

Executive Board – 22 September 2020

Subject:	Ofsted Focussed Visit and Children's Services Improvement Programme
Corporate Director(s)/Director(s):	Catherine Underwood, Corporate Director for People
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Cheryl Barnard, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People
Report author and contact details:	Michelle Roe, Executive Officer Michelle.roe@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
Other colleagues who have provided input:	
Subject to call-in:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Criteria for Key Decision:	
(a) <input type="checkbox"/> Expenditure <input type="checkbox"/> Income <input type="checkbox"/> Savings of £1,000,000 or more taking account of the overall impact of the decision	
and/or	
(b) Significant impact on communities living or working in two or more wards in the City <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Type of expenditure:	<input type="checkbox"/> Revenue <input type="checkbox"/> Capital
Total value of the decision:	Nil
Wards affected:	All
Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s):	
Relevant Council Plan Key Theme:	
Nottingham People	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Living in Nottingham	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Growing Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respect for Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Serving Nottingham Better	<input type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):	
This report provides an update on the outcome of the Ofsted Focussed Visit in February 2020 and outlines the Improvement Programme undertaken since this Inspection.	
Exempt information:	
None.	
Recommendation(s):	
1 To note and comment on the outcome of the Ofsted Focussed Visit.	
2 To note and support the actions being undertaken to address the two Priority Actions.	
3 Councillors note their Corporate Parenting responsibilities.	

1 Reasons for recommendations

- 1.1 The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) is responsible for inspecting and regulating children's services. It is important that we meet our statutory requirements to provide services for children and young people in Nottingham. A significant amount of work has been undertaken since the Ofsted Focussed Visit in February 2020.

2 Background (including outcomes of consultation)

- 2.1 In February 2020 Ofsted undertook a Focussed Visit to look at our children subject to child in need and child protection planning and in particular:
- The quality of planning and review
 - The response to children at risk of sustained neglect
 - The quality of management oversight and supervision to progress plans.
- 2.2 There is no inspection rating given during a Focussed Visit, but Inspectors highlighted:
- Nottingham children's services were last inspected by Ofsted in November 2018 and were judged to require improvement to be good. At this focused visit, inspectors found that the experience of children in need of help and protection has deteriorated since the last inspection.*
- Over the last 12 months, there have been significant shortfalls in capacity, with insufficient social workers and managers to cope with the volume of work. In addition, systemic weaknesses in social work practice across the service have led to risks to children not being understood or responded to. As a result, children have been exposed to significant risk of harm from abuse and not adequately protected.*
- 2.3 Given the level of concern in the service areas they looked at, Ofsted issued two Priority Actions:
1. "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.
 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."
- 2.4 Appendix A and B detail the wider context, action undertaken since the Ofsted Focussed Visit and next steps.

3 Other options considered in making recommendations

- 3.1 There are no alternative options.

4 Finance colleague comments (including implications and value for money/VAT)

- 4.1 The Children at the Heart Plan aims to address the findings identified from the Ofsted focussed visit in February 2020.
- 4.2 The plan has two overarching key priorities, Social Work Practice and Workforce Capacity. The total cost for the plan is £1.576m and predominately relates to additional staffing.
- 4.3 The costs are in addition to the budget allocated included in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
- 4.4 £1.4m of the additional expenditure will impact on the organisation's 2020/21 MTFP. The residual costs are funded from external contributions.

- 4.5 The above costs will form part of the Children's Integrated Services department. Spend is recorded, monitored and reported as part of the monthly monitoring process.
- 4.6 The total costs are based on a limited period. Any recurrent expenditure required to sustain improvement is not included in the above costs.
- 4.7 Further approval is required if costs over and above this decision are identified.
- 4.8 Failure to address the shortfalls identified in the Improvement Plan could result in material risks for the organisation.

Christine Green, Strategic Finance Partner, Children's & Education

5 Legal and Procurement colleague comments (including risk management issues, and legal, Crime and Disorder Act and procurement implications)

5.1 N/A

6 Strategic Assets & Property colleague comments (for decisions relating to all property assets and associated infrastructure)

6.1 N/A

7 Social value considerations

7.1 N/A

8 Regard to the NHS Constitution

8.1 N/A

9 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

9.1 N/A

10 List of background papers relied upon in writing this report (not including published documents or confidential or exempt information)

10.1 None.

11 Published documents referred to in this report

11.1 [Ofsted Focussed Visit Report \(February 2020\)](#)