

Children's Trust Joint Committee

21st June 2023

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| Report Title | Children's Trust Joint Committee Forward Plan |
| Report Author | Ann Marie Dodds, Executive Director of Children's Services (NNC) annmarie.dodds@northnorthants.gov.uk Richard Woodward, Head of Business & Performance (Interim) ICF Programme Lead NNC) richard.woodward@northnorthants.gov.uk |
| Executive Member | Councillor Scott Edwards, Executive Member Children, Families, Education & Skills (NNC) Cllr Fiona Baker – Children, Families & Education (WNC) |

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| Key Decision | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are there public sector equality duty implications? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 | |

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. This report seeks the Children's Trust Joint Committee's agreement to the proposed forward plan of agenda items for future meetings for the municipal year to May 2024.

2. Executive Summary

2.1. At the meeting of the Children's Trust Joint Committee held on 15th February 2023 it was agreed that the committee would meet on a quarterly basis.

2.2. At the meeting of the Joint Officer Board on 18th May 2023, it was agreed to recommend a forward plan to the Children's Trust Joint Committee.

2.3. Four meetings have been scheduled for the municipal year to May 2024 with an additional meeting in November 2023 during the contract sum process.

2.4. The additional meeting scheduled towards the end of the contract sum negotiation process in November 2024 will provide the Joint Committee with democratic oversight of the process and allow any decisions to be taken in line with the committee's terms of reference.

2.5. This report seeks the Children's Trust Joint Committee's agreement to the proposed forward plan of agenda items for future meetings for the municipal year to May 2024.

3. Recommendations

3.1. It is recommended that the Children's Trust Joint Committee:

- a) Notes the dates of the committee's meetings for the municipal year to May 2024.
- b) Approves the forward plan proposed by the Joint Officer Board for the municipal year to May 2024 as set out in this report.
- c) Notes that that Joint Officer Board will from time to time also recommend additional agenda items for consideration at the Children's Trust Joint Committee as required by the terms of reference for the Committee and the Joint Officer Board.

3.2. Reason for Recommendations

- To ensure that the Children's Trust Joint Committee maintains democratic oversight of arrangements for the delivery of early help and children's social care services by Northamptonshire Childrens Trust (NCT) as set out it the committee's terms of reference.
- To oversee the interface between the unitaries in relation to the effective discharge of the commissioning responsibilities pursuant to the Service Delivery Contract.
- Consider relevant matters arising in relation to the delivery of the services and their financial position.
- To provide governance in respect of the Northamptonshire Children's Trust limited company to reflect the role of the two Unitaries as joint members/owners of the jointly owned Teckal company in accordance with the Articles of Association. In particular, joint decision making for the exercise of Council rights under the Articles, NCT's Business Plan and the Reserved Matters;
- To provide political and statutory oversight of the relationship between the two unitaries in relation to the provision of Support Services to NCT pursuant to the Support Services Agreement.
- Consider matters reported to the Joint Committee by the Joint Officer Boards and the Councils

3.3. Alternative Options Considered

- To not have a Forward Plan of the Committee – This Is not recommended. Not having a clear forward plan would mean the two Councils might not be able to fully meet their responsibilities in relation to the ownership of the Trust and appropriate oversight of its service delivery and financial position. Further details regarding Issues and Choices considered can be found in section 5 of the report below.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. From 1 April 2021, after the abolition of Northamptonshire County Council, North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council became joint owners of Northamptonshire Children’s Trust (NCT) with each council owning a 50% share. Whilst the Trust is operationally independent of the Councils, the Councils still retain significant control over NCT and are responsible for making decisions on a number of ‘reserved matters’ that are set out in the Trust’s Articles of Association.
- 4.2. The Councils have established the Children’s Trust Joint Committee to discharge the functions of the Councils that relate to ownership of NCT, the provision of support services to the trust and consider relevant matters arising in relation to the delivery of the children’s early help and social care services and their financial position.
- 4.3. At the meeting of the Children’s Trust Joint Committee held on 15th February 2023 it was agreed that the committee would meet on a quarterly basis.
- 4.4. At the meeting of the Joint Officer Board on 18th May 2023, it was agreed to recommend a forward plan to the Children’s Trust Joint Committee.
- 4.5. Four meetings have been scheduled for the municipal year to May 2024 with an additional meeting in November 2023 during the contract sum process.
- 4.6. The additional meeting scheduled towards the end of the contract sum negotiation process in November 2023 will provide the Joint Committee with democratic oversight of the process and allow any decisions to be taken in line with the committee’s terms of reference.
- 4.7. The meeting dates and forward plan of the Childrens Trust Joint Committee for the municipal year to May 2024 proposed by Joint Officer Board are contained in the table below:

| Meeting Date | Forward Plan |
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| Wednesday 21 st June 2023 2pm WNC – Council Chamber, County Hall, Northampton | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract Sum 2023/24 Update - Budget, actuals and forecasted outturn |
| Wednesday 6 th September 2023 10am NNC - Council Chamber, Corby Cube | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change control to include Transport in the Support Services Agreement • Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Annual Review and Annual Report • Review of progress to realise 2023/24 savings proposals and MTFS • Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Accommodation Strategy • Early Help |
| Wednesday 8 th November 2023 2pm WNC – Council Chamber, County Hall, Northampton | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCT Business Plan • Contract Sum 2023/24 Update - Budget, actuals and forecasted outturn • Contract Sum 2024/25 and MTFS • Support Services SLA Strategic Review and Change Controls |
| Wednesday 6 th March 2024 2pm WNC – Council Chamber, County Hall, Northampton | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of realisation of 2023/24 savings proposals and MTFS |
| Wednesday 1 st May 2024 10am NNC - Council Chamber, Corby Cube | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract Sum 2024/25 Update - Budget, actuals and forecasted outturn |

5. Issues and Choices

5.1. The Councils have established the Children’s Trust Joint Committee to discharge the functions of the Councils that relate to ownership of NCT, the provision of support services to the Trust and consider relevant matters arising in relation to the delivery of children’s early help and social care services and their financial position.

5.2. The development of a forward plan for the Childrens Trust Joint Committee will ensure an appropriate level of democratic oversight and the ability to discharge the Councils functions as set out in the terms of reference of the Childrens Trust Joint Committee, the Service Delivery Contract, the Articles of Association and Support Services Agreement.

5.3. Not having a clear forward plan would mean the Councils might not be able to fully meet their responsibilities in relation to the ownership of the Trust and appropriate oversight of its service delivery and financial position.

6. Next Steps

6.1. Should the Committee agree to the forward plan proposed by the Joint Officer Board it will form the basis of the work of the committee for the municipal year to May 2024.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1. The recommendations set out in this report will allow the Councils to maintain oversight of NCT's financial position.

7.2. Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1. The relationship between NCT and the Councils is governed by a series of contractual and legal agreements.
- 7.2.2. The recommendations set out in this report will allow the Councils to fulfil their responsibilities as set out in the Service Delivery Contract, the Articles of Association and Support Services Agreement.

7.3. Risk

- 7.3.1. As indicated by NCT at the Operational Group in June 2023 the cost of services delivered by NCT in the 2023/24 financial year will exceed the agreed contract sum. The Trust have especially alerted to the Councils the continued overspend on the budget for placements of children in care. This is a demand-led budget which causes challenges in forecasting demand and expenditure and a small number of high-cost emergency placements can have a significant impact on the budget. NCT will in the first instance look for in-year mitigations to manage the overspend. If these mitigations were not sufficient, then the Trust is able to seek additional funding through the 'in-year change request' mechanism set out in the Service Delivery Contract.

7.4. Consultation

- 7.4.1. This report has not been subject to any consultation.

7.5. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

- 7.5.1. This report has not been considered by NNC's Executive Advisory Panel

7.6. Consideration by Scrutiny

- 7.6.1. This report has not been considered by the overview and scrutiny committees of either Council.

7.7. Equality Implications

- 7.7.1. There are no specific equality implications arising from this report.

7.8. Climate Impact

- 7.8.1. There is no specific climate impact arising from this report.

7.9. Community Impact

7.9.1. There is no specific community impact arising from this report.

7.10. Crime and Disorder Impact

7.10.1. There is no specific crime and disorder impact arising from this report.

8. Background Papers

8.1. None