

18 December 2017

Agenda Item: 4

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND CULTURAL SERVICES

DRAFT PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE, 2018-21

Purpose of the Report

1. This report requests that Committee:
 - a) provides feedback on the vision and ambitions contained within the draft Partnership Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers in Nottinghamshire, 2018-21
 - b) endorses the processes for wider consultation with partners and stakeholders
 - c) approves a communication strategy that will include the publication of the final strategy, including appropriate documentation to support the promotion of the strategy with partners and stakeholders
 - d) requests regular reports on progress with the Strategy, in accordance with the Committee's corporate parenting arrangements.

Information and Advice

Looked After Children & Care Leavers Strategy 2015-18

2. In 2018, the current multi-agency Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2015-18 will come to a close. The 2015-18 Strategy has driven a number of improvements and service developments over the course of its lifetime to date. It has also addressed a number of areas for development identified by Ofsted in 2015, where services for care leavers were graded as 'requiring improvement' under the Single Inspection Framework. Key achievements of the 2015-18 Strategy to date include:
 - care leavers now routinely receive important health information
 - pathway plans are more specific regarding actions and timescales, and are regularly reviewed by the service
 - management information is now used to identify care leavers who are missing, at risk of sexual exploitation, misusing substances or offending, in order to better understand their needs and allocate additional resources

- implementing, monitoring and reviewing a 16+ accommodation strategy
- the governance arrangements underpinning the leaving care service have been strengthened
- the pilot of transitional personal advisors (PAs) has been initiated, who are appropriately supporting more young people into semi-independent living
- a dedicated practice consultant now supports pathway planning; practice development is improving the quality of plans for looked after children and care leavers
- a new, nationally-recognised supported accommodation model is in place, which is ensuring more young people are suitably housed
- the virtual school ensures that looked after children are better supported in schools; outcomes have improved as a result, with no looked after children excluded permanently and good attendance has been sustained
- the virtual school is now collecting, reviewing, monitoring and strategically using termly data on individual children and young people's progress, attendance and engagement, to identify children and young people at risk of failing to achieve their potential. This enables the virtual school to target additional resources and challenge where they are most needed for children and young people from 0–16 years of age.

Draft Partnership Strategy for Looked After Children & Care Leavers 2018-21

3. It is acknowledged that there is even more that can be done to ensure that partners work better together around a shared vision for looked after children (LAC) and care leavers in Nottinghamshire.
4. A Partnership Strategy for Looked After Children & Care Leavers for the period 2018-21 has therefore been drafted, which seeks to raise the collective, partnership ambition for our young people. The draft Strategy is attached as **Appendix 1**.
5. As corporate parents for all looked after children and care leavers in Nottinghamshire, we want to provide our children and young people with the best possible start in life. As they prepare for adulthood, we want to inspire our young people to fulfil their own ambitions and dreams. For this reason, we have continued to integrate our strategy for our looked after children *and* care leavers, to ensure the best possible support is provided as they reach adulthood.
6. We want to deliver a genuine, multi-agency, child-centred strategy, accepting that there is more to do to ensure that all partners are accountable for outcomes. We want to make best possible use of our collective resources to achieve our shared ambitions. In collaboration with key partners, which include health, education, police, housing and children's social care, we want to use our collective commitment to give every looked after child strong foundations and support to thrive in adulthood.
7. Our draft vision for looked after children and care leavers is a simple one, and one that has been shaped by the children and young people we look after. They are at the heart of everything we do as a Council and we expect all partners to share this commitment to look after children and care leavers.

We want our children and young people to have everything that good parents want and provide for their children. We will give our children strong roots of stability, love, encouragement, positive relationships and healing from past harm. We will give our

children wings of resilience, ambition, aspirational goals and practical and emotional support into successful adulthood.

8. Underpinning the draft vision are six ambitions that reflect the high aspirations and expectations that we, as corporate parents, have for every looked after child and care leaver:
 - a) Looked after children and care leavers are safe and feel safe
 - b) Looked after children and care leavers experience good physical, emotional and mental health & wellbeing
 - c) Looked after children and care leavers fulfil their potential
 - d) Looked after children and care leavers make a positive contribution to their communities
 - e) Looked after children and care leavers have a successful transition to adulthood
 - f) Looked after children and care leavers achieve sustained and fulfilling employment & economic independence.
9. It is proposed that new governance arrangements will be created to ensure that all partners recognise and act on their responsibilities and our shared ambitions for looked after children and care leavers.
10. It is intended that a “Looked After Children & Care Leavers Partnership Board” - a multi-agency group of senior officers - will be responsible for planning, reviewing and developing all aspects of our work with looked after children and care leavers, and providing support and challenge across the partnership. The Partnership Board will be responsible for developing and monitoring an annual ‘Delivery Plan’, identifying the key actions, timescales and intended outcomes across all partner members.
11. It is intended that the Partnership Board will report to the Children and Young People’s Committee, in accordance with the Committee’s corporate parenting arrangements.

Feedback and Engagement on the Draft Strategy

12. It is critical that the vision contained within this strategy is a shared and collective one across all partners working with looked after children and care leavers, as well as our looked after children and care leavers themselves. Key partners of the Strategy have been engaged via the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) and Children’s Trust arrangements. Our looked after children and care leavers have been given an opportunity to provide comment and feedback via the Children in Care Council arrangements, in order to ensure that the voice of our children and young people shapes and informs all actions.
13. It is therefore crucial that, as corporate parents for all looked after children in Nottinghamshire, the Children and Young People’s Committee is able to contribute fully, by providing feedback and comment on the vision, ambitions and content of the draft Partnership Strategy.
14. It is proposed that the final iteration of the Strategy be considered at the Children and Young People’s Committee meeting in January 2018.

Other Options Considered

15. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

16. To ensure the effective delivery of services which will drive the improvement of outcomes for looked after children and care leavers in Nottinghamshire within the resources available to the Council and its partners.
17. To support the local authority to deliver on its statutory duty under the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of the looked after child and to act as good corporate parents.

Statutory and Policy Implications

18. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults Implications

19. The strategy and action plan seek to strengthen support and practice which will ensure looked after children and care leavers continue to be safeguarded.

Implications for Service Users

20. Looked after children and care leavers will benefit from improved services and multi-agency working aimed at improving outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Committee:

- 1) provides feedback on the vision and ambitions of the draft Partnership Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers in Nottinghamshire, 2018-21
- 2) endorses the processes for wider consultation with partners and stakeholders
- 3) approves a communication strategy that will include the publication of the final strategy including appropriate documentation to support the promotion of the strategy with partners and stakeholders

- 4) agrees to receive the final Partnership Strategy for Looked After Children and Care Leavers 2018-21 at the Children and Young People's Committee meeting on 15 January 2018
- 5) requests regular reports on progress with the Strategy, in accordance with the Committee's corporate parenting arrangements.

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Constitutional Comments (SLB 07/12/17)

21. Children and Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

Financial Comments (SAS 06/12/17)

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

Background Papers and Published Documents

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.

Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2015-18 – report to Children & Young People's Committee on 18 May 2015

Looked After Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2015-18 – annual progress report – report to Children & Young People's Committee on 20 June 2016

Looked After Children Strategy Review – presentation to Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee on 13 March 2017

Increase in the establishment of Personal Advisor Posts – report to Children & Young People's Committee on 18 September 2017

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C1063