

Minutes of the CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL held on TUESDAY 22 March 2016 at 6.30 pm

**Present:** Councillor Miles (Chair)  
Councillors Cannon, Crooks, V Hopkins, Nolan and Patey-Smith.

**Officers:** N Rayner (Service Director, Children and Families), K Lockwood (Head of Corporate Parenting), J Hooper (Head of Safeguarding) and T Milner (Committee Manager).

**Apology:** Councillor Clancy

**CP35 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

None received.

**CP36 MINUTES**

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 19 January 2016 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Kelly Lockwood was welcomed by the Panel to the meeting following her permanent appointment as Head of Corporate Parenting.

**CP37 CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL: TODAY'S CHILDREN TOMORROW'S FUTURE (TCTF)**

The Head of Safeguarding introduced the report and highlighted that the Children in Care Group continued to be well attended and provided an ideal opportunity for young people to meet, have fun and to discuss important issues. Further events would be planned during 2016/17, with a view to organising the events in different settings.

The Panel heard that the New2UK project had got off to a very good start. The Project offered social and emotional support to young asylum seekers aged between 15-20 years.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Service Director, Children and Families and Head of Safeguarding be requested to circulate the web-links for documents to members of the Panel.

**CP38 REGULATION 44 AND MEMBER'S VISITS – JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2016**

The Head of Safeguarding presented the report and reported that the most recent Ofsted report for Furze House had been published on 20 January 2016, following an inspection visit in December 2015. Officers and Panel members were pleased that Furze House had been rated as 'good'.

With regard to the Walnuts interim inspection held in December 2015, it was reported that the home had been judged as 'improved effectiveness'. Westminster House was currently undergoing a 2 day Inspection Visit and the outcomes of Ofsted's interim report would be reported to a future Panel meeting.

Councillor Miles reminded the Panel members about the need to arrange their visits to the homes and to follow up on visits made.

RESOLVED -

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Head of Safeguarding be requested to liaise with Panel members regarding visits to Furze House, The Walnuts and Westminster House.

**CP39**

### **NATIONAL COMPARATOR DATA ON THE CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORK WORKFORCE**

The Panel received a report and summary presentation of comparator Local Authority data, including the use of agency social workers, from the Service Director (Children and Families). The Service Director referred to a recent survey amongst children and young people in and leaving the Council's care, which indicated that social worker changes were unsettling and a key issue for the children in the Council's care.

The Panel heard that the level of social worker vacancies and usage of agency staff was falling. However, it was recognised that it would take time for those children who had experienced changes of social worker to develop long-standing relationships with their new MKC social workers.

The Panel heard that work was underway within the South East to develop a Memorandum of Understanding between the organisations who employed agency social workers. It was hoped that this would both reduce the cost of agency staff and encourage Social Workers to reconsider direct Local Authority employment.

In response to a question from Councillor Cannon about working arrangements for social work staff and the impact on the Council, the Head of Corporate Parenting indicated that the Council offered flexible working arrangements for staff, and in some instances tried to fit some jobs around social workers' family life. The Service Director indicated that comparatively few agency children's social work staff were employed by the Council, and a range of values supports, such as good case supervision and controlled workloads were provided for all social work staff.

RESOLVED -

That the report and presentation be noted.

**CP40****REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY DEVELOPMENTS**

The Service Director (Children and Families) referred to previous Panel discussions about Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) developments. She noted that, whilst there was room for further improvement, the Council's current adoption service was performing relatively well. The Council continued to be committed to providing permanency to the children in its care and to minimising any delays with the adoption process.

The Panel heard that the Council had learnt a lot from the RAA work with partner Local Authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agencies. It was reported that the Council was currently participating in two RAA developments, Central East (led by Coram) and Adopt Thames Valley. A commitment had been made to both sets of partners that the Council would decide between those two options by June 2016. It was noted that this was a choice between two positive options, both of which had particular strengths and potential to deliver improved outcomes for Milton Keynes' children and adopters.

RESOLVED -

1. That the report be noted.
2. That officers colleagues continue to work with partner Local Authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agencies to develop an effective Regional Adoption Agency that meets local needs.

**CP41****LOOKING BACK LOOKING AHEAD**

The Head of Corporate Parenting provided the Panel with a presentation and oral update on the 'Forward Planning: A Glimpse into the Future' which provided an opportunity to look forward and to see if there were common themes and what could be built on to guide the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

The Panel heard that there was a new vibrancy about the Corporate Parenting Panel and it was important to receive the views of Panel members' about how best to build on this to formulate more creativity for the future. This would aid and shape the future working of the Corporate Parenting Panel, particularly its work and engagement with children and young people, Governance and the virtual school.

Councillor Miles indicated that there was an opportunity to look at how other authorities operated and to see if there were better or different ways of working which could usefully be adopted by the Panel. Councillor Miles suggested that site visits and/or a desk-top exercise could be conducted during 2016/17. He also noted that the Panel's annual report would be presented to the first ordinary full Council following the forthcoming May elections.

The Panel heard from Councillor Nolan, who indicated that she had met a number of children and had visited a number of venues, which proved to be very positive.

Councillor Betteley indicated she would like to see the views of young people in respect of the usefulness of the work undertaken by the Corporate Parenting Panel.

The Service Director, Children and Families thanked the Chair and the Panel members for their continued support.

RESOLVED -

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the key points be taken forward.

**CP42**

**DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 22 July 2016 at 6.30 pm.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING 7.55 PM