

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET		
SUBJECT:	PLACEMENT COMMISSIONING SUFFICIENCY STATEMENT AND STRATEGY 2020-2025		
DATE OF DECISION:	17 MARCH 2020		
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR ASPIRATION, CHILDREN AND LIFELONG LEARNING		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
AUTHOR:	Name:	Donna Chapman, Associate Director, Integrated Commissioning Unit	Tel: 023 80296002
	E-mail:	D.chapman1@nhs.net	
Director	Name:	Hilary Brooks, Director of Children's Services Stephanie Ramsey, Director of Quality and Integration	Tel: 023 80834899 02380296941
	E-mail:	Hilary.brooks@southampton.gov.uk Stephanie.Ramsey@southampton.gov.uk	
STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY			
NOT APPLICABLE			
BRIEFSUMMARY			
<p>Local authorities are required to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of children that the local authority are looking after, and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority's area ('the sufficiency duty'). In order to meet this duty, Councils will have in place a Placement Sufficiency Strategy which analyses need, reviews existing provision and identifies areas for development/improvement to meet the sufficiency duty.</p>			
<p>This report summarises the refresh of the Council's Placement Commissioning Sufficiency Statement and Strategy. The strategy will cover the period 2020 – 2025 with the opportunity to review and update annually.</p>			
RECOMMENDATIONS:			
	(i)	To approve the Council's Placement Commissioning Sufficiency Statement and Strategy 2020-2025	
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS			
1.	Southampton City Council's current Placement Commissioning Sufficiency Strategy expires on 31 March 2020 and there is therefore a need to produce and publish a new strategy.		
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED			
2.	Not Applicable – Statutory Guidance states that 'Local authorities must be able to show that at a strategic level they are taking steps to meet the sufficiency duty, so far as is 'reasonably practical'. The Council's Placement		

	Commissioning Sufficiency Statement and Strategy ensures that it fulfils this requirement.
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
	Vision
3.	<p>Our vision for placement provision as set out in the strategy is that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will be supported to stay with their families where it is safe to do so • We will achieve permanency through adoption, special guardianship and permanent fostering in a timely manner • Most children will live in a local, family placement • Children with disabilities will have the same access and opportunity for placements as their non-disabled peers • Care leavers will be able to access 'Staying Put' foster care, supported lodgings and supported accommodation • We will improve the timeliness of care planning and utilise strategic commissioning to improve timely access to a mixed range of placements that meet our local needs
4.	<p>Our aim is to work restoratively, assertively and productively with families to ensure that only those children who need to be in the care of the local authority receive accommodation, with the provision being the most appropriate, able to meet their needs and promoting a step-down approach. At the same time we want to ensure that when children do need to be in care, the majority can be placed within a 20 mile radius of the city, and where possible achieve continuity of their education, health, wider care needs and social networks to support stability in their lives.</p>
	Overview of Content of Strategy
5.	<p>The range of accommodation within the scope of the sufficiency duty includes foster care, residential care, semi independence provision and housing, within Southampton or relatively close to the city, in order to meet the needs of the diverse range of children in our care.</p>
6.	<p>Southampton currently commissions/provides a wide range of options as part of ensuring that it can access the full range of provision needed to meet the varying needs of the local children and young people in its care. Southampton's current provision options for meeting the short, medium and long term needs of our children and young people include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authority foster carers • Independent foster carers (IFAs) • Residential children's homes • Supported accommodation • Adoption
7.	<p>Some of the commissioned provision currently in place is coming towards the end of its contract life cycle (e.g. IFAs, Supported Housing for vulnerable young people and care leavers) and will need to be re-tendered to ensure the continued access to the range of placement options that will offer quality and stability of care for children and value for the council. The strategy will therefore guide the commissioning intentions for these re-procurements.</p>

8.	<p>The strategy includes an update on :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement options: the accommodation and placement provision that we currently have, how this has changed, and how we want it to change to continue to meet the needs of the children and young people in our care sufficiently and to the quality we seek. • Looked After Children population: Southampton's current comparative levels of Looked After Children compared to England and similar areas, and the make-up and characteristics of the children in our care in terms of their age profile, gender profile and ethnicity.
	<p>Priorities</p>
9.	<p>Based on current provision and the latest data on local need, the Strategy sets out a number of key priorities which are summarised below:</p> <p>Local Authority foster carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of local authority foster carers and retain existing carers. • Promote kinship and 'connected' care at the earliest opportunity to keep children within their families and communities. • Increase the range of placements offered by local authority foster carers, with a focus on those children with complex needs and behaviours. <p>Independent fostering agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to ensure that we are using the contract effectively – ensuring all placements continue to meet the needs. • Explore options for increasing access to local placements to bring children and young people closer to home where they can access local services and support networks. • Re-procurement of the contract for 2021 onwards, with a specific focus on strengthening provision in those areas which have been historically difficult to source, in particular same day placements, sibling groups and children who present with complex needs and behaviours. <p>Residential children's homes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all provision with independent residential children's homes is focussed on providing safe, stable and good quality care, with a view for the children and young people placed with them to be returned back to a family and friends network wherever possible. • Continue to explore and progress options for increasing access to local placements to bring children and young people closer to home where they can access local services and support networks. <p>Housing with Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure, in collaboration with the council Housing Services and supported housing landlords, that the range of 16+ supported accommodation is suitable for young people, young parents and their children. • Continue to develop the range of commissioned supported and specialist accommodation provision for young people and young parents aged 16+ with complex needs. • Provide sufficient emergency supported accommodation to young people

	<p>and parents in urgent need.</p> <p>Adoption:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners to contribute to the implementation and governance of Adopt South to ensure sufficiency of adoptive placements and adoption support.
10.	Section 8 of the strategy sets out the actions which will be taken to progress these priorities and how success will be measured. Where these actions entail substantial change or investment eg. Re-procurement of provision, development of in-house residential provision, separate proposals will be progressed through the appropriate governance processes.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>	
11.	Capital and revenue implications associated with specific proposals linked to the priorities in the strategy will be subject to a separate business case for the respective proposal.
<u>Property/Other</u>	
12.	Property implications associated with specific proposals linked to the priorities in the strategy will be subject to a separate business case for the respective proposal.
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
13.	Since the implementation of the Children Act 1989 local authorities have been required to take steps that secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for children looked after within their local authority area (Section 22G Children Act 1989). This section of the 1989 Act was also inserted into Section 9 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008. This is now referred to as 'the sufficiency duty'.
14.	The Statutory Guidance states that 'Local authorities must be able to show that at a strategic level they are taking steps to meet the sufficiency duty, so far as is 'reasonably practical'.
<u>Other Legal Implications:</u>	
	None
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
15.	Risks associated with specific proposals linked to the priorities in the strategy will be subject to a separate business case for the respective proposal.
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
16.	The Placement Commissioning Strategy 2020-25 will support Southampton's vision of being a city of opportunity, as well as the goals of being fairer and healthier, by ensuring suitable accommodation for children and young people in the council's care. The strategy forms a key part of the delivery of the council's 'welfare' agenda outlined in the council's corporate plan.

KEY DECISION?	Yes
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
Appendices	
1.	Placement Commissioning Sufficiency Statement and Strategy 2020-2025
2.	Equality and Safety Impact Assessment
3.	DPIA Checklist

Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None
Equality Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.	Yes
Data Protection Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out.	No
Other Background Documents	
Other Background documents available for inspection at:	
Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1.	None