

## **CABINET 14TH DECEMBER 2020**

**Report title:** Children Looked After and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2020-2023

**Wards:** All

**Portfolio:** Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Councillor Ed Davie

**Report Authorised by** Merlin Joseph, Strategic Director, Children's Services

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### **REPORT SUMMARY**

The report provides an overview of the Sufficiency Strategy which is requested to be approved by Cabinet on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

The Sufficiency Strategy outlines the approach Lambeth will take to provide placements for children and young people who are in care in Lambeth over the next three years. This includes the key placement provisions for young people that include; in house fostering, independent fostering agency placements, semi-independent accommodations, residential provision, and specialist provision.

### **FINANCE SUMMARY**

The models outlined in the Strategy will be paid for through existing revenue budgets allocated to Children's Social Care in relation to the placements budget.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. To approve the Sufficiency Strategy 2020-2023 and allow for the development of the models contained within the Strategy.

#### **1. CONTEXT**

- 1.1 Lambeth Council has the highest ambitions for our children and young people. Our Vision is that we want Lambeth to be ambitious every day for every child; putting young people and their families at the heart of what we do.
- 1.2 In 2018, Ofsted inspected Lambeth Council's Children's Social Care and found that we 'require improvement' to be good. Since then we have embarked on a journey to improve our Social Care services and quality of practice. We are doing this through our Ofsted Improvement Plan and

Programme which, focuses on distinct areas of improvement covering front line social work through to improving the quality of our placements for young people.

- 1.3 The Sufficiency Strategy is a core strategy required by Ofsted as part of the Inspecting Local Authorities Children's Services (ILACS) framework. Each Local Authority is required to publish how it will meet its sufficiency duty. Our new strategy sets out how Lambeth will meet this duty over the next three years.

## **2. SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY 2020-2023**

- 2.1 Children's Social Care working with Commissioners, have drafted a new Sufficiency Strategy to outline the placements that we need to provide for our young people. The key strategy outlines how the Council will meet our young people's needs and provide the framework as to how we will provide placements over the next three years.
- 2.2 Our sufficiency strategy has 5 key objectives, which will form the focus of our activity if approved. These are based on the needs of children in Lambeth and will ensure we have the right configuration of placements to meet our statutory requirements for children and young people who come into care.
- 2.3 Our Strategy includes a key analysis of the children in care in Lambeth. The Strategy recognises that the children in our care are unique and require specialist support to help them reach their potential on their journey through care. This analysis has helped us to understand our demand and help shape what we need for the future.
- 2.4 The Strategy outlines the relationship between Social Care and Health to help understand the health and social care needs of all children. This approach as set out in the Strategy helps to shape an appropriate and supporting environment for young people that meets their needs.
- 2.5 The Strategy provides the context and background on how placements are currently provided and the direction of travel that Lambeth wishes to pursue moving forward. The Strategy outlines, a strengthening of our in-house fostering service and how we will provide additional support to foster carers through an enhanced wrap around service. The Strategy also sets out our approach to reduce the number of IFA placements being made over the lifecycle of the Strategy.
- 2.6 The Strategy sets out our approach to Semi- Independent housing provision and the work that will be undertaken, to help young people transition to their own tenancy or access a Staying Put placement.
- 2.7 The Strategy also outlines how we will make greater use of the South London Commissioning Programme, to ensure that Lambeth obtains the best quality placements it can for young people. The Strategy also sets out how we will obtain value for money in the reduction of the spot purchasing of placements.
- 2.8 We have developed a new performance framework to help understand the usage of our placements to help us with performance and contract monitoring allowing for a systematic understanding of our placements and how they meet the needs of young people.
- 2.9 The Strategy also outlines the projects that will be undertaken to help deliver the objectives and core activities contained within the Strategy and how these will be delivered.

## **Conclusions**

- 2.10 Cabinet are requested to consider and approve the new Strategy allowing for greater support to be designed, procured, and commissioned to meet the needs of young people in Lambeth who require a placement.
- 2.11 Regular updates on the development and implementation of the areas contained within the Strategy will be updated through the relevant corporate governance and reporting requirements.
- 2.12 We will be re-visiting the Strategy in the Autumn of 2021 to ensure that the Strategy remains fit for purpose and to amend the Strategy as required.

## **3. FINANCE**

- 3.1 Finance note the contents of the Strategy and will work with Children's Social Care to design, develop, and implement the options put forward in the Strategy. This will be done within the allocated budgets available.

## **4. LEGAL AND DEMOCRACY**

- 4.1 Section 22G of the 1989 Act, requires local authorities to take strategic action in respect of those children they look after and for whom it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation within their local authority area (known as the sufficiency duty'). The statutory guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children (DfE 2010) provides 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 Lambeth Sufficiency Strategy 2020-2023 sets out how this duty will be met over the next three years.
- 4.2 This proposed key decision was entered in the Forward Plan on 20 July 2020 and the necessary 28 clear days' notice has been given. In addition, the Council's Constitution requires the report to be published on the website for five clear days before the proposed decision is approved by Cabinet. Any representations received during this period must be considered by the decision-maker before the decision is taken. A further period of five clear days – the call-in period – must then elapse before the decision is enacted. If the decision is called-in during this period, it cannot be enacted until the call-in has been considered and resolved.

## **5. CONSULTATION AND CO-PRODUCTION**

- 5.1 Young People, partners and health colleagues have been involved in engagement and consultation on the development of the Sufficiency Strategy that is going to cabinet on the 14th December 2020.
- 5.2 The Children in Care Council and young people will be involved in the development of services outlined in the Strategy. There is a legal requirement to consult with young people on the development of proposals relating to housing. Young people will be involved in the development of housing proposals contained within the Strategy as the working group is formed. Foster Carers have been consulted on the proposed changes to the Fostering Service, as part of a dedicated consultation as to how the service can be improved.

## 6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 Risks relating to the development of the key areas within the Strategy are to be subject to individual risk registers as part of the Children at the Heart of Practice Programme 2020-2022.

6.2 The main risks that impede on the successful delivery of this Strategy are;

**Table 1 – Risk Register**

| Item | Risk   | Likelihood | Impact | Score | Control Measures  |
|------|--|------------|--------|-------|---|
| 1    | That the Strategy is not approved leading to noncompliance on the provision of the Strategy as required under the Inspecting Local Authorities Children's Services framework (ILACS) | 2          | 5      | 10    | Strategy has been developed using co-production with a wide range of partners to gain approval and buy in to the approach for the next 3 years  |
| 2    | That the Strategy does not have wider buy in from partners and providers   | 2          | 4      | 8     | The Strategy has been produced in consultation with partners. The approach set out in the Strategy has been agreed as the most appropriate for Lambeth over the next 3-year period.           |
| 3    | That the Strategy does not cover the width of placement options that are required  | 2          | 5      | 10    | The Strategy has covered all core areas of placement that are understood to be required. This is kept under advisement to ensure that placements meet the needs of children and young people. |

### Key

|                   |                 |             |                 |                   |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <b>Likelihood</b> | Very Likely = 4 | Likely = 3  | Unlikely = 2    | Very Unlikely = 1 |
| <b>Impact</b>     | Major = 8       | Serious = 4 | Significant = 2 | Minor = 1         |

## 7. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 An equality Impact Assessment has been developed for the new Sufficiency Strategy that is being considered by the Cabinet.

7.2 The EIA Panel has considered the equalities impact of the proposed Strategy on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020. The Panel have approved the Equalities Impact Assessment that has been completed alongside this report.

7.3 Elected members will consider the Equalities Impact Assessments for services that are to be developed, through the course of the Strategy

## **8. COMMUNITY SAFETY**

- 8.1 The services outlines in the Strategy that are to be developed, will be done in conjunction with other core community safety strategies, policies and procedures that are relevant. This will include the Lambeth Made Safer for young people strategy that has been approved.

## **9. ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

### **Environmental**

- 9.1 There are no direct environmental implications in the report.

### **Health**

- 9.2 Children's Commissioning are leading the commissioning and sufficiency work alongside Children's Social Care. Children's commissioners are involved in key areas of the Strategy and will be leading on the development of the work with the South London Commissioning Programme.

### **Corporate Parenting**

- 9.3 The Strategy relates directly to the Corporate Parenting plan that has been updated and agreed at the September 2020 Corporate Parenting Board. The Strategy is a crucial component of the Corporate Parenting Plan, relating to improving outcomes for children in care.

### **Staffing and Accommodation**

- 9.4 There are no staffing and accommodation implications contained within the report.

### **Responsible Procurement**

- 9.5 There are no responsible procurement implications contained within the Strategy. All procurement activity relating to individual services will be managed through the required processes and procedures as part of the required re-tendering exercises.

### ***Good Quality Jobs with Fair Pay and Decent Working Conditions***

- 9.6 There are no direct implications in the Strategy relating to this section. All awards of contracts will consider the above area in making any contract award working with procurement.

### ***Quality Apprenticeships, targeted Employment for Lambeth residents and Lambeth Priority Group***

- 9.7 The Strategy has no direct implications relating to the above section.

### **Reduce Emissions: Lambeth Council has a commitment to being Zero Carbon by 2030**

- 9.8 There is no reduction of emissions implications contained within the Strategy.

### ***Single Use Plastics***

- 9.9 There are no implications specifically arising from the Strategy in relation to the use of single use plastics.

### ***Positive Health and Wellbeing***

- 9.10 The development of the new Sufficiency Strategy focuses on ensuring that young people's health and wellbeing is supported, and the Strategy also outlines how individual health assessments will be undertaken for children and young people.

### ***Other Offers (Innovation)***

- 9.11 There are no uses of corporate responsibility budget for services contained within the Strategy.

## 10. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

10.1 The table below details the stages and deadlines for implementing the recommendations:

| <b>Activity</b>                        | <b>Proposed Date</b> |
|--|----------------------|
| EIA Review Panel                       | 1/12/2020            |
| Cabinet Report on Sufficiency Strategy | 14/12/2020           |
| Call-In Deadline                       | 29/12/2020           |

## AUDIT TRAIL

This shows the consultation undertaken in the report's preparation and provides a reference point for comments. The report is not publishable if not completed by the named persons below. It is essential that officers liaise with relevant councillors (e.g. Cabinet Member and the relevant Ward Members).

| Name and Position/Title                                       | Lambeth Directorate                    | Date Sent | Date Received | Comments in paragraph:   |
|---|--|-----------|---------------|--|
| Councillor Ed Davie   | Cabinet Member for Children's Services | 02.12.20  | 02.12.20      | Strategy Approved  |
| Merlin Joseph, Strategic/Executive Director / Chief Executive | Children's Services                    | 02.12.20  | 02.12.20      | Strategy Approved  |
| Mark Sage Finance   | Finance and Property                   | 30.11.20  | 30.11.20      | Comments provided in report.   |
| Javed Ansari, Legal Services                                  | Legal and Governance                   | 01/12/20  | 01/12/20      | Comments provided in report  |
| Christian Scade, Democratic Services                          | Legal and Governance                   | 01/12/20  | 01/12/20      | Comments throughout  |
| Sasa Giglic -Procurement                                      | Finance and Property                   | 01.12.20  | 01.12.20      | Corporate procurement are content with the approach suggested in strategy. |

## REPORT HISTORY

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Original discussion with Cabinet Member</b>  | 15.11.20   |
| <b>Report deadline</b>  | 02/12/20   |
| <b>Date final report sent</b>   | 02.12.20   |
| <b>Part II Exempt from Disclosure/confidential accompanying report?</b>   | No   |
| <b>Key decision report</b>  | Yes  |
| <b>Date first appeared on forward plan</b>  | 20/07/20   |
| <b>Key decision reasons</b>   | 2. Expenditure, income, or savings more than £500,000. |
| <b>Background information</b><br><b>MANDATORY:</b> It is a legal requirement to insert any <b>public</b> documents you have used or referenced to write this report. Do not list private documents (such as OB reports). Detailed procurement information will need to be provided in an internal procurement report but will not be appended to this report (and the public info will be a background document). | None   |

**Appendices****Appendix A – *Lambeth Sufficiency Strategy  
2020-2023*****Appendix B – *Equality Impact Assessment***