

CABINET

21 November 2017

CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS STRATEGY 2017-2022

Report of the Director for People

Strategic Aim:	Reaching our Full Potential	
Key Decision: No	Forward Plan Reference: FP/230617	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mr R Foster, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People (Safeguarding)	
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Ward Councillors	All	

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

1. Recommends to Council the approval of the Children Looked After and Care Leavers Strategy 2017-2022 (Appendix A)

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1** This Strategy has been developed to ensure we outline our expectations and pledges we hold for our Children Looked After and Care Leavers, we want to outline our expectations as corporate parents.
- 1.2** The term 'Corporate Parent' means the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees, and partner agencies, for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by the council. A child in the care of the council looks to the whole council to be the best parent it can be to that child. Every member and employee of the council has the statutory responsibility to act for and for that child in the same way that a good parent would act for and for their child.
- 1.3** We want this strategy to be a partnership strategy and we will ensure it is developed and delivered alongside our children and young people to ensure this consistently meets the needs of our children who are looked after and those leaving care and ensure we uphold the pledges, and we do what we say we will do.
- 1.4** We will work closely with our Children in Care Council (SUSO – Speak up Speak Out) and our Care Leavers to continue to ensure our priorities for children and young people are upheld and ensure they change as the needs of our children and young people change.
- 1.5** We want to do all we can to support our children and young people to 'achieve their potential' and we feel strongly that this strategy will further develop and influence the work we do.
- 1.6** The Children in Care Council will frequently review the strategy, and ensure we as corporate parents are challenged when needed, our feedback survey will be developed to ensure we capture areas of the strategy in measuring how well we are doing and what we need to do better.
- 1.7** We are confident outcomes for our children looked after and our care leavers will continue to improve

2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1** We have endeavoured to make sure this strategy reflects the promises we have made in The Pledge: Our Promise to Children and Young People in Our Care and our Care Leavers.
- 2.2** This strategy is reliant on good partnership working, and we know that the best outcomes for children looked after and care leavers can only be achieved through this.
- 2.3** The success of this strategy relies on the commitment of the whole County Council; foster carers, commissioners and providers of healthcare, schools and colleges and all public and voluntary sector organisations in Rutland, which contribute to improving the lives of children and young people in our care and ensuring our care leavers have all they need in their transition into adulthood.
- 2.4** The Strategy is built around our Pledges which our children in care council developed. Our pledges are for children looked after and care leavers. This

document looks at each outcome in turn providing national and local information, as well as the view of children and young people from Rutland.

2.5 Each outcome is then described with a list of outcome statements which give more detail about what we aspire to achieve for children and young people.

2.6 Our Pledges to Children looked After and Care Leavers are:

Children Looked After and Care Leavers are happy and have good Health and Well Being

Children Looked After and Care Leavers are safe and in safe and stable placements

Children Looked After and Care Leavers achieve their potential and have access to good education, training and/or employment

Children Looked After and Care Leavers are prepared for adulthood

Children Looked After and Care Leavers are listened to and supported to participate in society

Children Looked After and Care Leavers build positive relationships

2.7 The strategy is accompanied by our Pledge Scorecard which will be reviewed and updated prior to each meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board and will include feedback from children looked after and care leavers and professionals will update at each Board.

2.8 The overall aim of the Corporate Parenting Board is to ensure the corporate responsibility of the whole council and partner agencies to children looked after, through the corporate parenting arrangements and governance. Rutland County Council has a strong track record as a corporate parent and this strategy builds on this so that the Council can become an outstanding corporate parent.

2.9 The Corporate Parenting Board holds others to account where the needs and wellbeing of children looked after and care leavers are not met.

2.10 The principle of '**would this be good enough for my child**' underpins our Corporate Parenting Board and therefore the objectives of this strategy are to ensure that the whole Council and partner agencies work together towards ensuring better outcomes for children looked after and care leavers.

2.11 All of the outcome statements and measures identified in the strategy are important and agencies will continue to seek improvements in all aspects of work with children looked after, the Annual Action Plan provides a vehicle for the multi-agency Children Looked After and Care Leavers Strategy Group to drive improvement in the selected focus areas.

2.12 The Strategy is accompanied by our **Ofsted Next Steps Plan** which will drive

forward improvement outcomes for children and young people. The Action Plan has a number of recommendations which will be addressed through 2017/18.

- 2.13** We have our Pledges which will further support and monitor this strategy and ensure it is effective as well as holding us to account for areas which do not progress.
- 2.14** This Strategy will be reviewed along with the Pledges prior to each Corporate Parenting Board meeting to ensure we progress in delivering the best possible service to our children looked after and Care Leavers.
- 2.15** This Strategy will be Multi-Agency, we want to work closely with partners as this is the best way and to ensure that Children Looked After and care leavers receive the best possible outcomes.
- 2.16** As a multi-agency and as corporate parents we all will:
- Provide oversight of the actions associated with their outcome
 - Offer their expertise in developing realistic and meaningful actions
 - Act as champions for their outcome within their organisations
- 2.17** Relevant professionals from across different partner organisations form the multi-agency **Corporate Parenting Board**. This group, will monitor progress and support activity within the Next Steps Action Plan. Regular updates on progress will be delivered to the **People Directorate Management Team** and **Children in Care Council**.
- 2.18** Twice a year, progress will also be reported to the **Corporate Parenting Board** with an annual report provided to the **Children and Young People's Scrutiny**. It is important that the governance of this strategy reflects its multi-agency nature, and as such, updates will also be provided to the **Children's Trust, Board** and **Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Board** as appropriate.
- 2.19** At the end of the year, all of the actions and all of the outcome statements within the Strategy will be evaluated.
- 2.20** Children and young people will be a key part of this evaluation and will be invited to give their feedback on how things have improved during the year, and what we need to focus on next. Based on the end of year evaluation, the Children Looked After and Care Leavers Strategy Group will identify a set of outcome measures which will be the focus of the next year's Annual Action Plan.

3 KEY THEMES

- 3.1** The Strategy aims to offer a detailed oversight of our roles and responsibilities as corporate parents
- 3.2** The Strategy offers some oversight around the National and Local picture
- 3.3** Children and Young People voice is evident within the Strategy allowing us to be aware of their voice and address issues as required.
- 3.4** The strategy will be delivered alongside our Ofsted Action Plan which will drive

improvement in outcomes for children and young people.

- 3.5** We will continue to measure progress via our Pledges and complete quarterly story boards to evidence progress as well as evidencing that we are meeting Children Looked After and Care Leavers needs within this strategy

4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1** Consultation has taken place previously with our Children in Care and our Care Leavers as they have produced the Councils Pledges and the Strategy has been produced based on these pledges

- 4.2** Whilst no formal consultation has taken place for the strategy to be finalised it has been committed with staff and partners through a variety of ways to gather thoughts and feedback, for example Scrutiny Panel, Corporate Parenting Board and The Children Trust Board.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 5.1** There is no planned alternative, the strategy is laying out our duty to children looked after and care leavers.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** There are no financial implications, the strategy is based on support and existing resources we have in place to ensure we offer the best service possible to Child Looked After and Care Leavers.

7 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1** Children's Services Plans form part of the Council's Policy Framework therefore the Children Looked After and Care Leavers Strategy 2017-2022 is required to be adopted by the Full Council, as set out in Article 4 of the Council's Constitution.

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT.

- 8.1** Equality Impact Screening has been completed. No adverse or other significant issues were found.

9 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1** There are no Community Safety Implications.

10 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1** There are no health or wellbeing implications.

11 ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1** There are no organisational implications

12 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 The Children Looked After and Care Leaver Strategy is designed to enable us as corporate parents to be aware of our role and responsibility in developing and ensuring an outstanding service is delivered.

12.2 This Strategy will be reviewed regular to ensure we are meeting the needs of our children and young people in care.

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 There are no background information

14 APPENDICES

14.1 Appendix A - Children Looked After and Care Leaver Strategy 2017 - 2022

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.