

<b>DECISION-MAKER:</b>	CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	THE SUFFICIENCY OF ACCOMMODATION FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	22 JULY 2021
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHILDREN AND LEARNING

<b><u>CONTACT DETAILS</u></b>			
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<b>STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY</b>	
N/A	
<b>BRIEF SUMMARY</b>	
To brief the Panel on how the council is fulfilling its duty to secure sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of children that the council is looking after.	
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>	
(i)	That the Panel note the current position and next steps to secure sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of children that the council is looking after.
(ii)	That the Panel is provided with an annual update on the sufficiency of accommodation in order to scrutinise the impact of the council's Placement Commissioning Sufficiency Statement and Strategy 2020-2025.
<b>REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
1.	Southampton City Council has corporate parenting responsibility for looked after children in its care and care leavers. There is a legal duty placed upon the council to secure sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which meets the needs of children that the council are looking after.
<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED</b>	
2.	None
<b>DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)</b>	
3.	The document attached as Appendix 1 outlines the current position and next steps to secure sufficient accommodation within the authority's area which

	meets the needs of children that the council are looking after. Demand for and supply of suitable accommodation options for children in our care is outlined within the national and local context. The impact of the council's Placement Commissioning Sufficiency Statement and Strategy 2020- 2025 is reviewed, including evaluation from the recent Ofsted focused visit.
4.	The sufficiency of local placements for our children in care remains a challenge in the context of a stable cohort of looked after children and a national and local shortage of suitable placements to meet the varied and complex needs of the children we care for.
5.	Next steps to secure sufficient accommodation, include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver on our fostering recruitment strategy 2020-2023.</li> <li>• Enhance our fostering provision through the step-across scheme, parent and child offer and emergency provision.</li> <li>• Deliver on the provision of two in-house Children's homes by the end of March 2022.</li> <li>• Managing and developing local independent placement provision through re-tendering of the commissioning framework and active engagement with providers based in the city.</li> </ul>
6.	In addition, attached as Appendix 2, is a detailed response to the recommendations made at a previous meeting of the Panel with regards to the recruitment of in-house foster carers.
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<b><u>Capital/Revenue</u></b>	
7.	None at this stage
<b><u>Property/Other</u></b>	
8.	None at this stage
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<b><u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u></b>	
9.	S.111 Local Government Act 1972
<b><u>Other Legal Implications:</u></b>	
10.	None
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS</b>	
11.	Steps being taken to manage the risks associated with placement sufficiency are outlined in Appendix 1.
<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS</b>	
12.	The Placement Commissioning Sufficiency Statement and Strategy 2020-2025 contributes to achieving the outcomes desired for children in Southampton. The Corporate Plan 2020 sets out the following regarding the wellbeing of children in the city:

	<p>“Working with partners to deliver the ambitions set out in the five-year Health and Wellbeing Strategy, this area looks at wellbeing across the city, with a focus on adults and children’s social care, education and public health. We work closely with partners to help safeguard vulnerable people across the city. We are focused on delivering strong customer experience across the Adults and Children &amp; Families services. We want Southampton to be a city that is recognised for its proactive approach to preventing problems and intervening early, as well being a ‘Child Friendly City’ where children and young people have great opportunities and an aspiration to achieve. We want our residents to have the information and support they need to lead safe, active, healthy lives and to be able to live independently for longer.”</p>
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<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	No
<b>WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:</b>	All
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
<b>Appendices</b>	
1.	Highlight report: Sufficiency of accommodation for children in care
2.	Highlight report: Response to recommendations made by the Panel at previous meetings relating to placement options

**Documents in Members’ Rooms**

1.	None
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**Equality Impact Assessment**

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out?	<b>No</b>
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**Data Protection Impact Assessment**

Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out?	<b>No</b>
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**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