

**REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S
COMMITTEE****LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN STRATEGY UPDATE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an update on development of Nottinghamshire's Looked After Children Strategy which was approved by Policy Committee in July 2012.

Information and Advice

2. In July 2012, Policy Committee approved Nottinghamshire County Council's Looked After Children Strategy. This report provides an update on its progress.
3. The Strategy was developed between Nottinghamshire and its partner agencies and acts as a joint statement of intent to work together to deliver the best outcomes we can for the children who come into our care.
4. In common with other areas of the country, Children's Social Care services in Nottinghamshire continue to be under pressure from the increase in numbers of looked after children. At the time of publication, there were 848 children and young people in care in Nottinghamshire. Independent audit shows that thresholds for entry to the care system are being applied appropriately, and the numbers of looked after children are lower than both Nottinghamshire's statistical neighbours and the national average. There is evidence, however, to suggest that some children spend longer in the care system than necessary.
5. The challenge is, therefore, to ensure that those children who will remain in care have a loving, safe, stable and happy childhood while also having a clear focus on finding permanent alternative placements through adoption, special guardianship or within the extended birth family through kinship care.
6. The Looked After Children Strategy has now been formally published and is available to download via the Children's Trust Executive web-page. This milestone was communicated through Nottinghamshire County Council's intranet page as well as via email to all partners and agencies involved in its development.
7. A clear reporting schedule has been set up to ensure that progress against the Strategy is monitored. A multi-agency Looked After Children Steering Group will regularly review performance against targets that have been set.

8. The first formal highlight report will be available in February 2013 and will then be refreshed every six months up until 2015. This will be provided to the Children's Trust Executive, Children in Care Council and Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee every six months.

Other Options Considered

9. The report is for noting only.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

10. The report is for noting only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

11. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the update on the development of Nottinghamshire's Looked After Children Strategy be noted.

Councillor Philip Owen
Chairman of the Children & Young People's Committee

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments

12. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments (NDR 02/01/13)

13. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers

The Pledge for Looked After Children

DfE Adoption scorecard May 2012

Report to Corporate Leadership Team 'Children's Social Care Transformation Programme May 2012'

Report to Children & Young People's Committee on 18 June 2012 'Looked After Children Strategy'

Report to Policy Committee on 18 July 2012 'Looked After Children Strategy'

Report to Corporate Leadership Team 'Children's Social Care Transformation Programme November 2012'

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C0154