

**Corporate Parenting Sub Commission
27 March 2012**

Present: Councillor Bailey (Chair)
Councillors Bolton and Campbell

Councillor Whitby was absent for 29/11 to 32/11 inclusive and arrived during consideration of 33/11.

Councillor Campbell left during consideration of 34/11 and was absent for 35/11.

29/11 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor F Khan and Councillor F Winter.

30/11 Late items to be introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

31/11 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Campbell declared a personal interest as he was a member of NASUWT.

32/11 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the chair.

33/11 Children Looked After Statistics

The Commission received a report from the Information Manager, Performance and Improvement Division, on Children in Care Data and Performance Summary.

It was reported that there were 488 children in care as opposed to 485 at the time the report was published in March and that this figure was the highest since 1998. It was also shown that there were a disproportionate number of children in care aged 12 and over and that the numbers had increased significantly in recent years. It was reported that the proportion of children in care from minority groups was slightly under represented when compared to the local population. It was noted that there had been a slight increase in the number of children who had been in care for less than one year and that there had been an increase in the numbers of Derby's children in care who were placed outside the City boundary.

The Commission highlighted the low numbers of children in care who were placed in the Council's own homes and hostels and questioned whether they were being utilised correctly in terms of capacity. The Strategic Director of Children and

Young People reported that occupancy levels of homes and hostels were being reviewed to help reduce the numbers of placements outside the City boundary. The Strategic Director also explained the reasons why some children needed to be placed outside the City boundary.

The Strategic Director explained that the numbers of looked after children in Derby were too high and that there were a range of measures that could be introduced to help reduce overall numbers. The Director of Specialist Services reported that a review of processes was needed to identify where they could be streamlined to provide consistency and reduce duplications.

The Commission questioned whether there would also be a review of foster care. The Strategic Director confirmed that a review was needed to look at the systems and processes in place within the fostering service.

Resolved to note the report

34/11 Safeguarding and Children Looked After Ofsted Action Plan

The Commission received a report from the Strategic Director on Safeguarding and Looked After Children Inspection Improvement Action Plan. It was reported that an Ofsted and Care Quality Commission inspection of safeguarding and looked after children services had taken place in May 2011. The Strategic Director explained that the inspection team had made 24 recommendations to improve services. As a result, an improvement action plan had been drawn up to address the recommendations. The Strategic Director confirmed that almost all of the actions had either been completed or were on track for completion.

Resolved:

- **to note the report;**
- **to recommend that the social workers, foster carers and managers be congratulated for their hard work.**

35/11 Out of Hours Service for Foster Care

The Commission received a report from the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Officer on Out of Hours Fostering Service Support – Action Plan. It was reported that the Sub Commission had considered the out of hours fostering service at its meeting on 14 February 2012 and it had been agreed that they needed to gather more evidence about the service and its effectiveness for service users.

It was also reported that the Sub Commission had asked Councillor Whitby to liaise with the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination Officer to arrange for Members of the Sub Commission to attend a foster carers coffee morning to discuss out of hours service.

It was agreed that the Chair, Vice-Chair and Councillor Whitby would attend a foster carers coffee morning.

Resolved;

- **to note the report;**
- **to ask the new Corporate Parenting Sub Commission for 2012-13 or its equivalent to continue investigations into this matter;**
- **to agree that Councillors Bailey, Bolton and Whitby attend a foster carers coffee morning;**
- **to ask the Sub Commission Members who attend the coffee morning to write a report of their findings which can be taken to a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Sub Commission or its equivalent.**

MINUTES END