

Time commenced – 1.02pm
Time finished – 2.26pm

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE
1 December 2015

Present: Councillor Bolton (Chair)
Councillors Jones, Russell and Whitby

19/15 Apologies

There were none.

20/15 Late Items to be Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

21/15 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

22/15 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 22 September 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

23/15 Fostering Statement of Purpose

The Committee received a report of the Acting Strategic Director for Children and Young People on Fostering Statement of Purpose. The report was presented by the Head of Service – Fostering and Adoption.

It was reported that the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services required the Fostering Agency to produce a Statement of Purpose which was updated once a year.

It was further reported that the updated Fostering Statement of Purpose had been written to be understood by children and young people. Members noted that the Corporate Parenting Overview and Scrutiny Board considered the previous version in January 2015.

Members were provided with an update on current numbers of foster carers. Members noted that there had been a small number of redundancies and that these had been due to normal life events and personal circumstances.

Resolved to approve the Fostering Statement of Purpose.

24/15 Adoption Agency Report

The Committee received a report of the Acting Strategic Director for Children and Young People on Adoption Agency Report. The report was presented by the Head of Service – Fostering and Adoption.

It was reported that the Children Act 1989, the Adoption Agency Regulations (2011), the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the Adoption National Minimum Standards 2014 placed duties and responsibilities on Local Authorities to provide, or arrange to provide an Adoption Service.

Members noted that the report provided adoption performance information for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 and at appendix 2 the adoption statement of purpose.

Members discussed the process involved in the recruitment of adopters and also Special Guardianship Orders.

Resolved to approve the Adoption Agency report and statement of purpose.

25/15 Update on Residential Homes Member Visits to Children's Homes

The Committee received a report of the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Committee on The Chairs Update Report on Member Visits to Children's Homes. The report was presented by the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Committee.

It was reported that all elected Members were Corporate Parents to all children in the care of Derby City Council, including those placed in residential care. It was also reported that it was the responsibility of elected Members to ensure that the needs of these children and young people were being met, providing them with the support and encouragement to develop, grow and meet their full potential.

Members noted that in order to fulfil the Councillors roles as a Corporate Parent, a number of elected Members had been involved in visits to Derby City Council run children's residential homes in Derby.

The Chair wished to thank elected Members who had completed the training and undertaken visits.

Resolved:

- 1. to receive the update; and**
- 2. to thank elected Members who had completed training and undertaken visits to Derby City Council run children's residential homes in Derby.**

26/15 Children's Homes Development Project

The Committee received a report of the Acting Director for Children and Young People on Children's Homes Development Project. The report was presented by the Head of Residential Care.

Members noted that a report was presented to the Corporate Parenting Overview and Scrutiny Board on 7 October 2014 on the Children's Homes Development Project, which would replace or modernise Derby's stock of children's homes and reduce overall capacity by 15 beds.

It was reported that Phase one, construction of two homes on the Moorfield site, was completed in July 2015 and the new homes were known as The Willows and 402 Sinfen Lane. It was further reported that the homes were formally opened by Councillor Sara Bolton Cabinet Member for Safeguarding and Children and Young People on 25 September 2015.

Members noted that Phase two began in January 2015 when the staff and young people of 55 Coronation Avenue relocated to Cricklewood Road, with the loss of six beds. Members also noted that the demolition of 55 Coronation Avenue had been completed and the construction of a replacement home was on schedule for completion by February 2016.

It was reported that Phase three of the development plan involved the refurbishment of 86 Queensferry Gardens to a high specification and standard and residents and staff would relocate to Cricklewood Road during that period. It was further reported that contractors would be on site by the end of July 2016, work should be completed by the middle of March 2017, ready for occupation in April 2017.

Members noted that Phase four, the refurbishment of 19 Cricklewood Road, would start in July 2017 and be completed by the end of February 2018, ready for occupation by the end of March. Members also noted that the staff and residents of 22 Bute walk would then move in and Bute Walk would close. It was reported that two further beds would be lost on completion of phase four, leaving a total of 24 beds. It was further reported that this timetable allowed for a detailed consideration of the closure of Bute Walk in relation to the demand for residential beds.

Members discussed the proposed reduction in the overall number of beds by 2018 and the use of external placements for children with high level needs.

Resolved to note the plan, bed reduction and timetable for phases two, three and four.

27/15 East Midlands Regional Children's Framework for Independent Fostering Agencies and Children's Home Providers

The Committee received a report of the Acting Strategic Director for Children and Young People on East Midlands Regional Children's Framework for Independent

Fostering Agencies and Children's Home Providers. The report was presented by a Commissioning Manager.

Members noted that the Cabinet paper attached at Appendix 2 of the report provided an overview of changes in relation to the East Midlands Regional Children's Framework (EMRCF), which was the principle mechanism for sourcing placements for children where there was no identified in-house provision that could meet the child's needs.

It was reported that the framework was due to end on 31 January 2016 and was currently being re-procured. It was further reported that a recent review of its effectiveness had been undertaken to support the development of the new specification.

Members noted that the number of placements Derby City Council were sourcing externally had increased, which was impacting on the overall cost of placements.

It was reported that on 7 October 2015 Cabinet approved Derby City Council's continued participation in the EMRCF for sourcing independent fostering and children's home placements.

Resolved:

- 1. to note the report; and**
- 2. to agree that an update report be brought to a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee on the evaluation of bids and the implementation plan for the new framework in Derby.**

28/15 Update on Children in Care Pledge

The Committee received a report of the Acting Strategic Director for Children and Young People on The Pledge. The report was presented by the Project Manager – Volunteering Matters.

It was reported that the Pledge was a promise made by Derby City Council to all Derby City children in care and leaving care, to give them the best opportunities they could have in life. It was also reported that all adults who work for and with the Council would make a commitment to work to the Pledge at all times.

Members noted that the Pledge was conceived by the Derby City Children in Care Council throughout 2012. Members also noted that the current Pledge had 28 commitments and it was felt that these needed to be updated and be more aspirational.

It was reported that from June – August 2015 the looked after children had been asked to highlight their top ten priorities, which would form the new Pledge. Members noted that it was planned that the updated Pledge would be launched and implemented early in 2016.

Resolved:

- 1. to receive the update; and**
- 2. to request a further update at a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee.**

29/15 Children and Young People Missing from Home and Care

The Committee received a report of the Acting Strategic Director for Children and Young People on Children and Young People Missing from Home and Care. The report was presented by the Head of Service, Integrated Services 0-19.

It was reported that there continued to be serious concern about the numbers of children and young people who go missing from care and their own homes. It was further reported that there was an urgent need to fully understand the reasons why young people run away and to identify what help and support could be given to help them adopt strategies to avoid taking such risky actions.

Members noted that a plan to reduce the incidences of children and young people going missing had been in place since May 2015 and was refreshed following a Council internal audit and a performance surgery in August. Members also noted that in July, a task group was established to embed actions from the plan, and ensure compliance with the Runaway and Missing from Home and Care protocol.

It was reported that return Interviews had the potential to help us understand the reasons why young people go missing. It was further reported that there were challenges in ensuring the timely completion and good quality of the return interviews carried out with young people, despite the fact that the information gathered may provide insight and help in planning future preventative work.

Resolved:

- 1. to note the progress on the Improvement Plan to reduce the incidences of missing children and young people;**
- 2. to endorse plans for further actions and monitoring; and**
- 3. to agree that an update on the reasons for missing episodes be brought to the February meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee.**

MINUTES END