

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

**CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY
2022-2024**

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To inform and seek the Cabinet's endorsement of the revised Placement Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care and Care Leavers 2022- 2024.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Statutory guidance on securing sufficient accommodation for looked after children (2010) requires local authorities to take steps to secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of its children in care, ('the sufficiency duty').
- 2.2 The Children in Care and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2022-24 is underpinned by our One Family Approach and the ambition and belief that children should be in their families, in their schools and in their communities.
- 2.3 Where it is not possible for children to remain within or return to their own family networks, we want children who enter care to live within a family setting where they are able to build positive relationships with trusted adults. Where it is in the child's interests to live in a residential children's home we expect this to be the best provision that provides the best care.
- 2.4 We want children to be able to remain in their home as long as they wish in line with their needs and wishes and we seek to provide high quality supported and independent accommodation for care leavers as they progress on to adulthood that enables them to build their resilience, confidence and life skills as independent adults.
- 2.5 The Children in Care and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2022-24 is based upon thorough knowledge of our children in care and care leavers and ensuring that we have the best care available to meet the needs of children who need to be cared for by the Council. The strategy also complements and works in conjunction with the 'Multi-Agency Children in Care and Care Leavers Plan 2022-2024'.

3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

3.1 The Children in Care and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2022-2024 details the progress made in delivery sufficient high-quality provision to meet the needs of children in care and care leavers.

This includes:

- Further investment in local provision to build on and develop North Lincolnshire Fostering, Adoption and Family Support provision
- Building on and developing the best provision suitable to the needs of care leavers as they progress into adulthood that include:
 - Staying Put arrangements with carers
 - Staying close to their carers so they can be supported
 - Supported accommodation including supported lodgings
 - Tenancies within social housing
- Robust and effective recruitment to increase the availability and choice of foster and adoptive carers
- Enhanced training, support and development for all carers
- Increased availability and choice of foster families matched to the needs of the children
- Low and reducing numbers of children placed with external providers – where none have been placed for over 2 years
- Increased and improving stability for children in care and care leavers

3.2 The Children in Care and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2022-2024 projects and is informed by the current and anticipated care and care leavers population to identify further developments and build on the progress to date.

4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

4.1 The Children in Care and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2022-2024 includes the 'Sufficiency Delivery Plan 2022-2024' detailing the plans, developments and actions to continue to provide sufficiency and choice during the lifetime of the plan.

4.2 Children in care numbers have continued to reduce, and the vast majority of children in care are placed locally. To build on this success and continue to meet the needs of children in care and care leavers through achieving the key aims in relation to placement sufficiency, the Council has made a commitment to:

- Ensure all children and families receive the right help at the right time through our One Family Approach

- Continue and build on the recruitment and retention of foster carers to ensure availability and choice – including further additional capacity within the Fostering Service
- Continue and prioritise the focus on improving stability for children in care and care leavers through family solutions approaches and enhanced training for carers.
- Build on and further develop the integrated service for care leavers including:
 - Tiered Pathway Planning based on the individual needs of young people.
 - Continuing to build and Increase the portfolio of high-quality accommodation
 - All young people connected through free WiFi
 - Delivery of a dynamic housing model, which enables young people to reside within supported accommodation provided by the Council
 - Working closely with our corporate family to build on and expand the amount of opportunities available for work experience, training and employment

5. **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)**

- 5.1 Financial - there are no additional costs to the Council identified within the Children in Care and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2022-2024.
- 5.2 Legal - the Children in Care and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2022-2024 sets out the strategic intentions of the Council in fulfilling our sufficiency duty (S.22 Children Act 1989) towards these children.

6. **OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)**

- 6.1 In ensuring there is sufficiency of provision, the Children in Care and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2022-2024 contributes to the Council priorities in achieving positive outcomes for children and young people that will have a positive impact in:

Prosperous - through providing an environment that supports children's confidence, success and engagement with education, employment and training

Safe and well - through the provision of sufficient accommodation that supports positive outcomes and success for children in care and care leavers; and enabling safe and successful transitions to their own accommodation

Connected - through enabling children in care and care leavers to take an active part in their communities through the support of their carers and workers, building community resilience and social capital.

7. **OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

7.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment Stage 1 Initial Screening Template was completed in relation to Children in Care and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2022-2024 and did not identify any negative potential impacts.

8. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

8.1 Children in care and care leavers are consulted in relation to all aspects of their care, accommodation and support. The Children in Care and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2022-2024 takes into account the feedback from children and young people in developing the provision of accommodation.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That Cabinet welcome the positive review of the strategy and endorse the revised Children in Care and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2022-2024

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

- Children in Care and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2022-2024