



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING SUB COMMISSION **9 December 2008**

Report of the Director of Corporate and Adult Services

Elected Member Visits to Children's Homes

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To consider and discuss elected member visits to Children's Homes

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 There are five children's homes in the city which are regularly inspected by officers and reported under regulation 33 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2001. These visits conform to national minimum standards and look at all aspects of the home including physical and management issues affecting the home. The sixth, The Lighthouse in Derwent Ward provides respite care for children with disabilities.
- 2.2 Elected Members also carried out a number of visits during the latter end of 2007 and early part of this year. The visits were considered by those members to achieve a number of positive outcomes:
- It gave assurances to staff and more importantly to the children that members were genuinely interested in their welfare and took their responsibility as a corporate parent very seriously
 - It increased awareness amongst members particularly for those in whose ward the home was located of the issues surrounding the management of the home
 - It gave members opportunity to consider needs of the home and children and give suggestions on improvements
- 2.3 Three members were asked to visit homes when the visits were first started. This included a member from Corporate Parenting Sub Commission, the local ward member and one other. However it soon became apparent that having three members to conduct a visit was overly ambitious and that it was not always easy to organise these due to member diaries. Also a number of the visits were carried out around the same time for each home. As a consequence only one round of visits has been carried for all homes except Cricklewood which has had two visits.

Record of member visits

Home	Date of Visit	Members involved
Coronation Avenue Alvaston	14 November 2007	Councillors Poulter, Leeming, Allen
Bute Walk Derwent	24 October 2007	Councillors Rawson, Redfern and Hird
Moorfield Children's Centre Sinfen	14 November 2007	Councillors Higginbottom, Turner, Chera
Queensferry Gardens Shelton Lock	23 October 2007	Councillors Poulter, Jennings, Berry
Cricklewood Mackworth	22 October 2007	Councillors Higginbottom, former Cllr Gerrard, Ginns
	21 January 2008	Councillor Redfern

2.4 There is still significant level of interest and commitment for members to continue with the member visits. It is proposed that:

- Each home is visited at least twice a year and ideally visits should be carried out in pairs with one of the two being either a member of the Corporate Parenting Sub Commission or the local ward member. *However, if it is not possible for two to attend together then one member may carry out the visit on his/her own.* Visiting in pairs enables members discuss issues with one another and corroborate their findings whilst enabling them to pick up more issues.
- The Moorfield units are visited separately because it takes too long to visit three on one visit
- A standard report is completed for each visit at the home before members leave the premises, as experience suggests there is not always the time to complete later. A draft copy of the report is attached for discussion
- A simple checklist will be prepared for members to complete to assist with the recording the key points from the visit
- The Overview and Scrutiny team will organise the visits for each home

2.5 Members are asked to discuss frequency of visits, what are the key issues that should be looked at for each home and where these should be reported. Members should also consider who is best placed to organise the visits, whether these should be through the Overview and Scrutiny Team or in the Children and Young People's Department.

2.6 Members are also asked to consider what prior briefing and / or preparation they might require before undertaking these visits.

Month	Home	Ward	Member wishing to attend	Suggested dates for Visit
January	Coronation Avenue	Boulton		
February	Cricklewood	Mackworth		
March	Bute Walk	Derwent		
April	Moorfield	Sinfin		
May	Queensferry Gardens	Cellaston		
June	The Lighthouse, St Marks Road	Derwent		
July	Coronation Avenue	Boulton		
August	Cricklewood	Mackworth		
September	Bute Walk	Derwent		
October	Moorfield	Sinfin		
November	Queensferry Gardens	Cellaston		
December	The Lighthouse St Marks Road	Derwent		

<p>For more information contact: Mahroof Hussain 01332 255597 e-mail Mahroof.hussain@derby.gov.uk</p> <p>Background papers: None</p> <p>List of appendices: Appendix 1 - Implications Appendix 2 – Member visit to children’s home report</p>
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IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. None arising from this report.

Legal

2. None arising from this report.

Personnel

3. None arising from this report.

Equalities impact

4. Looked after children are amongst one of the most vulnerable groups in the city and regular member visits will help to make further improvements in children's homes.

Corporate Priorities

5. This report links with Council's priority for 2007-10 on supporting everyone in learning and achieving and helping us all to be healthy, active and independent.

Member Visit to Children's Care Home Report

Name of the Home:

Date of Visit:

Names of Member(s) visiting

1. Physical Condition/ appearance

1a External

Consider physical appearance, location etc.

1b Internal

Consider issues such as heating/lighting, furniture and furnishing, washing facilities, kitchen and decoration.

2. Care and Control

Look through daily log, incident book, consider behaviour of children etc.

3. Health and Wellbeing

Do children like their food, what are arrangements for buying clothes, is everyone registered with a GP etc.

4. Education, Training and Employment

Does each child have a school place? If not, what arrangements are in place for their education?

5. Staffing

Recruitment, training, levels of sickness and absence etc

6. Children's views/comments about the home, if any

7. Other comments