

Report Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee Thursday 31st March 2022

Item Name: Children's Transformation Programme

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Lead Portfolio Holder: Councillor Cheryl Barnard

1. Purpose:

The purpose of the report is to provide an introduction to, and update on progress with the Children's transformation programme.

2. Recommendations

Children and Young People Scrutiny committee to consider progress of and proposals for Children's Transformation programme

3. Proposal or Issue:

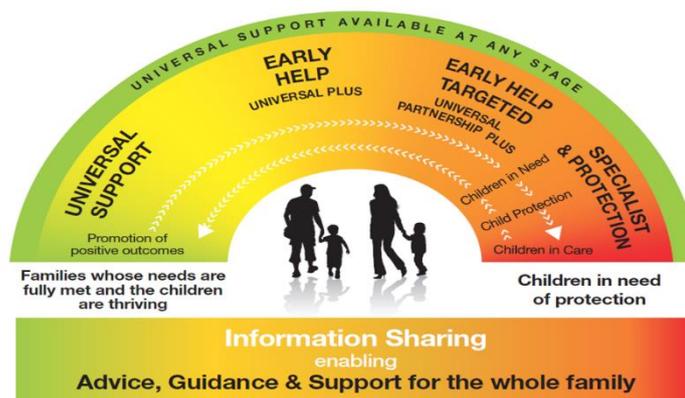
3.1 Context

Providing support to children in need of care and protection, and their families, is one of the key priorities for Nottingham City Council. It reflects significant statutory responsibilities and reflects the Council's commitment to and ambition for the children in our city. The Council's Strategic Plan sets this out in the "Child Friendly City" priority.

As part of the Council's improvement journey, developed in response to the Non-Statutory Review of 2020 and the subsequent requirements, the Council is committed to delivering its statutory responsibilities and priorities within a clear medium term financial plan. This underpins the need for sustainable children's services which deliver outcomes for children and families within an affordable budget.

The transformation programme for Children's Integrated Services is founded on the principles of improving outcomes for children, learning from elsewhere and designing a solution which is right for Nottingham.

In March 2021 a report was presented to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee detailing the Children's Integrated Service improvement programme following the Ofsted Inspection in 2018 and the Focused Visit in 2020. Following this report there was a subsequent Focused Visit in July 2021 and an updated improvement plan was developed. Transformation recognises and responds to this context of service improvement.



This diagram above is the Nottingham model of universal prevention, early help and specialist services. If needs cannot be met with universal services practitioners will need to consider early help and more targeted or specialist and protective support is required.

3.2 The diagnostic assessment of Children's Services:

A diagnostic assessment of the Children's Social Care service conducted from October to November 2021, which compared NCC service activities to similar councils elsewhere, identified:

- a number Children in Need (CIN) and Child Protection (CP) plans could have been prevented through an earlier intervention
- a number of CIN and CP plans ran on for longer than necessary
- a revised focus on early intervention would avoid children being taken into care
- there is scope to increase the number of children in foster care with a corresponding reduction in residential care
- there is potential to enable more children in care to leave care earlier than is currently enabled.

Moreover, this assessment demonstrated that the implementation of a service redesign programme, centred on improving outcomes for children supported by NCC, would also result in a significant reduction in forecasted expenditure growth currently assumed within the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

The diagnostic process was undertaken through workshops reviewing cases to establish if the right outcomes were achieved and if not what were the barriers. This output formulated the proposals contained within the outline business case (OBC) and that through improved children's outcomes recurrent annualised gross financial benefits of £11.2m - £16.1m from the target and stretch programme respectively, can be achieved after an 8 year period when all workstreams are at maximum delivery benefit.

Following the diagnostic assessment a business case was developed for the proposed Children's transformation programme that would see Nottingham City Council (NCC) improve the outcomes, safety and experience of the children supported by NCC.

Due to the size, scale and pace of the transformation programme needed, NCC would need to procure an external delivery partner to provide the experience, expertise and capacity to deliver on the values set out in this document.

In conjunction with this requirement and after a rigorous diagnostic in October/November 2021 with Children's Services colleagues, further resource investment was identified for Children's specialists to support the delivery partner which has been updated further as the business case has developed.

To align to the current MTFP period, by the end of financial year 2025/26, the gross financial benefits from the target programme will be:

Annually - £9.3m and cumulatively - £20.7m.

This programme will also be a significant enabler on the Authority's journey to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families and therefore links positively with the children's improvement journey.

3.3 Supporting change

Due to the ambition and scale of change required, significant additional external resource will be needed to deliver the financial and non-financial benefits. This resource will provide the capacity and expertise needed and has been assumed as a cost throughout the OBC. This resource has also been assumed when calculating the risk assessment of this programme, any change to that assumption will impact the overall cost, savings and risk value.

External commissioning of resources would be based on the appropriate procurement process, post award contract management and necessary approvals.

4. The transformation programme:

4.1 The scope of the programme

The transformation programme is focused across all of Children's Social Care, from Early Help (EH) including Play and Youth (P&Y), through Child in Need (CIN) and Child Protection (CP) plans and all the way through to Children in Care (CIC). **Fundamentally the programme is designed to improve the outcomes of Nottingham's young people and families.** This will be achieved by working with practitioners across the service to design and implement a new operating model that will:

- **Help families stay together** more safely and with greater resilience using effective targeted interventions. This will significantly reduce the trajectory of growth of children in care of the Authority
- **Ensure the most timely and effective support is consistently provided from early help through CiN and CP.** This will be a significant driver of service quality and risk as well as reducing future establishment growth requirements

- **Reduce bottlenecks and improve processes** and ways of working to help practitioners spend more time helping young people, and gain greater satisfaction from their roles
- **Improve commissioning and recruitment processes** around residential and foster careers
- Support Nottingham on the journey to **establish consistent good practice** and the operating environment required to sustain this
- Work with supporting functions in the Authority including finance, data, HR and others to enable this ambitious change programme
- **Creating a legacy of change approach** and skills transfer to NCC to ensure the maximum sustainability of change is achieved

Improvement in these processes and practices will deliver the cost reductions referred to above.

4.2 Objectives and Outcomes

The objectives of the transformation programme business case are summarised in the table below and are based on full financial benefit by year 8 of the programme after 12-18 months of implementation. For each objective there is a target operational volume with associated financial opportunities. These are net of the resources identified in October/November 2021 and the project is expected to deliver within the range.

<i>Description</i>	<i>Target</i>
Avoidance of children coming into the care of Nottingham through better use of targeted, timely and effective interventions and familial placements as appropriate.	35 additional children supported per year
Safely support the children in friends and family placements to transition to SGO.	20 additional children supported per year
Successfully support more children per year to safely reunify.	4 more children reunifying per year
Reducing the delays experienced by children leaving care to reunification, adoption or SGO	5-week reduction in average duration
Effectively close plans first time to avoid future plans. Bringing repeat CIN / CP plans down with targeted, effective and understandable interventions	141 fewer (CIN) 89 fewer (CP) ...children needing our support each year
Increasing the visibility and control that we have around our plans, reducing durations to those of the most effective teams.	6-week reduction (CiN) 2-week reduction (CP) ...on the length of time children have to spend on a plan
Increasing the net number of foster carers (leavers and joiners)	11 additional foster carers per year
Increasing our block residential provision	10 additional block beds

NET BENEFIT BY YEAR 8	10.610
Add back Implementation costs	0.631
GROSS BENEFIT BY YEAR 8	11.241

4.3 Scope

The proposed project of work contains two elements:

The first is a transformation programme encompassing the previously stated objectives and the second is a further assessment looking into the area of special education needs (SEN) and Assisted School Transport (AST).

a) The transformation programme:

Considering the above objectives and opportunities identified through the Oct-Nov 2021 assessment, although subject to change, an indicative series of workstreams has been developed:

- **Pathways to permanence (SGO/reunification)** – Increasing the number of children supported to permanence through the SGO or reunification channels.
- **Edge of Care** – Supporting less children to require NCC care through increasing the number of children who can be supported with effective and targeted interventions.
- **Plan quality / duration** – Looking at the effectiveness of intervention and the management of our plans. This will also involve development and deployment of establishment modelling
- **Fostering** – Increasing the net number of foster carers with NCC Commissioning – Ensuring the correct capacity at improved unit costs exists, with full consideration of the operational changes to be delivered
 - **Supporting workstreams** – A number of enabling workstream will be required to support the programme and these will include working across functions such as management, BI, finance alongside looking at how the service distributes its skilled staff.

b) The SEN assessment:

A Diagnostic of the SEN service is proposed which will be akin to the Diagnostic of Children's Social Care undertaken already. This will identify opportunities to improve outcomes and ways of working and reduce cost.

There are **no benefits realisation captured for this at present**. This will be developed as the programme progresses.

5. Formal Consideration of Implications

5.1 The following implications of the children's transformation programme:

- Financial Implications
- Legal Comments
- Procurement Comments

- Risk Management
 - HR Considerations
- Are addressed within the following reports:

- Executive Board on 22 February 2022:
 - [MTFP 2022/23 to 2025/26 and](#)
 - [Childrens Social Care Service Redesign](#)
- City Council on 7 March 2022
 - [Budget 2022/23](#)

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 Transformation specification for procurement is completed and timescales for planning and implementation have been finalised.

It is anticipated that the Transformation Delivery Partner start delivery onsite in May 2022, subject to successful procurement exercise.

The table below outlines key dates and milestones for the next steps.

<i>Stage</i>	<i>Date</i>
<i>Invitation to Submit Initial Bid issue date</i>	<i>14/03/2022</i>
<i>Deadline for tenderer clarification requests</i>	<i>24/03/2022</i>
<i>ITSIB tender return date</i>	<i>28/03/2022</i>
<i>Negotiation round</i>	<i>04/04/2022</i>
<i>Invitation to Submit Final Bid (ITSFB) issue date</i>	<i>11/04/2022</i>
<i>ITSFB tender return date</i>	<i>19/04/2022*</i>
<i>Contractor outcome notification by</i>	<i>25/04/2022</i>
<i>Contract start date</i>	<i>May 2022</i>