

Children's Trust Joint Committee

6th March 2024

Report Title	NCT Transformation and Efficiency Board Update
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Executive Member	<p>Cllr Fiona Baker – Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education, WNC</p> <p>Cllr Scott Edwards, Executive Member for Children, Families, Education & Skills, NNC</p>

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 type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	

List of Appendices

Appendix A – T&E Board Approved Business Cases Feb 24 FINAL

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is to provide an update on Transformation and Efficiency activity that has been agreed at the Transformation and Efficiency Board relating to improving outcomes for children and young people.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The Transformation and Efficiency Board was introduced in November 2023 as part of the informal step in arrangements. The remit of the board has three core responsibilities:

- 2.1.1. Transformation – providing strategic capacity and support to progress core children’s and joint Councils/NCT transformation projects and programme.
- 2.1.2. Programme Oversight and Management – robust governance, plans and business cases.
- 2.1.3. Right sourcing – considering/changing the delivery model or commissioning of services.
- 2.2. All are managed with a 3-way shared ownership and oversight of spend, benefits realisation and end user experiences and impacts.
- 2.3. There have been three meetings to date and the Board has reviewed a number of transformation and efficiency business cases. Appendix A provides a summary of activity.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. To note the contents of the report and progress made to date.

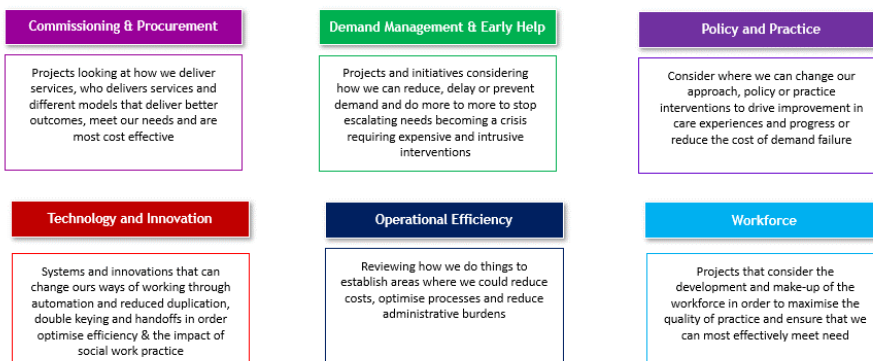
4. Report Background

- 4.1. North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) and West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) are committed to supporting Northamptonshire Children’s Trust (NCT) to deliver children’s social care and targeted early help services across Northamptonshire. Both take their corporate parenting role very seriously and want to support children, young people and families to thrive in their community.
- 4.2. Children’s Services in Northamptonshire were judged ‘inadequate’ by Ofsted in 2019.
- 4.3. Northamptonshire Children’s Trust (NCT) was partially formed on 1st November 2020 and fully launched on 1st April 2021.
- 4.4. From 1st April 2021, after the abolition of Northamptonshire County Council, North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) and West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) became joint owners of Northamptonshire Children’s Trust (NCT). Whilst NCT 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 NCT’s Articles of Association.
- 4.5. The Transformation and Efficiency Board was created in November 2023 and to date has convened on three occasions with monthly meetings booked for the remainder of the 2024.

- 4.6. The membership is made of officers from NCT, North and West Northamptonshire Councils and chaired by the Councils Chief Executives on an alternating basis. The board also has representation from the Department of Education.
- 4.7. The aims of the Transformation & Efficiencies Board are to
- Help secure improvement in this shared Council/Trust service and progress it towards Good rating by OFSTED in 2025 and lifting of the DFE directive.
 - Help address the financial imperative to bring down costs and improve value for money.
- 4.8. The Board have three core responsibilities in these aims
- **Transformation** – a new joint shared transformation service providing strategic capacity and support to progress “core” childrens and joint Council/NCT transformation projects and programmes to improve outcomes and drive efficiency initiatives.
 - **Programme Oversight & Management** – robust governance, plans and business cases supported by tracking, monitoring, the management of dependencies and benefits realisation to ensure savings and projects aims are realised.
 - **Rightsourcing** – consider and/or change the delivery model or commissioning of services including potential Transfers of services between the Councils and Trust where it makes sense.
- 4.9. All of the above managed with a 3-way shared ownership and oversight of spend, benefits realisation and end user experiences and impacts.
- 4.10. The Board also reviews the progress made through the informal step arrangements agreed between the NNC, WNC and NCT around financial matters.
- 4.11. Transformation activity is supported by key themes of improvement.

Transformation By Themes

To assist with oversight and understanding the current and proposed project/transformation initiatives will be split into themes that create clarity on the who, what and how & align to the ILACs framework



4.12. The Transformation and Efficiency Board has approved the following business cases (See Appendix A)

Operational Efficiency

- Circle to Success Delivery
- Maximising Housing Benefit Subsidy Delivery

Policy and Practice

- Placement Efficiency
- Improving Outcomes for Children – IRO CP Chair Delivery
- Practice Model Delivery
- Improving Engagement for Young People – IV Visitor

Improving Outcomes for Children

- Strategic Manager Delivery
- Family Support Workers Practice

Demand Management

- Exploitation Hub Delivery
- MASH Review Delivery

Workforce

- Workforce Managed Teams

5. Issues and Choices

5.1. The work to date has been in response to the informal step in arrangements.

5.2. Following approval of business cases, progress will be monitored by the Transformation and Efficiency Board.

6. Next Steps

6.1. Further business cases and updates on informal financial step in will continue and robust monitoring arrangements developed to ensure full benefit realisation are realised.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial

7.1.1. When the Trust was being developed, detailed work was completed to calculate how costs would be split between North and West Northamptonshire Councils. This was based on the relative populations and demand for children's social care services in each Council area. Proportionate shares for costs and benefits following the county council budget disaggregation were agreed. The disaggregation concluded the split

of WNC 55.84% and NNC 44.16% exclusive of any specific grants that are given directly to NNC or WNC to passport to the Trust.

- 7.1.2. To support the Trust to deliver its business plan the Councils and NCT have agreed a Contract Sum of £180.009m made up of Block 1 core funding (£177.429m) and Block 2 transformation individual items (£2.580m).
- 7.1.3. Block 2 transformation individual items totalling £2.580m include £2.363m which is non-recurring.
- 7.1.4. WNC and NNC have made provision for a Block 3 transformation costs totalling £3.291m. Use of this funding will be subject to business cases being presented to and approved by the Transformation and Efficiency Board.
- 7.1.5. It has been agreed that business cases presented to the Transformation & Efficiency Board will cover the following principles:
- Where it is a time limited resource, there must be clear end dates to work to and success triggers.
 - There should be quantifiable benefits i.e. payback periods, costs reduction (cashable savings) assumptions, management of a material operational risk (cost avoidance savings), improved outcomes.
 - Alternative options to be reviewed as part of each business case and explained why these have been discounted to get to recommendation.
 - All proposals must be considered against the Trust’s MTFP and those of both Councils.
- 7.1.6. Both WNC and NNC have made the commitment to ensure there are dedicated officer resources available to the Transformation & Efficiencies Board via secondment to NCT and other arrangements to support the development and delivery of business cases (known as the Transformation Programme Team).
- 7.1.7. Business cases using Block 3 funding approved by the Transformation & Efficiency to date are contained in the table below:

Project Title	Funding Agreed 2024/25
Circle to Success	£0.410m
Placement Efficiency	£0.138m
Maximising Housing Benefit Subsidy	-
Improving Outcomes for Children – Strategic Manager	£0.068m
Improving Outcomes for Children - FSWs	£0.132m
Exploitation Hub	£0.435m

MASH Review	£0.70m
Improving Engagement for Young People – IV Visitors	£0.203m
Total	£1.659m
Balance outstanding	£1.862m

7.1.8. It is recognised there is a need for each approved business case to have a clear and robust benefits forecast including the phasing of when these are likely to be delivered and metrics for each scheme to be measured against. Where these are not currently in place the Transformation Programme Team will work with the business case owner to establish these and submit for approval to the Transformation & Efficiency Board. All future business cases considered by the board will have this information included prior to being considered.

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.

7.2.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from the proposals. Consideration for specific legal implications are reviewed as part of the business case development and approval.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

7.3.1. NNC has identified 'Brighter, Better Futures' as a key priority in its Corporate Plan recognising that children, young people and their families may need help at different stages in their lives. They will aim to provide help as early as possible and provide the right support, at the right time in the right way to ensure that children are safeguarded and get the best start in life.

7.3.2. WNC has identified 'Improved life chances: Best Start in Life' as a key priority of its Corporate Plan, including a focus on early help services to ensure children have the best start in life and parents have the right support at the right time from the right service, to enable families to thrive.

7.3.3. Both NNC and WNC's identified priorities will be achieved by supporting NCT to provide higher standards of support.

7.4. Risk

7.4.1. Risk summaries have been completed for each project and a programme risk register is being developed.

7.5. **Consultation**

7.5.1. Appendix A which details the business cases approved by the Transformation & Efficiencies Board has been reported at both the Children's Trust Operational Group and Strategic Group in February 2024.

7.6. **Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel**

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

7.7. **Consideration by Executive Leadership Team (WNC)**

7.7.1. This report has been considered by ELT.

7.8. **Consideration by Scrutiny**

7.8.1. This report has not been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees of either NNC or WNC.

7.9. **Equality Implications**

7.9.1. There are no specific equality implications arising from this report.

7.10. **Climate Impact**

7.10.1 There is no specific climate impact arising from this report, however as NNC and WNC committed to considering impact on the environment which is managed via the individual strategic lead partnership organisation via organisational policy and commitments.

7.10.2 NNC, WNC and NCT are aware there are emissions associated with publishing web content and will seek to minimise the impact where possible.

7.11. **Community Impact**

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

7.12. **Crime and Disorder Impact**

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

8. Background Papers

- 8.1. The report has been based on the actions arising from the Transformation and Efficiency Board papers.