

Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on 21 March 2023 at 7.00 pm

- Present:** Councillors Paul Arnold (Chair), Adam Carter (Vice-Chair), Kairen Raper (via Microsoft Teams) and Lee Watson
- Chair, Children in Care Council
Vice-Chair, Children in Care Council
Laura Hall, Thurrock Open Door
Wendy Caswell, Chair, The One Team, Foster Carer Association
Jenny Josling, Vice-Chair, The One Team, Foster Carer Association
- Apologies:** Councillors Maureen Pearce and Georgette Polley
- In attendance:** Janet Simon, Assistant Director, Children's Social Care and Early Help
Ewelina Sorbjan, Assistant Director for Housing Management
Dan Jones, Strategic Lead, Looked After Children
Clare Moore, Strategic Lead for the Youth Offending Service and Prevention
Tina Russel, Assistant Director SET CAMHS and Partnerships
Kenna-Victoria Healey, Senior Democratic Services Officer
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Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised the meeting was being filmed and recorded, with the recording to be made available on the Council's Website.

32. Minutes

The minutes of the Corporate Parenting meeting on 4 January 2023 were approved as a correct record.

33. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

34. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

35. Children's Social Care Performance 2022-2023

The Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Early Help presented the report found on pages 13-36 of the agenda.

Members discussions focused on the Initial Health Assessments and the timeliness of their completion for Thurrock's children and young people within

care. They sought assurances that improvements continued to be made including the Initial Health Assessments to be made within the timescales expected.

The Chair of the Committee thanked officers for the report and for their continued focus on Initial Health Assessments.

RESOLVED

That Members note improvements and areas for improvement in Children's Social Care and note the work that is undertaken to ensure good and improving performance.

36. SET Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Report for Looked After Children, January 2022 - December 2022

The Assistant Director SET CAMHS and Partnerships talked Members through the presentation which had been circulated as part of the agenda.

Members thanked officers for the report and enquired as trauma could be part of many cases for young people who were in care, however encouragement to discuss feelings and mental health was not given until adulthood, how the services provided were made aware to the young people who may need them. The Committee heard how it was important for young people and children to be informed of such services and pending on their age they could refer themselves via their social worker should they wish to speak with somebody. It was heard how leaflets which outlined all services and the range of appointments for access had been produced and circulated.

During discussions it was queried as to whether the young people referred to within the report awaiting treatment had now been assessed and treatment provided, it was confirmed it had. Members further queried as to whether fast tracking was available if required for certain services. It was explained depending on timing and whether the young person had relapsed as to the service provided, sometimes a one of consultation to assess the young person's needs could be offered.

RESOLVED

That the SET Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Report for Children Looked After, January 2022 – December 2022 is noted and reviewed by Members.

37. Children in Care Council Update (Verbal)

The Chair of the Children in Care Council addressed Members providing them with an update from the Children in Care Council since the last meeting.

Members thanked the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Children in Care Council for attending the meeting and for the update they provided.

The Chair of the Children in Care Council explained they were looking to produce a group letter to be able to communicate better with the Council including Social Workers and perhaps when attending such meetings as the Corporate Parenting Committee. It was also commented they were looking at considering video calls when required to meet with health professionals as well as their Social Workers and even perhaps GP appointment, as ways to improve communication.

RESOLVED

That Members acknowledged the update given by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Children in Care Council.

38. The One Team, Foster Carer Association Update (Verbal)

The Chair of the One-Team Foster Carer Association provided an update for the Committee and in doing so explained the role what the Foster Carer Association. She advised that communication between Foster Carers and the Council were continuing to improve with the Assistant Director and Strategic Lead attending their meetings regularly.

Councillor Arnold, Chair of the Committee thanked the Chair and Vice-Chair for their attendance and update. He continued it was useful to hear from the Foster Carers directly and offered his thanks to all Foster Carers looking after children within the borough.

RESOLVED

That Members acknowledged the update given by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the One Team, Foster Carer Association.

39. Recruitment of Foster Carers

The Strategic Lead for Looked After Children presented the report found at pages 61-74 of the agenda.

Members thanked Officers for the report and commented they were pleased to see a range of methods to recruit Foster Carers being used. It was suggested that the event at Grays Beach in the summer could be a good place to have a stall to be able to provide information and leaflets.

RESOLVED

- 1. That Members are updated on the current progress in Fostering Recruitment**
- 2. That Members are aware of the key areas for improvements.**

3. **That Members are aware of the challenges the Local Authority is experiencing in recruiting foster carers and what we are doing to address these.**

40. Housing Options for Care Leavers

The Strategic Lead for Looked After Children presented the report found at pages 85-88 of the agenda.

During discussions the Committee heard how progress was being made to assist young people in being able to achieve Thurrock Council tenancies where appropriate and the range services which were in place if and when other arrangements were required to be made.

The Chair of the Committee thanked officers for the report and commented it was pleasing to hear that Thurrock's young people were being cared for even when they were no longer technically a Looked After Child.

RESOLVED

For the Committee to note the range of accommodations option provided to care Experienced Young people on leaving care and how Thurrock Council is discharging it's corporate parenting duty.

41. Work Programme 2022-2023

Members discussed the work programme for the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

It was agreed that the Chair would meet with the Assistant Director, Children's Social Care and Early Help and Strategic Lead, Looked After Children to decide on items for the next meeting.

The meeting finished at 9.04 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk