



Derby City Council

CORPORATE PARENTING SUB-BOARD
5 February 2013

ITEM 6

Report of the Strategic Director for Children and
Young People

Member Visits to Children's Homes

SUMMARY

- 1.1 Elected members carry out periodic visits to children's homes to monitor the quality of care and the welfare of children and young people. Visits fall within members' corporate parenting responsibilities.
- 1.2 After each visit members report on their observations and recommendations and members are informed of actions taken as a result.
- 1.3 This report summarises the reports of visits done in 2012 and the responses.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the report.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Elected members share corporate parenting responsibility for the well-being of children in care. Children placed in children's homes are especially vulnerable and have poorer life chances than other children in care because of their greater needs.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 Councillors Bailey and Martin visited Moorfield on 17 August 2012. They reported that the building was well-maintained and commented on the quality of recording. All the children had school places and liked living at the home. It was fully staffed but they felt that morale had suffered as a result of an Ofsted inspection earlier in the year. The Councillors raised certain minor issues and were contacted after the visit to inform them of the outcome.
- 4.2 Councillor Williams visited 22 Bute Walk on 29 August. Councillor Williams reported that the home had improved 100 per cent, most of the repairs had been finished and it felt much more like a home. However she thought there was an 'excuse culture' among some of the staff. In response Mark Barratt, Service Director, informed Councillor Williams that an improvement plan was in place to address the development needs of the staff group. The home is now providing settled placements for four children in a very positive atmosphere.
- 4.3 Councillors Bailey and Campbell visited 19 Cricklewood Road on 26 October. They reported that the home was in excellent condition, the children seemed happy and well-behaved, meals were healthy and interesting and the needs of a dual-heritage child were catered for. All the children had a school place and the staff seemed happy and motivated. They recommended that frosted glass should be fitted to the fire escape door and Councillor Bailey undertook to pursue cheap or discounted tickets for events. In response Mark Barratt informed the Councillors that the frosted glass would be fitted shortly and that looked after children received from free or discounted ticket to events on occasions through the fostering and adoption marketing officer or virtual head teacher.
- 4.4 Councillors Bailey and F. Winter visited 86 Queensferry Gardens on 29 October. They reported that there had been improvements and the home looked extremely cheerful from the outside. Inside it was bright and comfortable but needed new dining table and chairs, bedroom furniture and desks. They found no problems with the care of the children or staffing and thought the manager and deputy had made improvements. They raised issues about the provision of a commercial refrigerator and the replacement of the cook. In response Mark Barratt informed the councillors that dining room furniture was on order and the rest would be replaced when funding allowed. The bedroom furniture has now also been ordered. The refrigerator had been supplied on the advice of the catering manager to meet environmental health standards. The competing requirements of health and safety and a homely environment have to be carefully balanced and on this occasion there had been insufficient discussion. The position of the cook is now subject to vacancy control.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 Not applicable.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer	N/A
Financial officer	N/A
Human Resources officer	N/A
Service Director(s)	Mark Barratt, Service Director – Specialist Services
Other(s)	N/A

For more information contact:	Rod Jones 01332 643815 rod.jones@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

1.1 None arising from this report.

Legal

2.1 None arising from this report.

Personnel

3.1 None arising from this report.

Equalities Impact

4.1 None arising from this report.

Health and Safety

5.1 None arising from this report.

Environmental Sustainability

6.1 None arising from this report.

Asset Management

7.1 None arising from this report.

Risk Management

8.1 None arising from this report.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

9.1 None arising from this report.

