

Report Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee Thursday 1st December 2022

Item Name: Children's Transformation Programme

Corporate Director and Lead Officer: Catherine Underwood Corporate Director for People and Ailsa Barr Director of Children's Integrated Services

Report author: Chad Thompson, Children's Services Transformation Delivery Lead

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 Children's Transformation programme

3. Context of Programme:

3.1 Context of Pre-Programme Period

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 has been further reinforced by an Ofsted inspection of Nottingham City Council's Children's Services in July 2022 which judged the council's Children's Services to be 'Inadequate'. These have both underpinned 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.

3.2 The diagnostic assessment of Children's Services:

A diagnostic assessment of the Children's Social Care service was conducted from October to November 2021. This process was informed by detailed

workshops with practitioners where the journeys of individual children were anonymised and reviewed to consider where the opportunities lay for improving outcomes. Alongside that, there was significant analysis of activity data and benchmarking with appropriate comparator authorities. Key headlines for identifying improvement opportunity were:

- 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 workshops reviewed 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 work streams 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 council.

3.3 Supporting the Change:

Due to the size, scale and pace of the transformation programme needed, NCC identified it 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. Transformation investment was agreed in the MTFP.

A competitive tender process took place between March-April 2022, which resulted in the Newton Europe being appointed as Transformation Delivery Partner.

It was initially anticipated that the Transformation Delivery Partner would start delivery onsite in May 2022. However, contracting delays and the full Ofsted inspection of Children's Services in July led to delay. Work began during August 2022 and a re-profiled programme of delivery has been agreed.

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 Youth (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

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 in brackets). These are net of the resources identified in October/November 2021 and the project is expected to deliver within the range.

Description	Target (Financial Equivalent)
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 (£4.770m)
Safely support the children in friends and family placements to transition to SGO.	20 additional children supported per year (£0.580m)
Successfully support more children per year to safely reunify.	4 more children reunifying per year (£0.540m)
Reducing the delays experienced by children leaving care to reunification, adoption or SGO	5-week reduction in average duration (£0.730m)
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 (£0.900m)
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 (£0.940m)
Increasing the net number of foster carers (leavers and joiners)	11 additional foster carers per year (£1.800m)
Increasing our block residential provision	10 additional block beds (£0.350m)
NET BENEFIT BY YEAR 8	10.610
Add back Implementation costs	0.631
GROSS BENEFIT BY YEAR 8	11.241

4.3 Programme Plan and Approach

The children's transformation programme will comprise of two phases; the 'Design, Prototype, and Trial' phase, and the 'Implementation and Sustain' phase.

'Design, Prototype, and Trial' phase (November 2022 – Spring 2023): to develop frontline-led, new ways of working that are tested and measured to demonstrably deliver the best outcomes for children and families in Nottingham

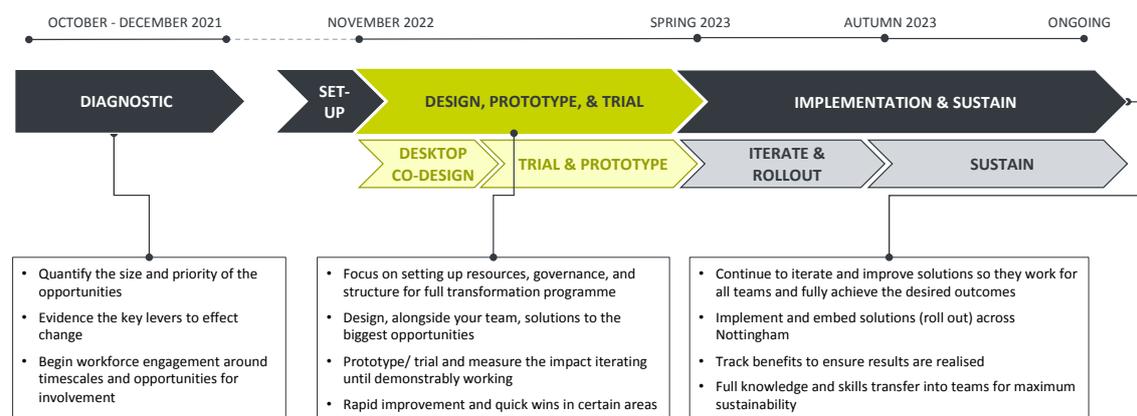
and as a consequence, achieve a lower overall cost and/or reduced demand growth to the Council. This will specifically involve work in one geographic area of the city with selected teams to develop, measure, test and iterate new ways of working until we are confident that they will deliver the total target benefit.

The outcome of the design phase set the vision for the future transformation of the services and confirmed the opportunities identified in the diagnostic assessment. It also refined the solution to deliver those opportunities, prepared the organisation for change, and set up an implementation plan for rollout to all districts across the city.

‘Implementation and Sustain’ phase (Spring 2023 – Winter 2023/2024): takes the newly designed tools, practices and processes and iterates them with the remaining locality teams to ensure they work seamlessly together, continuing to improve them to deliver the target operational and financial benefits. By the end of the implementation phase, the new ways of working will be in place, sustainable new levels of performance will have been achieved and teams in the service will have the ability to build and improve on them over the long-term.

Programme Expected Timescales

What does this next 12-18 months look like?



4.3 Within Children’s Services designated colleagues will act as Design Leads who will work alongside Newton Europe on co-production. These individuals will share practice experience, relationships, local knowledge, and great ideas to ensure the successful design and delivery of the transformation programme. Their key responsibilities will include:

- Develop in depth understanding of practice, process and culture relating to their workstream.

- Leadership of the workstream, influencing the prototype teams to change the way they work.
- Develop a workstream plan to design, test and iterate a new way of working.
- Report progress against the plan, escalating risks and opportunities.
- Develop and implement a method of measuring impact of the trials.
- Engage with and support teams as they test and iterate new ways of working.
- Coordinate with other Design Leads to ensure the new ways of working are complementary.

4.4 Revised Programme Benefits Timeline

With the delay to the start of the programme delivery from May 2022 to November 2022 described in 3.3, this has resulted in the overall benefits timeline being delayed by the same period. Therefore the cumulative benefit delivered over the MTFP will be £10.61.

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 The children's transformation programme will move into the 'Design, Prototype, and Trial' phase as outlined in 4.3.

Future reporting back to the committee will describe progress against both operational plans and expected financial benefits plans.