



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-COMMISSION

19 JUNE 2007

Report of the Corporate Director for Children & Young People

Visits by Elected Members to Children's Homes

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That members should consider how best to fulfil corporate parenting responsibilities and whether a new programme of open evenings should be drawn up.
- 1.2 In the event that members decide to continue with open evenings, consideration should be given to how the process of arranging events can be rationalised, and how more members can be encouraged to attend.
- 1.3 In the event that members decide to continue with open evenings, organisation of the visits and arrangements for Criminal Records Bureau checks should be managed by Member Services as they have more direct access to councillors and their diaries.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 There is no statutory requirement for councillors to visit homes but it is an expectation for them as corporate parents. Before 2005, a rota of monthly visits by councillors was drawn up. Very few visits were being carried out as planned. Member Services feedback indicated that the possible reasons were intrusive criminal record checks, the perceived formality of unannounced visiting and the requirement to write a detailed report of the visit. The format was reviewed in 2005 in the light of twice yearly inspections by the Commission for Social Care Inspection and monthly management visits. It was proposed that the ethos of councillors' visits should become more supportive and participative and less inspectorial.
- 2.2 In 2005 an alternative system for visiting homes was agreed. Each home would host an open event once a year to which councillors would be invited. No more than six councillors would visit at any one time and the staff of the home and young people living there would present issues specific to that home for discussion in a sociable atmosphere. To prepare councillors for the open events, an introductory session was held, facilitated by officers and young people.
- 2.3 In 2005 and 2006 three open evenings took place, attended by four, three and one councillor respectively. A total of six councillors took part, although all councillors were invited. A number were arranged but had to be cancelled at short notice due to lack of attendance, and one was not cancelled but no one attended.

- 2.4 The logistics of arranging open evenings at a time when councillors were free to attend, together with circulating invitations and coordinating responses have proved complicated and restricted the frequency of events. Member Services have more immediate access to councillors' diaries which would make arrangements easier to manage.
- 2.5 The requirement for councillors to undergo criminal record checks has remained.

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Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1: Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 None

Legal

- 2.1 The role of councillors as corporate parents was introduced by the government as part of the Quality Protects initiative in 1998.

Personnel

- 3.1 None

Equalities impact

- 4.1 Visits to children's homes assist Councillors to assess the quality of services provided to this vulnerable group of children and young people.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 5.1 Children's homes promote the five outcomes for children which form the basis of the objectives of the Children and Young Peoples' Plan