

Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



Nottingham
City Council

Reference Number:	3878
Author:	Deborah Hemsley
Department:	Children and Adults
Contact:	Deborah Hemsley (Job Title: Executive Officer, Email: debbie.hemsley@nottinghamcity.gov.uk, Phone: 0115 865151)
Subject:	'Children at the Heart' Improvemnet Plan
Key Decision (decision valued at more than £1million):	Yes
Total Value:	£1,576,000 (Type: Revenue)
Decision Being Taken:	To agree the 'Children at the Heart' Improvement Plan and phased Improvement Plan funding.
Reasons for the Decision(s)	<p>The 'Children at the Heart' Improvement Plan has two priority areas of focus: 1) Social Work Practice (to address the systemic failures in social work practice to ensure that planning and intervention for children improve their experiences and that new and emerging risks are identified and responded to); and 2) Workforce Capacity (to stabilise the workforce and address the significant shortfall in capacity to enable social workers and first-line managers to respond effectively to children in need of help and protection). The Improvement Plan is in response to the two priority actions that followed an Ofsted focused visit in February 2020. Wider recommendations were also made around the practice improvements that need to be delivered, we are committed to achieving improvements at the pace required to ensure that all children receive the same standard of help and protection that they need. The improvements we need to make require concerted and effective improvement activity over a sustained period, and it is clear that swift improvements need to be achieved in order to secure demonstrable impact on outcomes for children in the City. The 'Children at the Heart' Improvement Plan supports clear prioritisation of activity to enable us to embed practice improvements over the next six to eighteen months.</p>
Briefing notes documents:	Appendix 1 - Children at the Heart Improvement Plan -.pdf

Other Options Considered:	1) To do nothing: this is not a viable option as, following the Ofsted focused visit in February 2020, recommendations were made for practice improvement before an Ofsted return visit estimated for Autumn 2020. The 'Children at the Heart' Improvement Plan and phased funding has been implemented to ensure that practice improvement is visible upon the Ofsted return visit.
Background Papers:	None
Published Works:	None
Affected Wards:	Citywide
Colleague / Councillor Interests:	None
Consultations:	<p>Date: 04/03/2020</p> <p>Other: Councillor Cheryl Barnard</p> <p>Councillor Barnard was consulted as Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People on Wednesday 4 March, to provided assurance following the Ofsted focus visit of February 2020.</p>
Crime and Disorder Implications:	None
Equality:	EIA not required. Reasons: This decision does not represent changes to a policy, service or function.
Decision Type:	Leader's Key Decision
Subject to Call In:	Yes
Call In Expiry date:	02/06/2020
Advice Sought:	Legal, Finance

Legal Advice:

There are no particular legal comments in relation to the plan, the aim of which is to discharge statutory duties effectively, including those under Parts IV and V of the Children Act 1989.

Advice provided by Natalie Grant (Team Leader, Children and Adults - Legal) on 19/05/2020.

Finance Advice:

The decision requires approval to spend an additional £1,576,000 in accordance with the 'Children at the Heart' Improvement Plan. This is in addition to the budget allocation captured in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The Improvement Plan aims to address the shortfalls identified following the recent Ofsted focus visit. The table below provides a summary of costs associated with each phase of the plan to address two key priorities:

Phase One - £176,000
Phase Two - £1,400,000
TOTAL: £1,576,000

The costs identified aim to: 1) address the systemic failures in social work practice to ensure that planning and intervention for children improves their experiences, and that new and emerging risks are identified and responded to; and 2) stabilise the workforce and address the significant shortfall in capacity to enable social workers and first-line managers to respond effectively to children in need of help and protection.

The above costs will form part of the Children's Integrated Services department. Spend will be recorded, monitored and reported to the 'Children at the Heart' Improvement Board. The additional expenditure will impact on the organisation's MTFP and increase the budget gap going forward. Failure to address the shortfalls identified could create material risks for the organisation. Further approval is required if costs over and above this decision are identified.

Advice provided by Christine Green (Strategic Finance Business Partner) on 14/05/2020.

Signatures:

David Mellen (Leader/ PH Regeneration, Safety and Communications)
SIGNED and Dated: 23/05/2020
Catherine Underwood (Corporate Director for People)
SIGNED and Dated: 21/05/2020