



Date: 17th December 2019

**To the Chair and Members of the
Cabinet**

Future Placements Strategy

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor Nuala Fennelly	To be confirmed	Yes

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a background of the current provision for Children in Care in-house residential homes, those families who receive an overnight Short Breaks service and the offer for young people leaving care, to stay with their foster carers when they become 18 years old. It sets this within the wider context around foster care provision and semi-independent living arrangements for young people leaving care. The report sets out a series of recommendations that will improve services for children by providing greater opportunities for them to thrive in secure and stable environments akin to family settings within Doncaster. No child will be moved from an existing placement unless it is in their best interests.

1.2 Why is it a Key Decision?

There are proposals to change the current (in-house) Doncaster residential homes provision; to add six two bed Children's homes, to change the financial offer to foster carers for young people to 'Stay Put' with their foster carers post age 18years old, and to develop a proposal for a new overnight Short Breaks offer. These changes strengthen the current policy to provide children's services locally and in family friendly settings. The changes to foster care provision and semi-independent living services are not a key decision, but are included in the report to add context as this is a key part of the strategy to improve support.

1.3 Wards Affected.

At the time of writing, it is difficult to know exactly which wards will be affected as there is still further work to be completed on where the new homes will be. The proposed change to the overnight Short Breaks offer potentially affects children and families from all wards.

2. EXEMPT REPORT

This report is not exempt.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet Members are asked to:

1. Endorse the development of six new, two-bedroom Children's homes, which will reduce the need for out of authority providers, and ensure Doncaster children are looked after in Doncaster, in secure and stable environments akin to family settings.
2. Approve the purchase and refurbishment of two, two bedroom Children's homes to the Learning and Opportunities: Children and Young People capital programme

and transfer budget of £0.6m from the Investment & Modernisation Fund held in the Corporate Resources capital programme.

3. Approve the increase in the 'Staying Put' rate to foster carers, to enable more young people to remain at home with their foster carers once they become 18 years old.
4. Endorse the decision to develop a more modern and improved Short Breaks overnight offer, and to note that a further report will be presented to the Executive following conclusion of a consultation exercise with stakeholders.
5. Support the plan to recruit more in-house foster carers, including specialist foster carers and reduce the number of children in, independent fostering agency placements and out of authority providers.
6. Support the plan to develop a new in-house residential setting, for young people with the most complex needs aged 16 years and above.
7. Welcome associated savings arising in the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block and Doncaster Children's Services Trust cost of service delivery.
8. Acknowledge the level of consultation to date and the commitment to continue to consult throughout subsequent phases.

4. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4.1 **Our vision** is for all children to have a right to a family life and wherever possible they will be supported to live with their birth parents or family. Where this is not possible, they will live with nurturing and supportive families. If they cannot live in a family home, they will live in a Children's home, which replicates family life as closely as possible. Every effort will be made either to safely return children to their families or to ensure they have a permanent alternative family as soon as possible. In practice, this means:

4.2 More children will stay at home with their families with systemic support at the earliest possible stage, meaning fewer children entering the care system; continuing the reductions experienced over the last year.

4.3 For those Children in Care, there will be more opportunities for them to live in a setting as close as possible to family life where there is permanence and support. No child will be moved from an existing placement unless it is in their best interests to do so.

4.4 Children will move back into Doncaster into better quality homes more akin to a family setting. Their experiences are likely to be improved with greater opportunities for them to thrive in secure, stable and supportive environments, with local services better able to co-ordinate any wider support, i.e. education and mental health services.

4.5 Increased capacity locally will mean fewer children are placed out of Doncaster in the future over the next three years.

4.6 More Children in Care will live in Doncaster, which means they are able to go to school in the areas where they live, maintaining friendships and contact with their families (where it is safe to do so). They will be able to stay in Doncaster and access local services.

4.7 Services will give better value for money.

4.8 Children will be supported effectively through episodic periods of crisis with the aim of keeping them within the family home.

4.9 More young people would be able to stay with their former foster carers when they turn 18 years old, ensuring placement stability.

4.10 The Short Breaks offer will better meet the needs of children and their families. This will give greater independence, help the development of essential life skills and provide opportunities for hobbies and enjoyment whilst providing greater support to families.

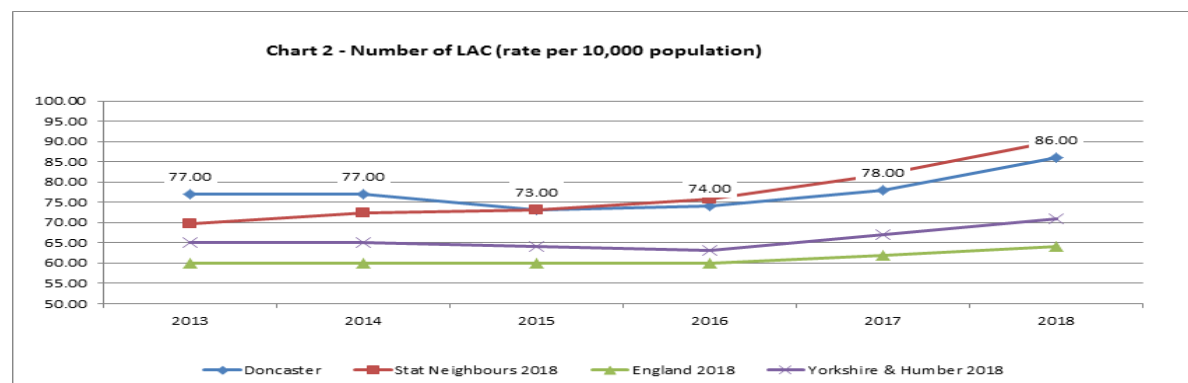
5. BACKGROUND

5.1 The definition of looked after children (Children in Care) can be found in the Children Act 1989. A child is deemed to be looked after by a local authority if a Court has granted a Care Order to place a child in care, or a council's children's services department has cared for the child for more than 24 hours. The preference in Doncaster is to use the term Children in Care.

5.2 The agreed definition of a person with complex needs is *someone with two or more needs affecting their physical, mental, social or financial wellbeing.'*

5.3 Doncaster has experienced higher levels of demand for Children in Care than previously anticipated. This has placed a huge pressure on the system in relation to capacity, quality and cost. Doncaster experienced a growth rate of 11% from 2013 to 2018. Over the last year, we have started to see these reduce, and whilst they remain high in overall terms, it gives confidence moving forward.

5.4 The following chart highlights the demand increase from 2013 to 2018 and respective comparisons.



5.5 The table below shows the care ladder for Children in Care at the end of quarter two (21019), and is provided to demonstrate the range and volume of services currently available.

		2018/19				2019/20	Latest Position	Trend	Movement since year end		Movement over 12 months	
		Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1	Qtr2					
Residential care	In-house Residential	19	19	19	20	17	16	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	-4	-20%	-3	-16%
	Out of Area	29	31	33	35	29	32	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	-3	-9%	1	3%
Fostering	Independent fostering agencies	195	206	189	169	172	166	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	-3	-2%	-40	-21%
	In-house fostering, incl. family & friends	204	207	198	191	186	208	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	17	9%	1	0%
Adoption Services	Receiving Allowances	102	106	108	111	105	97	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	-14	-13%	-9	-9%
	Independent adoption agencies - 'bought in quarter'	3	2	2	4	5	2	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>				
	Independent adoption agencies - 'sold in quarter'	2	3	2	3	4	1	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>				
Special guardianship orders		287	311	320	320	319	324	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	4	1%	13	5%
Child arrangement orders		163	172	182	174	177	178	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	4	2%	6	4%
Leaving Care	16-17 Transition	27	28	32	26	28	26	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	0	0%	-2	-7%
	Supported Independent Living	3	6	5	5	5	5	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	0	0%	-1	-33%
	18+ Accommodation	51	40	39	38	42	42	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	4	11%	2	4%
Asylum seekers		7	4	3	3	2	4	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	1	33%	0	0%

5.6 There are currently four in-house residential homes in Doncaster plus one overnight unit for Short Breaks. All of which are four bedroom homes apart from Oaklands, which has eight bedrooms. The table below shows the breakdown of utilisation across each of the homes and for the overnight provision.

Residential Home	Registration Use	Ofsted Rating	Capacity	Numbers in Residence	Average Occupancy
Morrison Drive	Children's Home	Outstanding	4	4	100%
Cromwell Drive	Children's Home	Requires Improvement	4	4	100%
Amersall Road	Children's Home	Good	4	4	100%
Pinewood Avenue	Children's Home	Good	4	4	100%
Oaklands	Short Breaks Overnight Provision	Good	8	Varies 3-5 per night, equates to approx. 476 nights per annum	35%

5.7 All four homes are at full occupancy, with all but one rated as good or above. This gives confidence in the Trust's ability to run and manage in-house residential homes. However full homes of four children can present a challenge to residents and/ or the wider community and does not fit with the vision of having settings akin to a family home. It can also be difficult to match children in residential homes of more than two children.

5.8 Due to matching difficulties, capacity or specific needs that cannot be met by in-house provision, it is at times necessary to place children with independent providers, these maybe in Doncaster and/or out of Borough, these are called out of authority placements. Independent providers do not require the local Council's authorisation to open and as such can apply to Ofsted for registration in any part of the Borough. The Council does have an opportunity to consider applications through the request for planning process. In February 2019, discussions took place around linking relevant professionals in to the planning consultation process for developments relating to independent children's homes. The protocol dictates that senior leads in key agencies are consulted where planning permission is required, providing them with a 21 day period to view the details supporting a planning proposal and to provide comments to support their stance on the proposed development. Yet whilst there is now a greater opportunity to influence decision-making, the Council is unable to decline applications if they meet key criteria.

5.9 There are currently **no** in-house residential homes for children with a disability, which means that any child, who is unable to be in the family home, will need to be placed with an out of authority provider. There are ten children currently placed in an out of authority placement. The same challenges apply as raised in the above point.

5.10 There is only one specialist foster carer for children with complex needs, and no in-house residential home for older young people (16 years +) with complex needs. This at times means that children cannot stay within a family environment, which results in out of authority placements. Specialist foster carers are the most skilled and experienced carers who care for the most complex children and young people and there is a need to increase the number of these.

5.11 There are 374 children placed with foster carers with 208 residing with in-house foster carers. The benefits to placing locally as opposed to independent fostering agencies relate to both quality and price. An in-house placement costs approximately £27k per annum less than independent fostering agencies. Children in Care are more likely to stay in an in-house foster care placement longer, achieving better outcomes.

5.12 Short Breaks provide opportunities for disabled children to spend time away from their primary carers. This includes day, evening, overnight or weekend activities and take place in the child's own home, the home of an approved carer or a residential or community setting. Consultation with parents and carers has identified the need to revise our current Short Breaks offer in particular for overnight support. The current overnight offer is an eight bedroom children's in-house residential home, which is clinical in its setting, being based more on a medical model than a family home. A recent survey of families identified that almost half did not give positive feedback about the residential unit, whilst being clear that they still want an overnight offer. In addition, the home is running below capacity due to the difficulty in matching children with complex health and neuro-developmental needs. Speaking to parents of children with severe complex health needs identified, that they do not want to use overnight residential facilities due to their anxieties around the impact of other children in the same facility, an example being a child with a complex tracheotomy and parental anxiety about this being knocked or pulled out. Recent consultation with families (that use the service the most) identified a very clear message that they want overnight support. There is a commitment to continue to consult with families around a new overnight provision and the development of a proposal.

5.13 Staying-Put is an arrangement where young people remain with their foster carers following their 18th birthday and was endorsed by the Government and formalised in the Children and Families Act 2014. The Staying-Put rate has remained static in Doncaster (£155 per week) since 2014, and is no longer competitive when considering the rate offered by neighbouring authorities (excess of £200 per week). This means that in order to secure staying put arrangements there is a need to pay high rates in line with foster care rates, which can be in excess of £600 per week to independent fostering agencies, with a proportion of the fee going to the agency and not the foster carer. This is placing a financially unsustainable burden on the budget, as there is a need to endorse former fostering rates, which can be in excess of £600 per week for an adult. In some cases, this has, resulted in young people leaving their foster placement. Implementing the new arrangement would see a predicted increase in the number of young people who stay put, around 20 per annum. Currently there are only twelve young people in staying put arrangements, some of these with in-house carers and some with Independent Fostering Agencies.

5.14 For some children with more severe complex issues, aged between 16 and 18 years, traditional residential children's homes are no longer appropriate, particularly if there is a mix of older and younger children. Many of these children have additional complexities requiring therapeutic interventions, which can mean that semi-independent living providers are unable to meet their needs. This frequently results in these young people moving from provision to provision because of their presenting behaviours. In some cases, this results in children being placed in out of authority placements. Consequently the creation of a bespoke and regulated children's home, which focusses on preparation for independence, delivered alongside appropriate therapeutic inputs has a far greater chance of success. Currently in Doncaster, there is no such provision, which has indeed resulted in out of authority placements.

5.15 To conclude, the above captures the needs analysis, which to summarise are:

- Average capacity for in-house residential homes is at 100% and there is a need to increase in-house capacity with settings akin to family life.
- No current in-house residential homes for children with complex needs.
- Need to recruit more specialist foster carers for children with complex needs.
- Plan to recruit more in-house foster carers.

- More children placed in out of authority placements than desired.
- Short Breaks overnight provision is for some outdated and based on an historic medical model rather than a family setting.
- The Staying Put Rate is too low and is not competitive, hindering recruitment.
- There is not an in-house residential unit for young people aged 16 years + that offers wrap around therapeutic interventions for the most complex young people.

6. PROPOSALS

6.1 The introduction of six new in-house two-bedroom children's homes, with the first four bedroom homes opening in 2020 and the second two homes opening in 2021, this includes two homes for children with complex needs. The requirements for the homes will reflect the needs of the children, including both single storey and two storey dwellings, to ensure the best environments are provided. The aspiration is for eight children to return to in-house residential provision by the end of 2020, with the second two homes providing four beds to manage future growth, meaning four children would not need to go out of Borough in the future. Detailed discussions have started to explore which children would be best suited to move to these provisions, considering their individual needs, including which educational setting would be best, and GP registration. Any placements would be done in a planned and managed way that has the best interests of the child at heart. Any move will be based on improving a child's outcomes. Housing colleagues have been made aware of Ofsted requirements for homes and are starting to search for suitable properties. There are no special housing requirements outside of this, which hopefully broadens the scope of potential houses.

6.2 Recruit eight new specialist foster carers for children with complex needs. The Trust have started a targeted recruitment and discussions have taken place around which children would benefit from this type of placement, at the time of writing this report this is one child. The remaining seven places will be taken by assumed growth of three children in 2020/21 then four children over the following financial years.

6.3 Increase the number of in-house foster carers from 191 to 276 by 2023, so that 75% of all foster care placements are in-house. The Trust have a good track record of recruiting and retaining in-house foster carers and have already increased to 208 over the last quarter.

6.4 It is proposed that there may be a new Short Breaks offer for children and families who want support overnight. This is based on the outcome of initial consultation sessions with parents and carers, in particular those currently using the current overnight provision, as detailed in section 15. The aspiration is to develop a mixed economy of overnight provision in two settings, a residential unit offering around 500 bed nights per annum and foster cares offering around 100 nights per annum. The residential unit may not be Oaklands, which is the current provision, as this does not have the correct configuration and too many beds. No decision has yet been reached on this issue but it is felt that any new residential offer will include a smaller residential unit offering a setting more akin to family life, with a focus on creating an environment like a sleep over rather than the current more clinical setting. There are some foster carers that have expressed a desire to move away from providing full-time care but would like to continue providing some care, in particular overnights. This is the cohort of potential Short Break foster carers. The next phase is to develop a firm proposal for the new overnight offer and to consult with stakeholders on that proposal.

6.5 Implement a new Staying Put financial framework of £250 per week, which is competitive sub-regionally and encourages foster carers to support young people as they transition into adulthood. It will mean that 20 more young people per annum will get the opportunity achieve permanence. This is particularly important in terms of stability around assuring educational outcomes.

6.6 A new bespoke and regulated four bedroom in-house residential children's home, which focusses on preparation for independence, delivered alongside appropriate

therapeutic inputs. The new home will be managed by the Trust with dedicated wrap around therapeutic support from health services. The aspiration is that this cohort of young people get the intensive support they need in a secure and stable environment.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTIONS

7.1 The recommended option is to agree the proposals outlined in section six as this will bring around the improvements outlined in section four.

7.2 If the proposals are not agreed then the improvements will not happen and the current arrangements will remain in place.

8. IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	<p>The Future Placements Strategy will enable several of the outcomes to be realised.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	
	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or 	

	better <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	
	Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	
	Connected Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	

9. RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The key strategic risks identified at this stage are as outlined below.

9.1. Risk 1: Unable to source two-bedroom children's homes – There is a clear understanding of the requirements for the homes but there are potential risks, including the availability of stock, including an acquisition and agreement of capital funding (outlined in 8.1) and inability to secure an educational placement close enough to the home.

Mitigation – Individuals children's needs have been assessed and there is a clear specification of requirements for each. Housing colleagues have picked this up. There are on-going conversations with the Capital Asset Management Board around securing capital funding.

9.2 Risk 2: Not able to recruit enough in-house foster carers – The Trust have been successful previously in recruiting foster carers however, there are challenges in doing so, including other Local Authorities campaigns and rates and independent fostering agency rates.

Mitigation – Increase in recruitment budget to allow for greater depth of campaign learning from what works in other areas. There is a greater focus on recruiting specific types of carers with particular skills and experiences to allow better matching with children.

There is a renewed focus on recruitment and as discussions progress around which children would be best suited to foster care provision, a more targeted recruitment is possible.

9.3 Risk 3: Unable to source a 16 + children's home - There is a clear understanding of the requirements for the homes, but there is a risk that this stock does not exist locally.

Mitigation – A mixed economy approach where properties are either refurbished or purchased allows for significant scope in obtaining the property. Likelihood of being unable to purchase a property to meet this need is therefore small. This will be a four-bed home and therefore obtaining the property should be relatively easy within the borough

9.4 Risk 4: Not able to recruit enough specialist foster carers - As this is a specialist area and outside of the mainstream ask and carers feel unable to offer this service

Mitigation – targeted recruitment and support offer akin to the Mockingbird constellation model will ensure prospective carers feel supported and therefore able to offer the placements needed. We are actively recruiting over the coming months

9.5 Risk 5: Staying Put rate not agreed – The risk is potentially two-fold. Firstly, foster carers choose not to offer post 18years olds placements and/ or they join independent fostering agencies who offer a higher rate.

Mitigation – Request for increase in rate included in this paper. The increase in the financial offer ensure more of our young people are able to enjoy family life to the age of 25 in line with most families.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [NC 27/11/19]

10.1 The proposals contained within this report relating to the future placement of children and young people and, will assist in the Council and the Doncaster Children's Trust meeting their various statutory duties in relation to Children in Care and Children with complex needs. This includes duties in the Children Act 1989 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

10.2 In relation to the short breaks offer, in order to comply with the general duty on Council's to act fairly, prior to a decision to implement any final proposals relevant stakeholders including service users, their parent/carers and staff should be formally consulted. Sufficient reasons must be put forward for the proposals to allow for intelligent consideration and response by the stakeholders; adequate time must be given for consideration and response; and the product of the consultation must be consciously taken into account by elected members before a final decision is made on the proposals. In addition, given this area inevitably involves people with protected characteristics, when considering the final proposals at a future date, elected members will need to be reminded of their obligations under the public sector equality duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials: AB 28/11/19]

11.1 The proposals outlined in section six have been factored into the consideration for the Council's, Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block and Doncaster Children's Services Trust Medium Term Financial Strategies.

11.2 The table below summarises net savings totalling £3.3m for financial years 2020/21 to 2022/23 from implementing each proposal.

Proposal	2020/21 Pressure/ Savings to budget (£s)	2021/22 Pressure/ Savings to budget (£s)	2022/23 Pressure/ Savings to budget (£s)	Total Pressure/ Savings (£s)
Children with complex needs: 2 x 2 Bed Homes & Specialist Foster Carers:				
DMBC General Fund	-88,800	7,470	-31,850	-113,180
Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block	-423,000	103,510	-38,590	-358,080
Doncaster CCG Continuing Health Care Contributions	-61,120	25,280	-24,740	-60,580
Children with complex needs: Borrowing costs of £600k capital funding required:				
DMBC General Fund	31,000	31,000	31,000	93,000
Children's Trust 4 x 2 Bed Homes:				
DCST General Fund	120,920	120,920	0	241,840
Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block	-306,260	-306,260	0	-612,520
Re-profile foster care provision:				
DCST General Fund	-445,420	-731,620	-519,420	-1,696,460
4 Bed Home for 16+ children:				
DCST General Fund	0	-120,000	0	-120,000
Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block	0	-146,260	0	-146,260
Revised Short Breaks offer:				
DMBC General Fund	-600,000	0	0	-600,000
Increase Staying Put rate to £250 p/w:				
DCST General Fund	70,540	0	0	70,540
TOTAL DMBC General Fund	-657,800	38,470	-850	-620,180
TOTAL DCST General Fund	-253,960	-730,700	-519,420	-1,504,080
TOTAL Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block	-729,260	-349,010	-38,590	-1,116,860
TOTAL Doncaster CCG Continuing Health Care Contributions	-61,120	25,280	-24,740	-60,580
TOTAL Net Savings	-1,702,140	-1,015,960	-583,600	-3,301,700

11.3 The table below summarises a budgetary pressure of £1.1m by 2022/23 across Social Care, Education and Health that will be avoided for Children with complex needs placements by implementing the proposal for specialist foster carers.

Proposal	2020/21 Cost Avoidance to budget (£s)	2021/22 Cost Avoidance to budget (£s)	2022/23 Cost Avoidance to budget (£s)	Total Cost Avoidance (£s)
Specialist Foster Carers:				
DMBC General Fund	-7,450	-265,230	-109,070	-381,750
Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block	-98,980	-249,930	-150,930	-499,840
Doncaster CCG Continuing Health Care Contributions	-40,750	-122,230	-81,490	-244,470
TOTAL Cost Avoidance	-147,180	-637,390	-341,490	-1,126,060

11.4 The narrative below describes the financials associated to the proposals outlined in section six.

11.5 Two-bedroom in-house residential children's homes for children with complex needs has a projected individual bed cost of £173k per annum, which is approximately (£71k) cheaper than the current out of authority placement. The aspiration is for; four children to return to in-house provision and detailed discussions have started around a child's individual needs and appropriateness of moving placement. The assumption is that two of these

children will need an external education placement, which will cost on average £57k per annum. This proposal will require a (provisionally estimated) capital funding figure of £600k to cover the purchase of two homes and the refurbishments required, to make the homes suitable for the children identified. The £600k capital cost will be funded by borrowing through the Investment and Modernisation Fund; this creates a revenue cost of £31k per annum for the repayment of borrowing and interest. The savings are clearly far in excess of the borrowing costs.

11.6 The projected cost of a specialist foster care placement is £50k per annum, which is approximately (£194k) less than the current average cost of an out of authority placement. The Trust have started a targeted recruitment and discussions have taken place around which children would benefit from this type of placement, at the time of writing this report this is one child. A further seven places will be taken by assumed growth of three children in 2020/21 then two children per financial year thereafter which will result in annual cost avoidance of (£1.1m) by 2022/23 across social care, education and health as without this provision the growth of seven children across the next three financial years would have to be placed in an out of authority placement.

11.7 The two proposals for children with complex needs will deliver across financial years 2020/21 to 2022/23 general fund savings of (£113k) included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, savings to the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block of (£358k), and savings to Doncaster CCG of (£61k) as their continuing health care contributions towards packages will reduce.

11.8 Two-bedroom in-house residential children's homes has a projected individual bed cost of £135k per annum, which is (£75k) less than an out of authority placement. Out of authority placements are usually funded 50% from the Council's general fund and 50% from the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block. Future in-house residential placements will be fully funded from general fund at an increased cost of £30k per bed per annum to the general fund. However, the proposal will deliver significant savings of (£612k) per annum to the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block, based on the assumption that 50% of the placements will go to a mainstream school and 50% will require external education to be commissioned. The proposal is included in the Trust's Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Trust have an allocation of £1.554m in the Council's Capital Programme, which will be used to fund the purchase of the homes, and any renovation required.

11.9 The cost of an independent fostering agency placement is £27k more than an in-house placement; therefore, the Trust's aim is by 2023 to have 75% of fostering placements in house with only 25% in an independent fostering agency placement. This proposal included in the Trust's Medium Term Financial Strategy will deliver savings of (£1.696m) to the general fund across 2020/21 to 2022/23. This proposal does include increasing the support network to in house foster carers and the funding of this has been netted off the savings.

11.10 The Trust are proposing a further four bed children's home for those children that are not quite ready for semi-independence. These young people will potentially be those who are currently living out of authority and/ or in independent provision. The average cost of the most complex children in an external placement is £260k per annum. The savings from this proposal included in the Trust's Medium Term Financial Strategy is (£120k) per annum to the General Fund and (£146k) per annum to the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block. The cost of purchasing and renovating the homes is included in the £1.554m in the Council's Capital Programme.

11.11 There will be a re-profiled budget of £400k to deliver the revised Short Breaks offer. This proposal will deliver a (£600k) general fund saving, which is included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

11.12 The current rate Staying Put rate of £155 per week is less than the neighbouring authorities, the majority of whom are paying in excess of £200 per week. Increasingly

independent fostering carers are not prepared to accept the £155 rate to allow young people to Stay Put and are requesting the same level of funding they received to foster often this is £300-£450 per week. The proposal is to increase the standard rate to £250 per week, which at an average activity of 20 Children Staying Put equates to £260k per annum. The Council receives Staying Put grant of £149k, which is paid over to the Trust via the contract, and, it has been assumed that 50% of young people Staying Put will claim Housing Benefit equating to £41k per annum. The net budget pressure from this proposal is £70k, which will be funded from the savings delivered by the other proposals included in the Trust's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

11.13 In addition, these proposals will have a direct benefit to local employment opportunities and local spend.

11.14 The Trust have an allocation of £1.554 million in the Council's capital programme as a figure for the development of a semi-independent living home, a further four bed children's home for those that are not quite ready for semi-independence and four, two-bedroom children's homes. This existing capital budget will be funded from capital receipts.

12. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [KW 28/11/19]

There are no human resource implications; however, there is an on-going commitment to keep checking this as the work progresses

13. TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [PW 28/11/19]

Where there are technology requirements to support the delivery of the Future Placements Strategy, a proposal would need to be submitted for consideration and prioritisation by the Technology Governance Board (TGB). Full technology implications will be provided as part of the TGB process once the requirements have been clarified.

14. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [CW 28/11/19]

The report acknowledges the poor health and wellbeing outcomes that are often associated with a child entering the looked after system. The proposal aims to reduce the number of children entering care and increase the quality of care for those who do. The report outlines how work will be undertaken locally that will reduce inequalities in health and improve health outcomes for those children who experience disadvantage and poorer health outcomes.

The reasons children go into care are often complex and multi-faceted. Therefore tackling the issue requires a range of interventions across agencies. A collaborative whole systems approach is likely to be more effective in preventing children going in to care than individual interventions.

For children who do end up in care, regardless of where that is, care providers should be equipped to support and promote the health and wellbeing of the children in their care.

15. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [LG 26/11/19]

The proposals would provide greater opportunities for equality, in particular for children with complex needs, as they will be able to stay in services in Doncaster, with specialist foster carers and/ or in a residential setting. They can't currently, which is not the same for children without complex needs.

There are no further concerns around equality implications at the time of writing the report.

16. CONSULTATION

16.1 There has been a significant amount of consultation as part of the initial development of the strategy and subsequently around the development of the proposal.

16.2 A Short Breaks review began with a questionnaire sent out to all 245 families who use the current respite service, 103 completed and returned the questionnaire (42%), which is a

good return rate and gives confidence in that we are actively engaging. Overall families said they wanted overnight respite but almost half not giving positive feedback on the current provision. Building on this there has been consultation around the Short Breaks offer via Doncaster Parents Voice with the development of a working group that will shape and oversee the implementation. This means that residents will be directly shaping the services they need. The information obtained from families will be used to inform the development of the proposals for a new overnight offer.

16.3 There has been two consultation sessions with parents and carers of current service users at Oaklands (19.11.19), to ensure they are central to future decision making. Again, there is an on-going commitment to work with this group around the new overnight provision.

16.4 There has been a significant amount of consultation around all aspects of the strategy. This includes with children, parents and carers, front line staff and senior leaders across the system, including agreement on the strategy at the Joint Commissioning Management Board, the Council Joint Leadership Team and Children's Trust Executive Management Team.

17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

17.1 There are no background papers to submit.

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