



Tuesday, 4 October 2022

SURREY HOMES FOR SURREY CHILDREN: A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO GROWING CAPACITY IN CHILDREN'S HOMES IN SURREY

Purpose of report:

To consider a proposed approach to developing the capacity of children's homes in Surrey to enable the longer-term ambitions of the Council's Looked After Children and Care Leaver Sufficiency Strategy 2020-2025, ahead of formal proposals being considered by Surrey County Council's Cabinet later in 2022.

Introduction:

1. As a Council, we are ambitious for our looked after children and want to enable them to achieve the best possible outcomes in their lives. The statutory sufficiency duty (Children Act 89) to secure accommodation in or near to Surrey plays a really important role in this, supporting children to remain connected to their communities and progress successfully towards independence, whilst also enabling us, as corporate parents, to more easily provide coordinated and holistic support.
2. Our latest [Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy](#) states our ambition to enable greater access to "Surrey homes for Surrey children". This is one of five key priorities, the other four being: living in a family setting where possible; a wide range of placements for diverse needs; homes of the highest quality; and support to move to independence. Aligned to this strategy, in October 2021 the Surrey Corporate Parenting Board endorsed the longer-term strategic ambition that "every looked after child has a choice to remain in Surrey, where this is appropriate to their needs", with the working hypothesis that this would lead to around 80% of looked after children being able to live in Surrey.
3. The first ambition in our Sufficiency Strategy is quite deliberately living in a family setting where possible, as evidence suggests that this leads to the best outcomes for the majority of children. Via the Placement Value and Outcomes (PVO) Transformation Programme additional resources have been secured to

support the growth of fostering capacity in Surrey, improved recruitment and retention of foster carers, enhanced wrap-around support and enabling more children to progress from children’s homes to families over time. This sits alongside support to enable children to remain with or return to their birth families, where this is safe and appropriate to do so. Despite this, we know that some children will achieve the best outcomes in appropriate, high-quality, and local provision in children’s homes. For the majority, this residential will be a time-limited intervention rather than their longer-term destination that supports their progress towards a family setting or more independent living.

4. Through the PVO Transformation Programme we have a clear picture of the current capacity of children’s homes in Surrey and a strong understanding of the steps we need to take to grow provision in Surrey to enable our longer-term sufficiency ambitions, despite the challenging national and local context we are working within. This paper provides an update on the current position in Surrey, sets out the steps we have taken to date to strengthen sufficiency, explains the key areas of ongoing focus that will be needed to enable our longer-term ambitions, and outlines specific proposals which we intend to bring before SCC’s Cabinet in November 2022.

Surrey’s current position and national context:

How many looked after children are currently placed in Surrey?

5. Table 1 shows the proportion of looked after children in Surrey in April 2022, compared to previous years.

Date	%	Number	Milestone description
April 2022	51.6	547	Current position
April 2021	51.0	514	Start of PVO Transformation Programme
April 2020	50.2	495	Launch of latest Sufficiency Strategy
April 2019	46.8	456	Baseline

6. A lower proportion of children requiring residential care are typically placed in Surrey than the overall population. For example, in July 2022, 45 of the 118 children (38%) in children’s homes placements were living in Surrey, not counting those in residential schools, parental assessment units and those currently in unregulated provision where regulated children’s homes would be preferred. If these groups are included then the number was 49 of 147 children (33%) in Surrey.

7. Using data from July 2022, achieving our longer-term sufficiency ambition of 80% in Surrey for children in residential provision would require an additional 45 (if just standalone children's homes) or 69 (if all residential provision types are included) to be accessing placements in Surrey. It is important to note that some of this gap could be met by making best use of existing capacity in Surrey, not just requiring the creation of new provision.

What is the current capacity in Surrey to meet this need?

8. In terms of Surrey's current capacity for longer-term placements in the county, there are 28 beds available across 9 children's homes run by Surrey County Council and 26 available across 6 children's homes run by external providers. This figure excludes 12 registered beds in 2 providers in Surrey that provide very specialist services focussed solely on young people with sexually harmful behaviours but includes the 15 beds that external providers opened across three homes in Surrey during 2021. This leads to a notional current capacity of 54 in Surrey, although the following considerations are important to bear in mind:
 - children's homes often operate below their registered 100% capacity at any point in time, due to considerations such as ensuring the specific needs of children placed in their care are met and their current staffing levels; and
 - Surrey County Council has no priority access to local homes in the area, with other local authorities able to refer into the provision – all providers in Surrey currently have some children from other local authorities placed in their provision, whose placements may – if stable - last for several years.
9. Whilst there definitely is potential to grow SCC's use of the residential provision that already exists in Surrey, alongside a number of external providers already planning to create new provision in the county over the months ahead, it is clear that we will not be able to achieve our longer-term sufficiency ambitions simply by maximising the use of the 54 existing beds in county and will, in reality, need to plan towards around double the current capacity.

What is our current operating context?

10. There are significant challenges nationally in the market for Ofsted-regulated residential children's homes and foster care, which have been attracting substantial media attention during 2022. This has been fuelled by two high-profile national reviews: Children's Social Care Market Study published by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) in March 2022; and the Independent Review of Children's Social Care published in May 2022. In particular, these reviews highlighted:
 - national concerns around placement availability;

- excessive provider profits;
 - increasing dominance of debt-backed private equity ownership (increasing the risk of disorderly provider failure);
 - concerns over the quality of care in some homes;
 - pressures on staffing and recruitment; and
 - the limited influence that individual local authorities can have on the wider provider market.
11. In addition to national reports, Surrey County Council is in touch with many local authorities across the country who all describe the unprecedented challenges currently with finding regulated placements for children.
 12. Thinking about Surrey's local context, there are both challenges and opportunities. Geographically, Surrey's landlocked location near to London does contribute to increased competition for beds in children's homes compared with what some of the highest performing LAs (in terms of sufficiency) experience. Alongside this, Surrey has some of the highest property prices in the country outside of London, with high associated costs of living, which present barriers to entry for new providers and apply upward pressure to the cost of placements in Surrey. In terms of opportunities, we are at a point where our overall practice within Children's Services is improving. This provides a firmer foundation for us to make progress in terms of sufficiency growth. We also know that, despite the price challenges, Surrey is a large local authority with significant spending power, which does give us some influence, options, and a degree of leverage in the market that smaller local authorities do not have.
 13. The lack of sufficient placements nationally, but particularly in London and the South, has resulted in growing use of unregulated supported accommodation by local authorities. Following a legislative change in September 2021, it is now unlawful to place children under the age of 16 in unregulated placements – whereas previously this was legally permitted where this was the best available option for a child. Many local authorities, including Surrey, nevertheless find themselves obliged to make such placements (especially in response to short notice requirements) to ensure children can be accommodated safely.
 14. As of 12 September 2022, there were five SCC looked after children aged under 16 in "unlawful" placements. This accommodation is only used when absolutely necessary, where it has not been possible to identify a regulated placement, and all these arrangements have been authorised by the Director of Corporate Parenting. Active and sustained placement searches continue for all these children, to try and secure alternative regulated provision, as rapidly as possible. Running parallel to placement searches, unregulated providers are being encouraged and supported to apply for Ofsted registration, so they can be regulated as a children's home, with a 'fast track' process available for providers.

15. Whilst unregulated supported accommodation is not currently subject to national Ofsted regulation and inspection, this does not mean it is not quality assured. SCC holds responsibility for quality assuring all unregulated provision where it places looked after children and takes this responsibility extremely seriously, especially so where this relates to children aged under 16. Overall, for supported accommodation, the Gateway to Resources (GtR) Review Team are responsible for quality assurance of providers. This includes at least annual quality assurance visits. SCC's own quality assurance is complemented and enhanced by regional collaboration with other Local Authorities. Key networks in this regard include the Children's Cross Regional Arrangements Group (CCRAG), through which SCC works actively with other LAs to share quality assurance information about unregulated providers, and the Commissioning Alliance, which SCC joined in September 2021 and now provides access to formally quality accredited supported accommodation provision for Surrey's children and young people, alongside additional information sharing between LAs and centralised contract management of Commissioning Alliance providers.
16. When we are considering placing a child under 16 in unregulated provision these overall arrangements are significantly strengthened. This starts with an initial due diligence visit prior to any child being placed in a provision where we have not previously placed a child. In the majority of cases this will be done in person, but occasionally (for example, when there is an urgent need to take up the placement or has been a recent visit to the provider) this may be done virtually and then followed up with an in-person visit soon after. This visit ensures that:
- the standard of accommodation is good enough;
 - the provider can evidence adherence with safer recruitment practices; and
 - the provider can demonstrate how they ensure they work effectively with young people – for example providing evidence of training for staff, and how improved outcomes for young people are enabled and monitored.
17. In terms of the current position, of the 5 children currently in unlawful placements, in person visits were completed ahead of placement for 3, with virtual visits undertaken in the case of 2. For the first of these, a virtual visit was undertaken, as a full quality assurance visit had been completed by GtR Review Team only 9 days before the placement being made, with no concerns identified. For the second of these, this placement was made with a known provider at a specific provision where SCC has previously placed a child and had no concerns about the quality of accommodation and standard of support, therefore an initial virtual visit was judged to be appropriate.
18. At the time of making the placement, conversations are held between the child's social worker and the placement provider to ensure they can meet the child's specific needs. This provides assurance about the suitability of the match

between provider and child. This sits alongside strong, ongoing work within our Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) service, which reviews and scrutinises the care plans for all looked after children.

19. Once the child has moved in, a member of the GtR Review Team visits the accommodation on a weekly basis. As the child becomes settled, frequency of visits by GtR Review Team may reduce to bi-weekly, or we may alternate virtual and in-person visits. At the time of submitting this report, for the children currently in unlawful placements, 3 are receiving fortnightly visits that alternate between virtual and in person. 2 are receiving weekly visits that alternate between virtual and in person. In the case of all current unlawful placements, regular contact between the child and their social worker is being maintained, to ensure their needs are being met.
20. Lastly, child-level oversight of all unlawful placements is undertaken by the Children's, Families and Lifelong Learning Leadership Team, supported by detailed weekly reporting. Specifically, in compiling this report, the Director for Corporate Parenting has confirmed that the assurance steps outlined have been taken in respect of all children currently in a placement of this type and that she regularly reviews placements as they continue, requesting updates from GtR where necessary.
21. In contrast to under-16s, SCC is legally able to place children aged 16-17 in unregulated supported accommodation. Within this cohort, as of 12 September 2022, there were however 8 young people whom SCC had identified as being in "unregistered" placements. This covers those in supported accommodation whose needs require some elements of "care" (as examples: support to meet health needs; or manage finances), not just "support", who would ideally be placed in provision registered with Ofsted. If an unregulated provider is deemed to be providing care in addition to support for 16-17 year olds, Ofsted, as the regulator, can take enforcement action against the provider, so again SCC would either be continuing to seek alternative regulated provision wherever possible or ensuring there is a plan for a step-down in the level of support over time so that "care" is no longer being provided.
22. At the time of submitting this report, the 8 children aged 16 or 17-year-olds in unregistered placements are being visited by GtR Review Team at the following frequency:
 - 1 of these children is being visited on a weekly basis, which alternate between in person and virtual visits;
 - 3 of these children are being visited on a fortnightly basis, which alternate between alternate in person and virtual visits; and
 - 4 of these children are being visited monthly in person

23. For all children in unlawful and unregistered placements a meeting is held every fortnight. This is attended by the Head of Service for GtR. A decision is made at this meeting as to whether the visiting schedule needs to remain at the current interval or whether it is appropriate to lengthen the time between visits. The decision making is predicated upon length of time in placement, needs of the child and how the provider is meeting those needs.
24. The majority of children in both “unlawful” and “unregistered” placements would be in some form of regulated, residential provision (including residential education), if there were sufficient, appropriate capacity available. This means they are taken into consideration in terms of our children’s home sufficiency planning.

What are we forecasting in terms of future demand?

25. Our current SCC demand modelling suggests that the number of children looked after by Surrey County Council will continue to grow. In April 2020, our population of looked after children was 984, in April 2021 it was 1,001 and in April 2022 it was 1,058 – growth of 7.5% across the period. Whilst there have been some initial signs that the growth in numbers of looked after children who are not unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) may be flattening, the midpoint of the current forecast would still see us reaching: 1,084 looked after children by April 2023; 1,122 by April 2024; and 1,158 by April 2025. To ensure our approach to demand modelling is robust, we have also commissioned an external provider to develop a complementary demand forecast, using a different statistical approach. This learns from data about the profile and journeys taken by Surrey’s looked after children over the last 11 years and plots the likely future journeys of children currently in the system, alongside future joiners. Despite the different methodologies, these trends suggest a similar level of growth over the next three years – so we have a reasonable degree of confidence in the numbers presented.
26. Despite this context of overall growth, our forecasts for children who will require children’s homes are holding relatively steady – with the midpoint forecast at around 115 children through to April 2025 based on current trends. Although it is early days, this perhaps reflects positively on the initial impact of efforts to promote family settings first, including developing our work to enable children to “step-down” from children’s homes back to families and newer practice models, such as No Wrong Door and Family Safeguarding. Whilst the cohort in children’s homes is forecast to hold steady over time in a context of overall growth, it is important to note that we are not forecasting reductions in the actual numbers of children needing this type of living arrangement.

What have we been doing to respond the challenges?

27. Despite the challenges being experienced nationally and locally, we continue to be ambitious about what we can achieve for Surrey's children. We are taking clear and concrete steps to strengthen our position in terms of children's homes sufficiency, which sit within the context of our overall PVO Transformation Programme, looking at all aspects of our sufficiency. These steps include:

- Undertaking an ambitious recruitment drive and investing in practice and process improvements across our 9 existing SCC-managed children's homes, to maximise the benefits of a recent service transformation;
- Pressing ahead with planned capital projects – we are currently building or going through planning to create 18 beds in Surrey County Council run children's homes. Of these 18 beds, 6 are currently earmarked to be a second No Wrong Door Hub, which will offer short-term capacity and a further 6 are replacement capacity for a previous SCC home.
- Strengthening relationships with existing Surrey-based providers, so that SCC are the LA of first choice when beds become available, as well as developing new contracting mechanisms that enable block booking of beds in local children's homes for Surrey children; and
- Working closely with external providers looking to create provision in Surrey, with some initial success – including three new providers opening Surrey-based children's homes in 2021 and around 25 additional beds being planned by external providers at various stages of development.

What growth do we want to achieve in terms of children's homes sufficiency?

Our longer-term ambition for children's homes in Surrey

28. As stated above, we want every looked after child to have a choice to remain in Surrey, where this is appropriate to their needs. Our working hypothesis is that this means 80% of Surrey's Looked After Children living in the county. To achieve this for residential provision, based on the current and forecast numbers of Surrey looked after children requiring children's homes, would require an additional 50-60 children to live in Surrey-based children's homes. It is important to note that this is the level of children we anticipate it would be appropriate to have living in Surrey, not the level of capacity that would be needed, which is likely to be higher than this to allow for less than 100% occupancy and/or placements made in external provision by other local authorities. This level of improvement is not going to be easy in Surrey and will take determined effort, adequate resourcing and ongoing commitment over a number of years, but we believe it is the right thing to work towards for children who are looked after.

How can we achieve this?

29. We believe we can achieve this ambitious level of change by developing a strong mixed economy of provision in the county. This will include:
- maximising the use of current in-house capacity;
 - strengthening relationships with existing providers based in Surrey;
 - encouraging complementary new provision to be developed locally by high-quality external providers; and
 - investing SCC's capital to create new children's homes – to be run by SCC or in close partnership with trusted providers.
30. The key aspects of work to strengthen the capacity of external provision in Surrey are already underway, following Cabinet approval secured as part of the Annual Procurement Forward Plan to develop new block contracting arrangements, but we require additional decisions from Cabinet to progress with further development of SCC-owned children's homes. This will be the focus of the remainder of this report.

Our plans to develop SCC-owned children's homes in Surrey

31. Surrey County Council is fortunate to have a strong pre-existing footprint in terms of its own in-house Children's Homes. The strengthening, refurbishment and, where needed, re-development of these homes is a core part of our sufficiency strategy. This means we are delivering a range of refurbishments and extensions, alongside approved new children's homes projects in Epsom & Ewell, Elmbridge and Mole Valley that have already been approved by Cabinet. In addition to these, we specifically intend to seek Cabinet approval to allocate £3.5 million of capital funding to create a second children's home in the Woking area. This new home, which will follow the standard 6-bed model (4 core beds with 2 additional adjoining beds) established for the new-build SCC children's homes currently in development, will both grow capacity in Surrey but also enable the decant of children from another SCC children's home (SC040633) to high-quality alternative accommodation, so that major improvement works can take place at the home.
32. To ensure the long-term future of SC040633 major improvement works are planned. In order to carry out these works, it will be necessary to relocate the current residents of the home. As Woking is an identified area where further children's home capacity is required, it is proposed that:
- A new Children's Home in line with the 6 placement (4 plus 2) model is purchased in the Woking area
 - SC040633 residents relocate to the new home
 - The major improvement works at SC040633 are conducted

- On completion, a decision can be made on whether it is in the best interests of the relocated residents, to return to SC040633 or remain in the new home and new residents be placed in SC040633
 - Works to ensure compliance with the appropriate regulations and guidance are taking place to keep SC040633 operational until approvals can be secured for this proposal
33. A project specific paper for the SC040633 home improvement works and costs will be brought through the appropriate governance route for approval.
34. Alongside the specific proposals connected to SC040633, we are planning to seek approval from Cabinet in November to use Surrey County Council capital to deliver up to 30 beds in SCC-owned children's homes, as a key part of how we can enable our sufficiency ambitions. Specific early proposals in relation to the locations of these additional beds have been developed, discussed and initially endorsed under the remit of the PVO Transformation Programme Board, but further work continues to clarify and agree the detail within this overall proposal ahead of any Cabinet discussion. In developing these early proposals we have taken account of:
- the geographic distribution of looked after children in and outside Surrey;
 - the profile of need of looked after children currently placed in residential provision in and outside of Surrey;
 - locations of current children's home run by SCC and external partners in Surrey, as well as their stated specialisms;
 - planned locations and specialisms of children's homes in development in Surrey, including SCC-owned and externally-run provision;
 - locations and specialisms of schools and education provision in the county and planned capital developments, by SCC or other providers, to ensure proposals for new children's homes are complementary;
 - the overall suitability in terms of community infrastructure of places in Surrey where further homes might be located; and
 - forecast future patterns in demand for beds in children's homes.
35. Our intention will be for these new homes to be managed by SCC in the first instance, but consideration will also be given to the potential for strategic partnerships with trusted and high-quality external providers.
36. The planned proposal would require the repurposing of up to £18 million capital funding to create up to 24-beds in SCC-owned children's homes (please note – the initial proposal will cover the creation of 24 of the total 30 beds we estimate might be needed in Surrey – we will need to return to Cabinet in the future should additional capital funding be required). We would draw this capital from £30 million funding previously allocated to the Care Leaver Accommodation and

Children's Home pipeline by Cabinet in February 2021, for the creation of 150 beds of care leaver accommodation in Surrey. We are seeking to reallocate this funding due to the considerable progress SCC has already made in growing the proportion of care leavers in Surrey, reaching 54% in August 2022 from a historical level of closer to 40%. This has been driven by both practice improvement around support for care leavers, as reflected in the recent Ofsted inspection, and recent increases in the capacity of supported accommodation provision in Surrey, delivered through the PVO Transformation Programme. This progress has reduced the scale of need to develop SCC-owned care leaver accommodation, although specific targeted proposals are still being progressed within the existing February 2021 approval. With a reduced need to secure care leaver accommodation, there is scope to repurpose the funding to create much needed additional capacity to accommodate looked after children in Surrey.

What is the business case for this level of capital investment?

37. As set out in this report, we have already established that we will need 50-60 additional children to be living in residential provision in Surrey to achieve our ambitious longer-term aim to enable every looked after child to have the choice to remain in Surrey, where this is appropriate to their needs. Whilst we could look to do this through open development via the external provider market, we will enable the best outcomes for children and achieve the best value for money if additional children's homes that are owned and (if possible) managed by SCC are a central part of our sufficiency strategy, in support of our statutory duties. Maintaining some capacity within the broader market strengthens our negotiating position as a commissioner of externally provided residential provision.
38. First and foremost, the business case is around enabling the best outcomes for Surrey's looked after children. Supporting children to live in Surrey, close to the communities they are from, provides them with best possible chance of maintaining their social networks, mitigating against some of the potential negative impacts of being in care and preparing them for their future in the county. Surrey-based provision also enables SCC to: work with its local partners to provide the best possible, well-coordinated wrap-around support to children; have improved confidence in the quality of the provision children are accessing; and better plan pathways on from the provision into either a family-based or more independent setting.
39. In addition to improved outcomes, this proposal will also create revenue savings on the cost of placements made in externally run provision. Based on the transformed model of SCC-managed Children's Homes, approved by Cabinet in November 2021, the average weekly cost of a placement in an SCC-managed children's home ranges from £3,177 to £4,294. This compares to an average weekly cost of residential provision from the open market of £5,232 per week (as in July 2022). For provision for children with disabilities (CWD), the cost

differential is less, with the SCC cost sitting at £5,194 compared to £5,639 on average on the open market. To illustrate, if we created 24 additional beds (8 of which were CWD) with £18 million capital investment, and achieved 90% occupancy over the course of the year, we would realise a revenue efficiency of £1.2 million each year (using a midpoint average cost for in-house).

What specific recommendations are we proposing to bring to Cabinet?
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40. As set out above, we are preparing to bring a set of specific proposals to SCC's Cabinet in November. This will build on the recommendation agreed to allocate SCC capital to the creation of care leaver accommodation at Cabinet on 23 February 2021 as follows:

"That Cabinet is asked to:

1. Endorse a long-term strategic ambition for Surrey County Council that every looked after child has have a choice to remain in Surrey, where this is appropriate to their needs – as previously endorsed by the Surrey Corporate Parenting Board
2. In support of the above ambition and delivery of Surrey County Council's Looked After Children and Care Leaver Sufficiency Strategy 2020-25:
 - a. Endorse an overall plan to initially create up to 30 additional beds in Children's Homes in Surrey across a number of sites (noting this may be revised by decision of the Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families), with care to be delivered either directly by SCC in-house and/or in partnership with trusted external providers; and
 - b. Approve the reallocation of up to £18 million towards the creation of up to the first 24 of these beds in new Children's Homes, taken from the £30 million of capital funding previously allocated to the dedicated budget for Care Leaver Accommodation and Children's Homes for the delivery of a programme of 150 beds for Care Leaver Accommodation by Cabinet on 23 February 2021.
 - c. Confirm that (in line with the recommendation previously agreed by Cabinet on 23 February 2021) delegated authority to approve individual schemes within overall budget constraints is given to the:
 - Executive Director – Children, Young People and Families, in consultation with:
 - Executive Director – Resources
 - Cabinet Member for Resources and Corporate Support
 - Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning

- Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families
3. Approve the allocation of £3.5 million of capital to the specific proposals detailed in this report to provide a second children's home in Woking to increase provision and provide decant for residents at another SCC children's home (SC040633) to enable major improvement works at the home."

Conclusions:

41. SCC is ambitious to enable more looked after children who want to live in Surrey to stay close to the communities that they are from and would like every looked after child to have the choice to remain in Surrey, where this is appropriate to their needs. This will require long-term commitment, focussed work and appropriate resourcing, but we are clear that this is the right ambition for Surrey's children and we can achieve the level of change required over time.
42. Children's homes are and will remain a key option for children and young people who are looked after, even as we work to promote family settings first, use residential provision as a time-limited intervention rather than longer-term destination, and implement practice models that prevent entry to care for some. Despite these changes, we are forecasting a consistent level of demand for children's homes for the foreseeable future, in the context of growing population of looked after children in Surrey and nationally.
43. We are facing a challenging national and local context in terms of the pressures on the market for Ofsted registered placements for looked after children, driven by rising numbers of looked after children nationally and regulatory change. This context means we need to consider proactive options that enable us to create local provision and manage some of the risks associated with the challenging national picture.
44. To deliver our sufficiency ambitions, we have modelled that we need to enable 50-60 additional children to access children's homes in Surrey, developing a strong mixed economy of SCC-run and externally provided services. Central to this ambition is our plan to develop up to 30 additional beds in SCC owned children's homes – which could be managed by SCC and/or run by a trusted strategic partner.
45. To enable this change we are looking to repurpose £18 million of capital funding previously earmarked by Cabinet for the creation of care leaver accommodation in Surrey, to deliver up to 24 of the 30 beds that are needed to achieve our longer-term sufficiency goal. This reflects the shifting balance of pressures facing Surrey's looked after children and care leavers since February 2021.

Recommendations:

46. The Select Committee is asked to:

- a) Endorse the overall long-term sufficiency ambition that every Surrey looked after child has the choice to remain in Surrey, where this is appropriate to their needs, accepting the current working hypothesis that this means planning for 80% of looked after children living in Surrey.
- b) Endorse the proposed recommendations set out in this report that are planned to come to Cabinet on 29 November 2022, to support the implementation of the Council's Looked After Children and Care Leaver Sufficiency Strategy 2020-25.

Next steps:

Informed by feedback from the CFLLC Select Committee, we intend to bring further developed proposals around the strengthening of the sufficiency of children's homes in Surrey to SCC's Cabinet on 29 November 2022.

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