

<b>Item No.</b> 7.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 8 November 2011	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Corporate Parenting Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Commissioning Strategy for Children in Care	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>From:</b>		Strategic Director of Children's Services	

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Committee notes the updated Commissioning Strategy for Children in Care (Appendix 1) setting out the key priorities for:
  - redirecting resources to reduce the need for children coming into care
  - improving outcomes for children in care
  - improving the quality and value for money of services for children in care.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The commissioning strategy for services for children in care has been reviewed in the light of a number of key factors, including the following factors in particular:
  - The 2011/2014 budget strategy requires significant reductions in children in care placement expenditure as part of the contribution to overall savings requirements.
  - The need to exploit the potential for further reducing the long term numbers of children in care by more effective early intervention, support for children and families on the cusp of care and alternatives to care.
  - The need to further improve the value for money of placements in terms of cost and quality, and promote outcomes for children looked after.
  - Meeting statutory guidance on the sufficiency of child care commissioned locally.
3. Given these factors it is essential that the commissioning of services is done within a framework that leads to the required changes, rather than simply re-commissioning the existing pattern of services. The strategy will provide a basis for evaluating all future detailed commissioning proposals and contracting processes.
4. The commissioning strategy is underpinned by a needs analysis which is updated on an ongoing basis as new data is received, and used for evaluating effectiveness of the strategy. The strategy will be developed and updated on an ongoing basis as set out in the document.

## KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. The commission strategy is based around the 3 key priorities of; redirecting resources to prevent children coming into care; improving outcomes for children looked after and obtaining increased value for money from placements.
6. The Executive Summary of the document (Appendix 1) highlights the key issues.

**Policy implications**

7. The commissioning strategy has implications in terms of the policy on procuring services for looked after children, and services that prevent children coming into care.

**Community impact statement**

8. The commissioning strategy is designed to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable children in Southwark (those in need or potentially in need of being looked after by the council) whilst reducing expenditure. This will be achieved by improving quality and value for money of placements, and by diverting more children from the high cost care system through support in the community. This in turn will deliver savings in line with the council’s budget strategy which has been subject to a separate equalities impact statement.

**Resource implications**

9. The commissioning strategy is intended to enable the children in care placement budget to be reduced in line with the children’s services budget strategy.

**Consultation**

10. The commissioning strategy is based on the principles set out in the Children and Young People’s Plan which was developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders. It is also the delivery mechanism for the 2010/11 – 2013/14 budget decisions which have been consulted upon.

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

<b>Background Papers</b>	<b>Held At</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Commissioning strategy background	160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Jodie Harris 020 7525 3967

**APPENDICES**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix 1	Commissioning Strategy for Children in Care

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Kerry Crichlow, Assistant Director, Strategy and Support.	
<b>Report Author</b>	Jodie Harris, Principal Strategy Officer Adrian Ward, Head of Strategy, Planning and Performance	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	25 October 2011	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>	25 October 2011	