

Time commenced – 6.00pm
Time finished – 8:47pm

CORPORATE PARENTING SUB BOARD 23 OCTOBER 2012

Present: Councillors Bailey, Boulton, Campbell, Williams and
F Winter

Councillor Martin was absent for 13/12 to 16/12 and arrived during consideration 17/12.

Councillor F Winter left the room during consideration of 18/12 and was absent for 19/12 to 22/12 inclusive.

Councillors Bolton and Martin left the room during consideration of 20/12 and was absent for 21/12 to 22/12 inclusive.

13/12 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Atwal, J Khan and Whitby.

14/12 Late Items to be Introduced by the Chair

In accordance with Section 100(B) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed to admit the following items on the grounds that the items needed to be considered before the next scheduled meeting of the Committee:

- Adoption Agency Report 2011-2012
- Annual report on private fostering

15/12 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

16/12 Minutes of the Corporate Parenting Sub Board held on 25 September 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

17/12 Adoption Scorecard

The Board received a report on the Adoption scorecard from the Strategic Director of Children and Young People. The report was presented by the Deputy Head of Service of Children in Care. The report measured adoption performance over a three year period. It was reported that the timeliness of adoption had gone down and the factors which affected this were:

- The needs of the children,
- Whether children could be placed with siblings or as singletons,
- Contact arrangements
- Availability of adopters.

The Board asked whether there was a shortage of social workers. It was reported that, although some recruitment of social workers had recently taken place, there was considerable pressure from high case loads in the service. It was further explained that the authority placed children all over the UK and staff having to travel great distances had an impact on their time and work. The Board asked if there was any possibility of working with other authorities, regarding long distance visits. The Deputy Head of Service explained that, due to safeguarding issues, it was the individual Council's responsibility to undertake the visits,

The Board questioned the timeliness of getting adopters approved and whether potential adopters were put off by the length of time it took. It was reported that the authority worked to a target of eight months for approval. It was further explained that to approve the right people it was important to get the right balance between a process that was too short and one that was too long.

Resolved to note the report.

18/12 Adoption Agency Report 2011-2012

The Board received the Adoption Agency Report 2011-2012 from the Strategic Director of Children and Young People. The Deputy Head of Service of Children in Care presented the report. The Derby City Adoption Agency had developed services to meet the needs of children who should be placed for adoption. The Adoption panel met 26 times between April 2012 and March 2012, and considered adoption matters such as:

- whether a child should be placed for adoption;
- the suitability of prospective adopters;
- whether a child should be placed with specific prospective adopter.

It was identified that since March 2012, 93 children had been awaiting adoptive placements. It was reported that a monthly highlight report would be produced to track key indicators of performance, such as a monthly spreadsheet that tracked the timeliness of adoptions. Members agreed that if issues or problems were identified, they should be brought before the Board.

Resolved to note report.

19/12 School Achievement for CLA 2012

The Board received a presentation on The Education of Children in Care Team SATS and GCSE outcomes 2012 from Virtual School Head Teacher for Children in Care. The presentation highlighted that education had positively impacted on the quality of the life for looked after children. It was reported that assistance from key partners and corporate parents helped to support the children with good use of intelligence of their needs. The information on a child was collected and reported in the Personal Education Plan.

The Board clarified with the Virtual School Head Teacher for Children in Care whether this also included BTECs and vocational qualifications. It was stated that vocational qualifications were included and there was an increase in Level 3 qualifications being achieved.

The Board asked whether schools identified how they would use the Pupil Premium. It was confirmed that the premium goes to the schools and the schools decided how it would be used. It was reported that there was a proposal to bring the pupil premium back into the remit of the virtual schools. Members noted that a gap in attainment existed between children in care and their peers. It was explained that if the pupil premium was within the remit of the virtual schools, there would be an ideal opportunity for it to be used for on-to-one tuition.

Resolved to note the presentation.

20/12 Foster Carers and Adoptive Parents Recruitment

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director of Children and Young People. The report was presented by the Lead Service Manager for Regulated Services. It was reported that the fostering service provider recruited and supported around 180 fostering households. It was further reported that certain activities previously used to recruit foster carers no longer yielded positive results but other new activities delivered for the first time had been received positively.

The Board asked whether the activities used had a positive impact on attracting foster carers. It was reported that 15 years ago no authorities or organisations advertised, but things had changed and the market was very competitive. It was further reported, that over that time, the numbers of foster carers had generally stayed the same, but children in care had increased.

Members agreed that they would like more communication on open days for fostering.

Resolved to note the report;

21/12 Fostering Report

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director of Children and Young People. The report provided information on the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services for the period from April 2012 to September 2012 and included detailed information on activity within the fostering service. The report was presented by the Lead Service Manager for Regulated Services

Members expressed an interest in analysing the activity report further in future meetings to establish why potential foster carers were unsuccessful, or dropped out of the recruitment process.

Resolved to note the report.

22/12 Annual Private Fostering Report

The Board considered the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's annual report on private fostering. The report detailed number of private fostering arrangements made to Local Authorities and the statutory responses. The Director of Specialist Services attended and presented the report.

Members expressed concerns over safeguarding issues and stated that it was important to know where all children in the city were. The Board asked whether more detailed figures could be provided with regards to Derby's performance in the context of the performance of comparator authorities

Resolved to request that the Overview and Scrutiny Officer liaise with the Performance team to obtain more information on Derby's performance , especially in relation to comparator authorities.

MINUTES END