



Minutes of the meeting of the CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL held on MONDAY 17 JUNE 2013 at 9.30 am

- Present:** Councillor Miles (Chair)
Councillors Brock, O'Neill, Small and Zealley
- Officers:** N Rayner (Assistant Director [Children's Social Care]), C Greer (Head of Delivery Corporate Parenting), C James (Safeguarding & Quality Manager) and S Muir (Committee Manager).
- Also Present:** Cllr Dransfield (Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Life Long Learning) and 1 Member of the Public.
- Apologies:** Councillors Bradburn and O'Neill

PC01 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 29 April 2013 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

PC02 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

None

PC03 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

1. Further to minute PC88 dated 29 April 2013, the Chair welcomed Councillor Versallion from Central Bedfordshire Council as an observer to the meeting and received an overview of the Corporate Parenting Panel at Central Bedfordshire Council; a reciprocal invitation to Milton Keynes Council Panel Members was also welcomed
2. With reference to Minute PC91 dated 29 April 2013, the Assistant Director (Children's Social Care) advised that with regard to the impact date of the effectiveness of the 12 month advert in the MK Hospital magazine for Foster Carers, 150 enquiries were received on 2012-13 and 25% of these enquires had resulted in applications being received which was above the national percentage of responses of 10%.
3. The Assistant Director (Children's Social Care) added that she was grateful for the suggestion of using LINK and welcomed further suggestions from Panel Members.

RESIDENTIAL CHILDREN'S HOMES – REGISTERED MANAGERS REGULATION 34 REPORTS

The Panel received details of the Residential Children's Homes – Registered Managers Regulation 34 Reports.

The Head of Delivery advised that the report format followed the format of Schedule 6 Regulation 34. He also advised that the reports for the 3 residential children's homes in Milton Keynes were presented together and that each home had received an Ofsted Inspection report of "Good". An interim Ofsted Inspection report had found two of the homes to be "Satisfactory" and 1 (Furze House) to be "Good".

The Head of Delivery further advised that changes to the future format of Members visits to the homes was progressing to a more twice yearly coffee morning style which will focussed on feedback from young people and their families. Dates of the Coffee Mornings to be advised to Panel members.

The Panel were pleased that the report formats were uniform and noted that there were 63 entries in the Accident Book at Furze House during the period and "a few" accidents at the Walnuts.

The Head of Delivery advised that the figure was high but related to a respite centre where there was a high level of young people being looked after on short term basis, the home was very diligent in recording minor injuries and marks on young people of an unknown origin to monitor any emerging patterns and trends. These matters were reported appropriately.

The Panel also noted that the Walnuts facility was not the best planned building to deal with 52 week placements for children with challenging issues and that the school were planning to withdraw the long term placements by 2014 when the last long term residents had moved out. It would then be a unit with short stay provision. At that point it would be registered as a boarding school with different visiting arrangements although Panel Member visits would always be welcomed.

The Panel were reassured that

- Alternative provision for 52 week placements would be in place in good time for 2014 for the three young people who currently live full time in the unit whilst attending the school.

There was discussion of whether there might be capital available to build a more appropriate 52 week facility and whether the withdrawal of the provision would result in an increase in out of area placements. The Assistant Director advised that the decision to withdraw from 52 week provision was ultimately the schools responsibility although the school were aware of concerns from the Corporate Parenting Panel, Offices and Ofsted about the suitability of the current building when they took this decision. It was agreed

that a report will be provided to the next meeting about future provision of care for children with challenging SEN issues.

RESOLVED –

The Panel noted the report.

PC101

ELECTED MEMBER REGULATION 33 VISITS

The Panel received details of the Regulation 33 Reports for the April 2013 visits and noted that visits to Furze House, Westminster Drive and The Walnuts had been carried out in April 2013.

Head of Delivery advised that the quarterly report was not due and would be discussed at the next meeting and this was an update on members visits only.

The Panel advised that the homes were always welcoming and were confident that this was the same for all visitors and that managers always responded well to challenge.

The Panel noted that plans were in hand to refresh the paintwork and make some improvements at the Walnuts.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

PC102

MILTON KEYNES FOSTERING SERVICES REGULATION 35 REPORT 1- JANUARY 2013 – 31 MARCH 2013

The Head of Delivery introduced the report and highlighted increasing activities to support families but that the speed with which the Courts now require officers to process Regulation 24 assessments is challenging. This was mainly due to late requests for assessments and to the delays in receiving responses to DBS checks (former 'CRB checks'). Thames Valley Police will not undertake PNC checks to fast track these assessments as this is not in line with ACPO guidance. The Assistant Director confirmed that this has been raised with Thames Valley Police and nationally with the family justice review group by the Association of Directors of Children's Services.

The Head of Delivery also confirmed that Milton Keynes Foster parents were made available to foster children from neighbouring local authorities rather than be left vacant. The number of children in Milton Keynes foster placements had decreased from 220 in June 2012 to 204 in December 2012 due to changes in the make up of the care population (fewer younger children).

The Head of Delivery also reported that 16% of 150 foster carers responded to the bi-annual questionnaire. Five of those who responded felt unhappy with support offered, this feedback will inform service development with the matter being raised at the fostering forum to look at a way forward.

It was reported that individual issues were referred to the carers Foster Link Worker who supported the Foster Carers and followed up with the carers.

The Panel were reassured that terminations of Foster Carers' approvals, whilst a point of concern, were due to valid reasons such as that the foster family had moved out of the area.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

PC103

MILTON KEYNES ADOPTION PANEL AND PERMANENCE REPORT OCTOBER 2012 – MARCH 2013

The Panel received the Milton Keynes Adoption and Permanence Report, October 2012 – March 2013.

The Head of Delivery confirmed that this was the 6 monthly report that was required to be brought to the Panel.

It was reported that there had been improvements in the numbers of difficult to place young people awaiting adoption and this would feed through the statistics in future periods.

The Panel discussed innovative approaches which are being used to recruit adopters for hard to place children, including activity days when prospective adopters can meet children in need of adoption and their current carers. It was confirmed that the recent training by BAAF which was attended by some Panel Members supported this. That training also focused on the new Prospective Adopters Report and how the Adoption Panel functioned.

The following issue was highlighted in response to issues raised in the report:

- Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Life Long Learning requested that the monthly information provided to him as lead member be included in future Panel reports.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

PC104

OUT OF BOROUGH PLACEMENT

The Panel considered the report which sought to present an overview of children in care whose placements were outside the borough of Milton Keynes.

It was reported that the Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children in July 2012 had expressed concern that a significant number of young people were placed out of area. It was explained that as Milton Keynes represent a small geographically area when compared with other local authorities, it is more likely young people will be placed out of area. In many cases this is not at a significant distance from the borough. Analysis showed a reduction

of young people placed more than 20 miles out of borough over the last 2 years. Members had concerns that Ofsted did not have this overview.

The following issues were highlighted in response to issues raised in the report:

- Work to continue to improve the range of placements available to ensure placement “sufficiency” in and near to Milton Keynes.
- Enhanced communication with young people out of borough by a variety of methods was discussed such as young people writing diaries of their activities, inclusion in TCTF activities, improved website and Member visits, in addition to the newsletter they receive.
- The reasons for those young people being placed out of area to be captured and included in a future report to panel.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

PC105

MILTON KEYNES CARE LEAVERS CHARTER

The Panel considered the progress of Milton Keynes Council's adoption of the National Charter for care leavers and the work being undertaken with the Children in Care Council to ensure that the charter (which has been adopted in principal) reflects local issues.

The Panel noted that consultation with young people was in progress but was delayed until after the GCSE examinations.

The Panel commented that housing for young people leaving care was a particular issue that needs to be addressed along with other issues and it was hoped that the local Care Leavers Charter when adopted by full Council would address this.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

PC106

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL ANNUAL REPORT

The Panel raised various minor drafting issues and noted that some data would be revised when 2012/13 figures are available.

The Panel considered the draft Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report which covered the period from January 2013 to the end of March 2013 and that future reports would be produced to cover the period 1 April to 31 March (fiscal year).

The panel noted that as a Committee of the Council the report was required to be approved by Council at the September meeting and also by Children and Young Peoples Select Committee on 3 July 2013.

The Panel also noted that the Children in Care Strategy should go to full Council but there is not an automatic requirement for further consultation before this is done.

The Panel noted that the draft overarching Children in Care Strategy addressed feedback from various consultation workshops carried out since the January Panel meeting and that the streamlined priorities would be valid for the next three years.

RESOLVED:

That the draft report be approved.

PC107

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Panel noted that the next meeting of the Panel would be held on Monday 2 September 2013 at 09.30.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 10.50 AM

DRAFT