficulties and benefit from early and effective support. We will work in partnership to seek to improve educational attainment in our city. To do this, we will work with schools, businesses and communities to ensure Nottingham is a ‘child-friendly’ city, where the views and needs of children and their parents or carers are actively listened to and embedded across all of our activities. We will transform our services to ensure that our resources are focused on the right things and find new ways to deliver the improvements we need to make across our regulated statutory services. We will also encourage our partners to do the same, to help jointly deliver a step change in the opportunities and life chances for children in Nottingham”.
- 1.4 Consultation on the Children’s Integrated Services proposals ran from 19th December to 2023 to 16th January 2024. On 25th January 2024 a paper was presented to Children’s and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee which set out Children’s Integrated Services budget savings proposals. Following this, proposals progressed to Full Council on 3rd March 2024. At that meeting the budget and savings proposals were agreed and signed off. Included within that were savings commitments within Children’s Services.
- 1.5 This report provides the committee with an update on progress of the savings made to date, the delivery plans and the anticipated savings delivery by the end of the 2024/25 financial year.

2. Current position of Children’s Integrated Services Budget Savings

2.1 Youth Justice Service DP(A)2473:

Remove vacant posts and re-structure of staffing, roles and responsibilities

Delivery plan to achieve savings:

Vacant posts have been removed to make the required savings.

Progress against savings target:

There is ongoing work to finalise the staffing structure, develop a youth hub in conjunction with the Youth service and to align that work with the wider transformation work in Early Help services.

Mitigations: N/A It is anticipated that the savings target will be met

2.2 Youth Service DP(A)2473:

Disposal/closure of the Ridge Adventure Playground and Bulwell Play and Youth Centre with increase targeting of youth services to those young people in most need.

Delivery plan to achieve savings:

The savings for 24/24 have been achieved through the reduction in staffing. The savings for 25/26 are based on the closure of the Ridge and Bulwell Riverside.

Progress against savings target:

The Ridge is scheduled to be delivering sessions until the end of 2024. The council continue to explore opportunities for the use of the Ridge to support the local community.

CAMHS CIC are scheduled to take on the lease cost for Bulwell Riverside enabling the Youth service to make the required savings.

The service is currently working with YJS to increase capacity to deliver targeted interventions.

Mitigations: N/A It is anticipated that the savings target will be met

2.3 Reduction in administrative support DP(A)2477:

Reduction in resources for support work

Delivery plan to achieve savings:

This saving related to disestablishing posts within the innovation and change team providing project support to the operational services. Three of the posts were vacant or were due to become vacant by March 2023. Those posts were not recruited to and have now been deleted. The final post was occupied and that staff member has been supported into an alternative, equal graded post within the council.

Progress against savings target:

Savings proposal on track to be met

Mitigations:

N/A It is anticipated that the savings target will be met as all posts are now vacant and will not be recruited to.

2.4 Children's care placement costs DP(C) 2403:

Reduce costs through commissioning workstreams including negotiation and market sufficiency

Delivery plan to achieve savings:

This project seeks to secure better outcomes for children and associated cost savings through being placed in the right placement at the right time according to their care plan through stepping down to fostering or supported accommodation placements in a timely manner. The project focusses on external placements and includes cost negotiations prior to placement, and panels for the following: high cost, exceptional and unregulated.

Supporting market development and engagement work includes supporting with Ofsted registration, implementation and development of the IFA Partnership Group. Long term commissioning solutions are out of scope in this reporting.

Progress against savings target:

The savings proposal is on track to be met and this is already in delivery.

Mitigations:

N/A It is anticipated that the savings target will be met

2.5 Childrens Transformation

Reduction in the number of child protection and child in need plans

Reduction in the length of child protection and child in need plans

Preventing children coming onto care through an increase in family network placements and supporting families at home services

Achieving permanence out of care through special guardianship orders and reunification

Increasing the recruitment, retention and utilisation of foster carers

Delivery plan to achieve savings:

The transformation programme is an established programme of delivery which has become established practice following a series of workstreams co-designed between Children's Integrates Services staff and the transformation delivery partner, Newton Europe. This is now business as usual and has led to a significant decrease in the number of children with child protection and child in need plans and a reduction of the number of children coming into care. Given the significant savings attached to the programme, sustainability continues to be governed through a steering group, which reports up to a Portfolio board and then on to the divisional leadership team programme board and finally to the Transformation and Change Oversight Board.

Progress against savings target:

On target to overachieve against the savings target.

The programme has been overachieving against its non-cashable savings target and forecast projections are that the programme will achieve £10.6 million savings this year against the savings target of £4 million for this financial year.

Mitigations:

N/A It is anticipated that the savings target will be met

4. Summary

The transformation activity has progressed well. We continue to exceed the identified expectations in terms of reduction of numbers of children in care, children with a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan. However whilst performance is currently exceeding expectations, we recognise there is further work to do to drive our improvement journey.

Children's and Education Services Directorate



Meeting Title	Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee
Report Title	Children's Integrated Services: Implementation of agreed Budget Savings
Meeting Date	11 th September 2024

Corporate Director(s)/Director(s):	Ailsa Barr, Interim Corporate Director Children's and Education Nick Lee, Director of Education Services
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Cheryl Barnard
Report author and contact details:	Nick Lee, Director of Education Services

<p>Summary of issues:</p> <p>Providing education services involves a mixture of meeting statutory duties for the local authority and the provision of discretionary services that support the efficient delivery of education by schools and settings and/or improved outcomes and life chances for children. The majority of discretionary services are delivered to schools on a traded basis.</p> <p>As a result of the significant budgetary challenges faced by the Council, all departments were asked to identify savings proposals. The council budget and savings proposals were signed off at Full Council on 3rd March 2024. Included within this are savings commitments within Education Services.</p> <p>This report provides an update on the implementation of the agreed budget savings, delivery plans and summary of progress on each budget savings heading.</p>
<p>Recommendation(s):</p> <p>1. Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee notes the summary of progress on the budget savings relating to Education Services.</p>

1. Background

- 1.1 Providing services for Children and Families is a key statutory responsibility for the local authority. The Strategic Council Plan sets this out as a priority reflected in outcome Child Friendly City. The plan sets out the vision that:
- 1.2 "Every child in Nottingham will get the best start in life, regardless of their circumstances. We will redesign our services to local children supporting them to thrive academically, emotionally and physically, ensuring equality of opportunity for all."

- 1.3 The plan notes that the Council will “prioritise our statutory duties which protect the most vulnerable children in our city by acting as corporate parent to children in care and care leavers, and by helping families to overcome difficulties and benefit from early and effective support. We will work in partnership to seek to improve educational attainment in our city. To do this, we will work with schools, businesses and communities to ensure Nottingham is a ‘child-friendly’ city, where the views and needs of children and their parents or carers are actively listened to and embedded across all of our activities. We will transform our services to ensure that our resources are focused on the right things and find new ways to deliver the improvements we need to make across our regulated statutory services. We will also encourage our partners to do the same, to help jointly deliver a step change in the opportunities and life chances for children in Nottingham”.
- 1.4 Consultation on the Education Services proposals ran from 19th December to 2023 to 16th January 2024. On 25th January 2024 a paper was presented to Children’s and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee which set out Education Services budget savings proposals. Following this, proposals progressed to Full Council on 3rd March 2024. At that meeting the budget and savings proposals were agreed and signed off. Included within this are savings commitments within Education Services.
- 1.5 This report provides the committee with an update on progress of the savings made to date, the delivery plans and the anticipated savings delivery by the end of the 2024/25 financial year.

2. Current position of Education Services Budget Savings

2.1 DP(A)-2444 Increase budget efficiencies – vacant properties

Delivery plan to achieve savings:

Dependent upon disposal of vacant education property to remove holding costs. E.g. security and minimal utilities

Progress against savings target:

Secretary of State approval to dispose of ex. hospital school site at Thorneywood received – site scheduled for auction imminently.

Mitigations: N/A It is anticipated that the savings target will be met

2.2 DP(A)-2454: Increase budget efficiencies – Programme management

Delivery plan to achieve savings:

The savings for 24/25 have been achieved through vacancy management

Mitigations: N/A the savings target has been met.

2.3 DP(A)-2451: Review of Education Partnership service

Delivery plan to achieve savings:

Deletion of 1.0 WTE post delivering discretionary service.

Progress against savings target:

Post has been deleted – post holder left NCC in May 2024

Mitigations:

N/A It is anticipated that the savings target will be met.

2.4 DP(A)-2455: Fund School Uniform Grant through the Household Support Fund

Delivery plan to achieve savings:

Replacement of general fund budget with allocation of HSF to ensure all eligible families claims can be met in 2024/25

Progress against savings target:

The transfer of budget has been made and supporting claimants.

Mitigations:

N/A The savings target will be met

2.5 DP(A)-2445 Maximisation of Dedicated Schools Grant for Virtual School Team

Delivery plan to achieve savings:

Service will be sustained at existing levels; however, it is proposed that during 2024/25 this will be fully funded by Dedicated Schools Grant (subject to School's Forum agreement)

Progress against savings target:

Funding report was approved by School's Forum (January 2024). Service fully funded for 2024/25 by DSG and additional grant support from government

Mitigations:

N/A The savings target will be met

2.6 DP(E)-2405 Education Psychology reducing costs

Delivery plan to achieve savings:

Develop policy with human resources and legal services to enable commissioning of internal (part-time) staff to provide "locum" cover to reduce reliance on external locum placements.

Progress against savings target:

Policy developed and implemented, however, increasing demand for EHCP assessments will impact upon capacity and ability to substantially reduce external capacity requirements. Aligned to national shortage of qualified staff the external locum market presents financial risk to many LA's. Target is likely to be realised but largely driven through vacancy management rather than the internal locum model.

Mitigations:

Traded service continues to over perform enabling service to currently meet increased demand for statutory provision. Vacancy savings will support meeting overall savings target.

2.7 DP(E)-2407: Review of catering in schools service

Delivery plan to achieve savings:

Review of management structure within the Catering service.

Progress against savings target:

Review undertaken – savings target has been achieved through review process.

2.8 DP(C)-2406: Catering in schools - annual pricing review

Delivery plan to achieve savings:

All customer schools to be informed of uplift in pricing for 2024/25.

Progress against savings target:

Implemented and target achieved.

2.9 DP(A)-2460 Health and safety in schools service - increasing income

Delivery plan to achieve savings:

Annual pricing review to ensure income fully covers costs and develop new contracts outside of the city to increase income.

Progress against savings target:

Pricing review completed and additional contract with non-city MAT agreed. Savings target projected to be met in 2024/25.

2.10 DP(E)-2403 SEND Transport – Seek approval for additional grant funding

Delivery plan to achieve savings:

Build business case to demonstrate potential to realise savings in the High Needs budget by further Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) subsidy to SEND transport budget. Seek Secretary of State approval to apply DSG on basis of successful business case.

Progress against savings target:

Subsequent to approval of target, the Department for Education advised that approval for additional application of DSG would not be allowable; leaving the target unachievable through this option.

Mitigations:

4 work streams have been developed to focus on alternative means of delivering the overall savings target.

1. To plan and execute insourcing of additional routes transferring the service from high cost external commissioned transport to our own internal fleet. Projected annual saving is £80-£100k with an estimated £50-70k achievable in the current 24-25 financial year if sufficient resources are available to implement this from September.
2. To identify the opportunity to reduce the PTS budget in-year to align with projected underspend in operating costs, due to vacancies and other reduced expenditure (excluding that required to deliver identified additional in house transport solutions) - £250-£300k in year.
3. To plan and execute options to increase use of a muster/pick up point process where vehicles are recommissioned to a single large minibus with escort to replace multiple taxi's.
4. To complete a high cost commissioned transport review, to focus on recommissioning of routes and allocated passengers, alongside a school placement review. Due to limited capacity of specialist school placements pupils may not be attending their nearest school, but the school that was most suitable of time of placement. A review of these placements may offer opportunities to offer a placement closer to home and remove the need for home to school travel assistance. £60K in year.

Monitoring the cumulative impact of these mitigations is being reported on a monthly basis.

2.11 DP(A)-2458 Close Colwick Park Activity Centre

Delivery plan to achieve savings:

Delete remaining posts from establishment. Identify options/opportunities to transfer building/assets to alternative provider to remove ongoing liabilities for maintenance/utilities etc.

Progress against savings target:

Posts deleted and voluntary redundancy process of remaining staff member complete. Building has been mothballed and transferred to Property Services for disposal/transfer. Negotiations with alternative providers to support access for city schools to adventure camps ongoing. Target is based upon cost avoidance to general fund budget – this will be achieved through the actions taken.

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Recommendation/Action Tracker 2024/2025

Dates/Deadlines	Recommendation/Action	Progress/Response
<p>Date of Meeting: 10 July 2024</p> <p>Date recommendations were issued: 12 July 2024</p> <p>Deadline for response: 12 September 2024</p>	<p><u>Priority Education Investment</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) That all possible partnership work is done to grow inclusion activity, and the development of schools as welcoming environments to all needs (including through the effective training of teachers and the resourcing of their professional development), to overcome barriers to school attendance in a proactive way that is directly informed by the voice of children and their families. (R) 2) That the Council maximises its engagement with all schools to seek to avoid the need for their issuing of a fine for non-attendance wherever possible. (R) 3) That there is close partnership engagement with the provider organisations that deliver mental healthcare services to ensure that early intervention activity connects children and young people to the support that they need to break down potential barriers to school attendance. (R) 4) That further information is provided on the delivery planning underway for the implementation of the Early Help Strategy (particularly on how there will be effective integration with other support services to reduce barriers to attendance, including for children attending schools outside the City Council area). (A) 	
<p>Date of Meeting: 10 July 2024</p> <p>Date recommendations were issued:</p>	<p><u>Early Years Entitlement and Wraparound Childcare Provision</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) That a 'One Council' approach is used to establish a solid childcare and early education infrastructure that is accessible to everyone in the 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) This is being progressed by Nick Lee, Director of Education Services and Sarah Nardone, Interim Director of Children's Integrated Services.

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Recommendation/Action Tracker 2024/2025

<p>12 July 2024</p> <p>Deadline for response: 12 September 2024</p>	<p>city, with proactive work carried out to engage with wider Council teams and foster collaborative working to ensure a comprehensive childcare offer. (R)</p> <p>2) That work is done to ensure that the needs of individual communities within wards are fully understood, to ensure that everyone does have access to childcare and that there is a full equity of outcomes for families across the city. (R)</p> <p>3) That further information is provided on the outcomes of the 2023 Childcare Sufficiency Audit. (A)</p>	<p>2) In order for this to be achieved, an integrated policy of work, that includes DWP, Director of Education Services and Interim Director of Children’s Integrated Services with the support of the 3rd sector, is being progressed.</p> <p>3) The 2023 childcare sufficiency audit can be found at: https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/earlyyears/section-pages/welcome-to-nottingham-city-early-years/childcare-sufficiency-assessment</p>
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**Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
11 September 2024**

Work Programme

Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To consider the Committee's work programme for 2024/25 based on areas of work identified by the Committee at previous committee meetings, the informal meeting of the Committee to scope its work programme for the year ahead and any further suggestions raised at this meeting

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the work that is currently planned for the municipal year 2024/25 and make amendments to this programme as appropriate

3 Background information

- 3.1 The purpose of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is to carry out the statutory overview and scrutiny function in relation to matters affecting children and young people.
- 3.2 The Committee is responsible for setting and managing its own work programme to fulfil this role.
- 3.3 In setting a programme for scrutiny activity, the Committee should aim for an outcome-focused work programme that has clear priorities and a clear link to its roles and responsibilities. The work programme needs to be flexible so that issues which arise as the year progresses can be considered appropriately.
- 3.4 Where there are a number of potential items that could be scrutinised in a given year, consideration of what represents the highest priority or area of risk will assist with work programme planning. The Scrutiny Prioritisation Process has been attached to assist Members on those considerations with the Committee advised to focus on two items per meeting so that due consideration can be given.
- 3.5 The current work programme for the municipal year 2024/25 is attached.

4 List of attached information

- 4.1 Scrutiny Prioritisation Process
4.2 2024/25 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

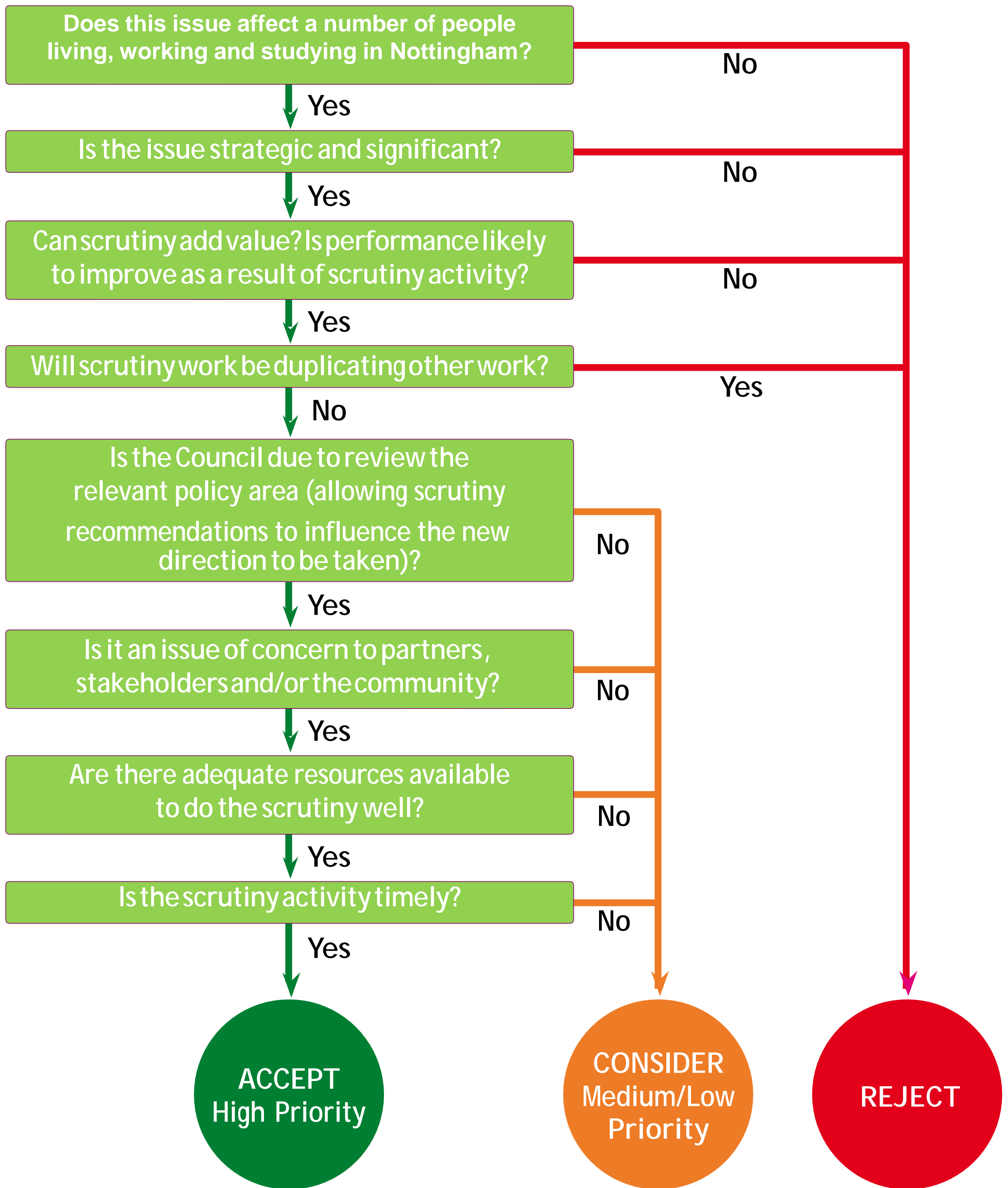
7 Wards affected

7.1 NA

8 Contact information

8.1 Damon Stanton – Scrutiny & Audit Support Officer
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Nottingham City Council Scrutiny Prioritisation Process



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Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee 2024/25 Work Programme

Chair: Councillor Naim Salim

Vice Chair: TBC

Wednesday at 9.30am

Date	Items
15 May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child Exploitation To scrutinise current arrangements in preventing child exploitation including cross partnership working and strategy development.• Children’s Services Improvement To scrutinise progress in the Council’s improvement journey following an OFSTED monitoring visit.
10 July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Priority Education Investment Area To hold partners to account.• Early years Extended Entitlement and Wrap Around Care• Children’s Services Improvement To receive a verbal update from the Executive Member on progress made in the Council’s improvement journey.
11 September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transformation/savings delivery plans – progress update To receive a progress update on the transformation• Children’s Services Improvement To scrutinise progress in the Council’s improvement journey following an OFSTED monitoring visit.
13 November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nottingham City Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report To consider the safeguarding partnership annual report

Date	Items
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative education provisions for permanently excluded children • Provisions for children without a school place / fair access • Children’s Services Improvement To receive a verbal update from the Executive Member on progress made in the Council’s improvement journey.
15 January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of the 25/26 Budget proposals on Children’s Services and Education To scrutinise the proposed budget and its impact on service provisions • Children’s Services Improvement To scrutinise progress in the Council’s improvement journey following an OFSTED monitoring visit.
12 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership response to SEND reforms • Impact of attainment • Placement Sufficiency • Children’s Services Improvement To receive a verbal update from the Executive Member on progress made in the Council’s improvement journey.
Special meeting if required	

Date	Items
April TBC	

Standing items

- Children’s Services Improvement – every meeting
- Nottingham City Council Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report – September
- Placement Sufficiency - March
- Impact of attainment – March
- Child Exploitation Strategy – 12-18 months to assess the performance of the Strategy

Topics for work programme

- Child Fostering – how can the Council champion and develop its own foster carers
- Youth Justice
- Police & Crime Commissioner – response to children living in households involving domestic violence / prevention of youth crime
- Child Poverty Strategy – how can the Council help prevent child poverty – mitigating the impacts of the removal of the household support fund

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WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25

COMPLETED ON

SIGNED (CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE)

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