

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE: CURRENT POSITION

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To present a review on the work within Children and Community Resilience over the last year, against the Council Plan 2018/21, in the context of the COVID-19 response and mid-term recovery plan.
- 1.2 The report provides a summary of highlights and achievements against the ambitions, goals, priorities and outcomes of the Council Plan.
- 1.3 It also informs Cabinet of the work undertaken across the service to support the response to the pandemic and contribution to the COVID-19 mid-term recovery plan priorities.
- 1.4 As part of the next phase of strategic planning, the report highlights areas of focus for 2021/22 and beyond.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 As a Council and working with partners, we are ambitious for North Lincolnshire and want our area to be the #BestPlace for our residents. The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges, developments and opportunities to the services we provide to children, young people, families and communities. The ongoing progress made in developing services that help and work with vulnerable children, adults, their families and communities placed North Lincolnshire in a strong position to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic through creative, innovative and flexible practices.
- 2.2 Across Children and Community Resilience, we have continued to respond to the needs of individuals and diverse communities, and to help and protect children, young people, families and vulnerable adults, prioritising those most in need, while we support and protect our workforce. It has enabled us to continue the excellent progress towards our ambition for children to be in their family, in their school and in their community.

- 2.3 The Council's approach to its business continuity response to the COVID-19 outbreak and actions taken to implement government guidelines have been rooted in the values, principles and ambitions of the Council Plan, and furthered through the strong partnerships, one Council approach, excellent assurance, and financial practice, framed under the following priorities:
- keeping staff and residents safe and well
 - protecting the most vulnerable
 - protecting the local economy
 - enabling communities to remain resilient
- 2.4 Children, families and vulnerable adults remain at the centre of practice as we respond to COVID-19, sustain standards and continue our journey towards recovery and renewal. Children, young people, families and vulnerable adults have, in the main, shown tremendous resolve and resilience in these challenging circumstances leading to much stability and positive outcomes. Those who work closely with us, foster carers, carers and partners, have shown immense care and collaboration through this time, in their ongoing commitment to helping children and families improve their outcomes.
- 2.5 There has continued to be effective leadership and management at all levels with a range of examples of working at pace on new and different tasks. This has required staff to be flexible in order to make the best use of available resources and capacity to manage need and demand. Staff have continued to work hard and show incredible resilience, flexibility and innovation in our response to COVID-19 and as reported to Cabinet in February 2021, provide comprehensive input to the additional expectations required in response to adapting to and preventing the impact of COVID-19. We have prioritised the wellbeing of our workforce and we have continued our focus on creating connectivity and opportunities for reflection; and feedback continues to demonstrate support at all levels.
- 2.6 Children's Services have continued to achieve a high level of performance during COVID-19 which demonstrates that children and families are benefitting from help; that services continually strive to safeguard children; that children in care and care leavers benefit from high quality practice and stable relationships; and that vulnerable groups have the help they need. Examples of key headlines in relation to performance and populations are that:
- Front door contacts, referrals, repeat referrals and assessments have remained consistent evidencing the continued drive to ensure children and families are supported at the right level and at the earliest opportunity

- The children in care population is at its lowest level since before the end of 2015/16, which reinforces our ambition for children to be in their families, in their schools and in their communities
- We have reduced the number of children in external provision enabling them to remain connected to their local support networks and community.

2.7 Key headlines in relation to Children and Community Resilience functions which contribute to the Council Plan and the COVID-19 priorities include:

Well Led: Business Continuity

2.7.1 **Business continuity:** Business has continued across all functions, whilst simultaneously adapting and supporting the overall COVID-19 response. In line with Government guidance, and as deemed appropriate, there has continued to be face to face contact with children and families in need of help and protection. This has been underpinned by local visiting guidance which is regularly updated to best reflect the current position.

2.7.2 **Recruitment and retention:** Children in North Lincolnshire continue to benefit from a stable, skilled workforce where social work practice continues to thrive. There is an ongoing focus on recruitment and retention across the workforce to ensure we maintain our strong position. We have implemented a range of initiatives to further enhance our children's services workforce including working with "Frontline"; developing social work students across the service, some of whom have gone on to secure a permanent position; and refreshed the recruitment landing pages on the Council website to better reflect our One Family Approach and the strength of our practice to incentivise working in North Lincolnshire.

2.7.3 **Social Care workforce:** We have refreshed and developed mechanisms for supporting and protecting the workforce from a practice perspective and also in terms of staff welfare and connectivity. This includes regular clinical and personal supervision including employee performance review meetings; full service team meetings; individual pod meetings; peer reflection sessions and informal peer to peer, relational support.

The Annual Social Work Health Check 2020/21 highlighted that social workers within North Lincolnshire are consistently saying that they perceive the workplace to be highly supportive and a reflective environment where they feel encouraged to make a difference to children and families. Social Workers report positive experiences of supervision that considers both practice and employee health and well-being. They have shared that they value a high support, high challenge, and no blame culture within the organisation.

- 2.7.4 **Professional development:** We have maintained a focus on developing skills and knowledge across the workforce by utilising research in practice and available resources and delivering training programmes. A further key development is our engagement in the National Assessment and Accreditation Scheme (NAAS). The NAAS has been embedded into social workers professional development and a service lead, practice supervisors and the first two waves of social workers have all successfully passed this accreditation. We have also facilitated the Children's MARS education and training programme through e-learning, workbooks and signposting to relevant resources and toolkits as well as virtual training courses.

Well Led: Transformation

- 2.7.5 **Leadership development:** Across the service, we continue to benefit from a strong core of stable middle and senior managers which have helped to provide the conditions for success. There has been further investment in leadership development, and members of the leadership team have worked through the "PRINT" programme to establish a heightened awareness of drivers and motivators. This will further enhance communication and collaboration leading to increased effectiveness as a high functioning team.
- 2.7.6 **Key documents:** The Children's Commissioning Strategy, Helping Children and Families in North Lincolnshire document and the Children's Challenge have been updated to cover the period 2020-24 and endorsed across the partnership. These strategic documents set the foundations for driving forward partnership action and system change. Through our One Family Approach, we aim to create a system that works for all children, young people and families to achieve our ambition of children being **in their families, in their schools and in their communities.**

- 2.7.7 **One Family Approach:** Across the Council and its partners, we have embraced our One Family Approach. There has been a continued focus on implementation which has been supported by workforce development sessions with leaders, managers and practitioners, and there is evidence that it is permeating through conversations, behaviours and practice. The One Family Approach is being used and adopted within the provision of all services and adopted in the review and re-write of other area wide plans for example the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health, Best Start and Special Educational Needs Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion plans.
- 2.7.8 **Use of resources and relational practice:** We have maximised digital technology and capacity across the children's social care system through deployment of staff to specific functions to maintain our 'offer to children'. Building on our One Family Approach practice model, we have continued to focus on relational practice and maintaining relationships and connections with our most vulnerable children and families via face to face interactions alongside virtual mechanisms, leading to positive and enhanced engagement and outcomes.
- 2.7.9 **Early Help:** Under the auspices of the One Family Approach, there continues to be a focus on early help, through the prioritisation of early help added capacity to co-ordinate early help and provide constructive challenge and support to meet the needs of children and families at the earliest point. We have integrated services across agencies to strengthen the targeted family support offer resulting in improved outcomes and reduction of risk.
- 2.7.10 **Vulnerable children in education:** We have continued to maintain a focus on vulnerable children in education. The daily tasking meetings, which were established in April 2020 in response to COVID-19, are now embedded into practice and they are continually reviewed to reflect the changing context maintaining a one team approach to supporting more vulnerable children to access education as appropriate.
- 2.7.11 **Partnership Integrated Triage:** We have continued to strengthen practice in our "front door" of social care in order to manage demand and meet need at the lowest level. An example of innovation is the Partnership Integrated Triage (PITSTOP) which was piloted in March 2021 and subsequently mainstreamed into practice. The PITSTOP has been highly effective in embedding the principles of the One Family Approach and improving the quality of contact and referrals. Joint work with the police, health and wider colleagues ensuring that the needs of the children and families are met at the lowest level and by the most appropriate person.

- 2.7.12 **Risk Outside the Family Home:** We have strengthened our approach to Risk Outside the Home incorporating our response to CSE / CCE and other forms of exploitation to focus partnership actions on disruption, prosecution and transforming spaces and ensuring robust connection with the child's individual plans, managing and reducing risk to children. Our joint approach to preventing child criminal exploitation has been shared nationally.
- 2.7.13 **Spaces and places:** There has been collaborative partnership action to transform spaces and hotspot locations for criminality and exploitation within North Lincolnshire to enhance community resilience and reduce risk. There have been a number of arrests of key adults of concern and child abduction notices issued which has reduced risk to identified children as well as the wider community. There has been an increase in intelligence being received due to the increased community engagement and awareness. By changing the spaces, reducing opportunities for exploitation to take place and increasing visibility and improving the overall aesthetics of the area, this has become a place that families who live in the area want to use.
- 2.7.14 **Rebranding of Youth Offending Service:** The principle 'Child First' guides the work of the Youth Justice Board and underpins our work in North Lincolnshire and we have re-branded our 'Youth Offending Service' to become a 'Youth Justice Partnership'.
- 2.7.15 **Armed Forces Covenant:** There has been investment in capacity to implement the covenant and we have continued our support to veterans and their families, including health liaison, housing issues and access to jobs and employment. The online offer has been developed and is well received. The council have also applied and received the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award which demonstrates our ongoing commitment to military families, reservists and cadet instructors.
- 2.7.16 **Service Development:** Through the development of the Strategy, Policy/participation/performance/partnership, Assurance, Children and Evaluation (SPACE) Service, we have adapted the infrastructure to further contribute to the robust effectiveness, standards and regulatory framework relating to children and families across the service, the council and the wider partnership. We have also enabled an opportunity for a care leaver to take up employment within the SPACE Service.

Well Led: Financial Resilience and Sustainability

- 2.7.17 **Reducing inequalities:** Through the Integrated Children's Trust, there is a focus on maximising opportunities and potential to address the hardship that children and families currently face within the context of COVID-19 and to contribute toward reducing inequalities and longer term disadvantage as a result of the pandemic. We have also utilised available funding streams to enable over 7000 children, young people and families to have access to food support, including care leavers and families in low income households with pre-school children, and 16 to 18 years olds in full time education.
- 2.7.18 **Foster Carers:** We have invested in the fostering service which has led to the highest number of North Lincolnshire mainstream carers we have experienced, leading to increased placement choice and improved stability for children in care. Foster carers have continued to help and support children and young people throughout the pandemic. Our foster carers continue to play a valuable role and have demonstrated their incredible commitment to children in care in North Lincolnshire.
- 2.7.19 **Care Leavers Financial Policy:** We have revised the Care Leavers Financial Policy which supports our commitment to improving outcomes for care leavers and enabling them to maximise their life changes leading to improved outcomes. A number of care leavers have secured employment in a range of different sectors, including making use of the Kick Start Programme and the apprenticeship scheme within the council.

Well Led: Governance and Assurance

- 2.7.20 **Commitment to partnership working:** Key partnership meetings have continued virtually and there is evidence of strong partner contributions to assessments, plans and meetings at every stage of the child's journey. The Children's Multi Agency Resilience and Safeguarding (MARS) Board has also continued to have a line of sight on the safeguarding pathway and undertaken independent scrutiny of safeguarding. There has also been a continued commitment to the Community Safety Partnership Board, The Youth Justice Partnership, Prevent Partnership Board and Channel Panel as well as strong partnership work on the front line as required.

2.7.21 Oversight and assurance: There has been an ongoing focus on undertaking regular Director of Children assurance events which support the process of regular quality assurance, practice learning opportunities and case auditing and is a key element of our learning and improvement framework. Examples of learning highlight that the quality of practice remains high and is underpinned by a strong value base; that we are child and family focussed; and that the One Family Approach is evident in practice. It also adds challenges to reflect on day to day practice.

2.7.22 Independent scrutiny: Across children's services, we have invested in independent scrutiny activity for specific complex cases and a number of key areas of practice. The outcomes of independent scrutiny activity have demonstrated the strength of local practice and the positive impact on children and families outcomes. Our ongoing focus on quality assuring our local decision making pertaining complex cases was reinforced through a conversation with the National Panel and demonstrated that this level of scrutiny reinforces good practice whilst ensuring, "no complacency" and continuous learning.

2.7.23 Children's MARS scrutiny and assurance: Under the auspices of the Children's MARS arrangements, there has also been a focus on scrutiny and assurance activity, including independent scrutiny, which demonstrates our partnership commitment to listening, learning, reviewing and adapting across the early help and safeguarding pathway. Learning from scrutiny activity evidences that we are effective in providing help and protection to children and families.

2.7.24 Practice standards: Services have continued to work within practice standards and we continue to develop creative solutions as part of our COVID-19 response and to meet our statutory and regulatory responsibilities. This is evidenced through regular monitoring, with leadership and management oversight, scrutiny and challenge.

2.7.25 Corporate Parenting: As corporate parents, we have continued to champion our children in care and care leavers and we have been active in encouraging and celebrating their achievements and successes. A recent corporate parenting self-assessment demonstrated a positive local position regarding corporate parenting arrangements which is underpinned by the strength of corporate parenting across the partnership and positive outcomes for children in care and care leavers.

2.7.26 **Spot Checks:** The Families Initiative (TFI) annual Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) spot check took place in December 2020 and was an opportunity to demonstrate our effective practice and the achievements and challenges of the local programme, which mirrors the principles of the One Family Approach. Positive feedback was received from the MHCLG. We have subsequently signed up to the Supporting Families Programme, which supersedes TFI, and aligns with our One Family Approach.

2.7.27 **Channel Panel/Prevent:** We have reconfigured our local partnership arrangements to respond to the updated national guidance and the new panel chair and deputy chairs have undertaken training and completed an audit against the required competencies. All cases considered at the Channel Panel follow a whole family approach and are tracked and reviewed at regular intervals. Each plan includes mitigation to reduce risk and there is a partnership approach with children's services and adult services inputs as required.

2.7.28 **Inspection preparedness and engagement:** There is ongoing activity to ensure preparedness for potential Ofsted notifications and a responsive approach to changes in inspection frameworks. The Ofsted Annual Engagement Meeting took place in November 2020 and was an opportunity to demonstrate a strong self-evaluation of all our services that help and protect children young people and families.

Keeping People Safe and Well

2.7.29 **0 to 2's:** Nationally, there has been growing concern and focus on pre-birth to two year olds. Local practice has been reviewed and further developed to mitigate potential additional risk within the context of the pandemic and to ensure that those babies and children who are the most vulnerable are seen and supported. There are strong management oversight arrangements in place and enhanced connectivity between Children's Centres, FaSST, 0 to 19 and maternity services. This has included ante-natal contacts, young parents, those children requiring 18-month development checks, those children who are eligible for 2-year-old funded places but have not taken these up, and children living in situations of family conflict. This will continue to be quality assured.

2.7.30 **Life Journey work:** We have strengthened our Life Journey Approach to children in care, to support our children having bespoke life story work and collection of memories.

- 2.7.31 **Health and wellbeing:** The health and wellbeing of our children in care, care leavers, foster carers and adoptive parents has been maintained. There has been a specific focus on the emotional wellbeing of our children in care and care leavers to build their resilience and ensure their ongoing connectivity.
- 2.7.32 **Kingfisher Lodge (KFL):** All children in KFL have responded positively to national restrictions, they are all in education provision and there have almost no incidents of missing from care. An Ofsted assurance visit in January 2021, noted that KFL is a well-managed home with dedicated staff that are caring and nurturing and the home replicates a family environment.
- 2.7.33 **Holding On approach:** Where this is a continued risk of children entering care we have continued our Holding On approach for parents with the ambition that they are equipped to care for their children.
- 2.7.34 **Family proceedings:** We have continued to undertake family proceedings court work in timescale and the average weeks for completion has further improved, comparing well to the national average. North Lincolnshire has also led on the chairing of the fortnightly regional Humber Local Family Justice Board Sub Group and there is also a fortnightly youth court and a fortnightly trial court, both of which are operating well.
- 2.7.35 **Family Time:** We have remained committed to our ambition that children remain in their families, in their schools, and in their communities and we have continued to ensure that children and young people have had direct family time to maintain and build their emotional connectively and ongoing relationships with family.
- 2.7.36 **Regional Adoption Agency:** We have partnered with a regional adoption agency to find the best matches for our children across the region and improve the prospects for children to live in families. The 'Family Adoption Links' Regional Adoption Agency went live in October 2020 and North Lincolnshire is committed to contributing to a system that can achieve good outcomes for children and families. There is an ongoing focus on recruitment as a key priority area.
- 2.7.37 **Care Call:** Care Call has continued to function as part of the whole team approach to supporting the most vulnerable and we have maintained a platinum level of service. The Care Call Pendant scheme supports over 5000 vulnerable people and provides much needed support to people in their own homes.

- 2.7.38 **Alarm Monitoring:** The Security Control Centre provide safety and security 24 hours per day and they have continued to monitor over 200 Intruder and Fire Alarms for Council buildings, School premises and private companies.
- 2.7.39 **Domestic Abuse:** We have continued to lead and develop the council's strategic response to domestic abuse. Work is underway to ensure preparedness and compliance with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requirements including the development of a new needs assessment and strategy, the establishment of a partnership board and implementation of the safe accommodation duty and support services. A project approach is in place and we are on target to finalise the needs assessment and strategy for sign off at the inaugural partnership board in July 2021.
- 2.7.40 **Participation:** We have strengthened our co-ordination and oversight of participation and we have further developed our consultation mechanisms through the quarterly thematic questions for all children and families who have experienced services and the BIG Q for children in care, the outcomes of which continue to shape and influence practice development and individual outcomes.
- 2.7.41 **Experience of services:** A significant consultation was undertaken with children, families and carers, subject to a variety of plans, and support to ascertain their views regarding services receiving during COVID-19. 549 children and adults provided feedback, the outcomes of which was extremely positive in terms of the support received, the time taken with children and families and the creative ways of intervening. Children, young people and families generally engaged with, and in some cases preferred, virtual engagement, though they articulated that they also appreciated face to face contact. This learning has been used to develop a more blended approach, which is based around the individual needs of the child and family.
- 2.7.42 **Quality and Advocacy:** Advocacy services have continued to deliver business as usual undertaking a mix of home visits and utilising a range of technology in order to offer and deliver independent return interviews to children missing from home and care. This has included prevention and safety advice, advice specific to COVID-19 and provision of any specific welfare information. An enhanced advocacy offer is also in place to capture children's lived experiences and provide support as needed for the very few children placed out of the area or where a child may have increased need such a through a period of transition.

2.7.43 **SENDIASS:** SENDIASS has continued to deliver business as usual through the provision of impartial, confidential and accessible information, advice guidance and advocacy to children with SEND and their parents/carers with respect to their SEND needs. The team have continued their virtual working arrangements, including attending virtual meetings with schools and they have successfully achieved the November 2020 target associated with the Information, Advice and Support Programme (IASP) and have received the full amount of funding available to date. Informal feedback evidences that the team's approach to empowerment is effective in building parental confidence.

2.7.44 **Communications:** An early response to the COVID-19 pandemic was to develop a bespoke children and families communications strategy, with a specific focus on tackling concerns about the 'hidden harm' that may impact upon children during the period of restrictions and school closures. A multi-agency communications group was established to help coordinate and amplify messaging across key agencies, multi-lingual safeguarding posters distributed, online content was reviewed and developed, and the public was encouraged to identify families in need via the #howRUnorthlincs media campaign. A new Families Direct e-newsletter has also been developed, to help target key messages and information aimed at parents and carers. 3238 parents/carers are currently registered to receive the Families Direct e-newsletter.

Enabling Resilient and Flourishing Communities

2.7.45 **Responding to the needs of communities:** Being flexible in responding to the needs of children, families, and communities, has been a key feature of the children's centre offer throughout the period of the pandemic. This has included maintaining a presence within the local communities, and maintaining contact with vulnerable children and families by telephone, video chat and face-to-face when appropriate in a safe and socially distanced way. Individual direct work with children and parents has continued to support them in a variety of ways to cope with and manage their emotional health and wellbeing, utilising online resources and face-to-face work when assessed as safe and appropriate. A targeted parent training offer has been delivered virtually both on a group work and individual basis to those parents identified as requiring extra help with aspects of family life and caring for children of all ages.

2.7.46 **Digital Inclusion:** We have procured MIFI devices for all care leavers in the community and supported them with access to the internet for those that need it, ensuring that young people remain connected to their support networks and their wider community

2.7.47 EU Resettlement Scheme: We have supported children and care leavers to apply for EU Settlement Scheme (as per government guidance) and provided information and support for children and families who were required to apply. This has enabled them to continue to live lawfully in the UK and access all services they are entitled to. We have also continued to expand the membership of the local UASC forum developing community services and support for this vulnerable group of children. This includes the development of a bespoke pathway that was agreed with partners for all UASC and former UASC who are now care leavers.

2.7.48 Safer Neighbourhoods: There has been a continued focus on protecting vulnerable people through a range of initiatives and community action including:

- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Panel which focuses on multi-agency responses to ASB victims and offenders
- Neighbourhood Action Teams are meeting virtually
- Crime reduction initiatives have progressed across North Lincolnshire, including car crime, burglary reduction, fraud awareness and cycle theft
- Night Safe Initiative in place to protect people in the Night Time Economy
- Neighbourhood Watch has now extended to over 230 groups
- Deployable CCTV installed to reduce ASB and protect vulnerable victims and communities
- Shop Watch and Town Centre Crime Reduction
- ReSet programme protecting vulnerable women
- Dangerous open water swimming project

Enabling Economic Growth and Renewal

2.7.49 Sector Led Improvement: Systems leaders have engaged in sector led improvement activity, including the regional self-assessment process and leading on peer review processes. It is recognised that our engagement in sector led improvement activity delivers dual benefits, promoting a culture of improvement for both us and the recipient which lends itself to our growth mindset and learning culture.

2.7.50 ADCS Yorkshire and Humber regional chair and co-ordination: The Director of Children took up the chair of the ADCS Yorkshire and Humber Regional Group in January 2020 and led on work across the region and at a regional level to shape and influence policy direction and share best practice. We have led on proactive communications across the region and ensured that meeting structures are responsive to need which provided a solid base on which to react to COVID-19.

2.7.51 Humber shaping and influencing: We have contributed to the development of the Humber Children's Partnership to ensure children and families are a key focus within the Humber Coast and Value Integrated Care System. There is a commitment to working collaboratively to add value and create synergies and improve health services for children and families across the Humber, while maintaining paramountcy of place.

2.8 Throughout COVID-19, core functions have continued to be undertaken and we have used creative methods to maintain and develop direct contact with children and families. This has been implemented through the telephone, video chat or face to face to meet their needs, in line with restrictions and visiting guidance and underpinned by robust risk assessments and operating procedures as required. Building on the outcomes of the Council's insights survey, further staff engagement across Children and Community Resilience and the government roadmap, easing of restrictions planning is underway. Some core functions and activities which have been undertaken virtually throughout COVID-19, have already recommenced face to face in council buildings, based on needs of children, families and staff and in line with government restrictions, including:

- Direct face to face intervention work in Children's Services, for example child protection conferences, children in need meetings and core groups. This enables children and families to be supported to engage and participate in the most constructive way possible and supports the safety and welfare of children, families and staff
- The Single Point of Contact (SPOC) and Integrated Multi Agency Partnership (IMAP) have returned to the physical office environment with appropriate safety restrictions in place.
- Specific support groups for vulnerable children, young people and parents have been approved in line with national guidance.

2.9 Families have continued to receive support as appropriate throughout COVID-19 to meet their individual needs, though it is proposed that some other group activities and interventions will be prioritised to take place face to face as soon as possible prior to the easing of restrictions. These will be underpinned by robust risk assessment to ensure compliance while meeting the needs of children, families and staff. These include targeted family support group work: where people would benefit from a specific face to face group intervention to help achieve improved outcomes.

2.10 Other added value functions and activities will be considered incrementally for easement, in line with the easing of restrictions as per the government roadmap.

2.11 Based on the review of 2020/21 and the current position, the following areas have been identified for further consideration and development during 2021/22:

- Embed the North Lincolnshire “**One Family Approach**” and Supporting Families Programme to ensure we make impact to improve the lived experience of children and families
- Embed the One Family Approach Hub to further strengthen the edge of care offer to maintain children in their families
- Embed the Risk Outside the Home approach across the partnership to further improve our response to children
- Continue to focus on workforce, recruitment, and retention with specific priority to recruit qualified social workers
- Consult and develop a new offer to children and families.
- Contribute to the new Community Safety Plan 2021 and work to address key priorities
- Continue to engage and support vulnerable adults and reduce anti-social behaviour
- Build community involvement in safer neighbourhoods
- Refresh our approach to “PREVENT” as one Council
- Continue to support “resettlement”

3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

3.1 Cabinet are asked to consider the report and note the contribution made to the Council Plan ambitions, goals, priorities and outcomes, including the response made to the COVID-19 pandemic and the mid-term recovery

4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

4.1 The progress made in developing services that help and work with vulnerable children, adults, their families and communities placed us in a good position to respond to COVID-19 through creative, innovative and flexible practices and it has enabled us to continue the excellent progress towards children being in their families, in their schools and in their communities and vulnerable adults safeguarded.

4.2 Business continuity across Children and Community Resilience has continued to be maintained and there is a continued focus on the wellbeing of our workforce.

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

Financial

- 5.1 Services being delivered in line with statutory functions, local responses and meeting need locally, reduces significant costs associated with external placements and growing demand for services. Overall CCR is showing an underspend, and this is reported to be down to the decrease in external agency placements and also due to staff vacancies. It is a priority to fill vacancies and there is a constant task to advertise, attract, appoint and retain staff to maintain our work with children and families and the anticipated longer-term impact of the pandemic on children and families. The overall budget position for children presents a continued risk associated with demand management across the system. This can only be mitigated by a strong and experienced workforce, good effective assessment, decision making and case management whilst at the same time providing local responses to meet need. North Lincolnshire foster carers provide an invaluable role in caring for children locally.
- 5.2 The financial implications of COVID-19 are being closely monitored against the emergency funding from government. The impact of funding assumptions and financial sustainability are regularly reported to Cabinet.
- 5.3 There are children and families who need help and protection as a direct result of the pandemic who would not normally require services. Further support and capacity is likely to be required to support these families within the context of “hardship” and emerging need during the coming months and years.

Workforce

- 5.4 Overall within CCR we have more workers with “no absence” than the average as well as below average “turn over”. We do know that the recruitment and retention of qualified social workers in front line social work contact, referral, assessment and case management is an area that requires constant and priority attention.

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

- 6.1 National advice and guidance has been incorporated into the local response to the pandemic as it has become available. The enactment of the Coronavirus Act 2020 led to certain relaxations of statutory requirements and the introduction of new powers and statutory instruments.
- 6.2 COVID-19 risk assessments have been completed as required.

6.3 Council services contribute toward the community safety responsibilities.

7. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

7.1 Not applicable for the purposes of this report

8. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

8.1 Any decisions and actions taken have been done in consultation as appropriate

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That Cabinet consider the report and note the contribution made to the Council Plan ambitions, goals, priorities and outcomes, including the response made to the COVID-19 pandemic and the mid-term recovery

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: None