

**MINUTES of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on
10 July 2012 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors Oliver Gerrish (Chair), James Halden, Steve Liddiard, Angie Gaywood, Sue Gray, Mike Revell, Joy Redsell and Lynn Worrall.

Apologies: Councillors Charles Curtis (Substituted by Steve Liddiard)

In attendance: R. Minto – Service Manager (Placement Support)
P. Coke – Service Manager (Children & Families)
N. – Open Door
B. Foster – Head of Care and Targeted Outcomes
M. Boulter- Democratic Services

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. OPEN DOOR CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL

The Children in Care Council was now supported by the Open Door charity and the Committee heard an update on the actions taken since this support had started. These activities included:

- Holding sessions with the Council,
- Completing a DVD about advocacy and complaints procedures etc,
- Electing a new chair and vice-chair,
- Attending a regional meeting,
- Meeting with OFSTED inspectors,

The Children in care Council had decided to meet every few weeks and were keen to organise an event in September where all looked after children could attend. There were also aspirations to place one of the Council onto the Youth Cabinet.

Members welcomed the progress of the Children in Care Council and suggested that when this Committee met with them, it should be in an informal environment.

There was a discussion over the amount of consultation that went into the pledge that drove the work of the Children in Care Council. Officers confirmed the pledge was agreed by the council Members a year or so

ago a represented the desires and wishes of the children at that time. Councillor Revell felt that the pledge should be reviewed and come through the Corporate Parenting Committee for further discussion. Councillor Gaywood felt that the pledge should be ultimately in the decision of the children and that it could be reviewed yearly with the input of this Committee. All Members agreed that performance indicators (PIs) relating to the pledge would be welcomed at Committee to scrutinise and help Members understand the work and aims of the pledge.

RESOLVED: That:

- i) **The Committee agree a schedule for liaison with the Children in Care Council.**
- ii) **The Committee request a report on PIs to return to the Committee, including contract related issues.**

3. CORPORATE PARENTING MEMBER INDUCTION

As part of the Member training schedule for 2012-13, the Committee received a training session on Corporate Parenting.

As part of the training Members received facts and figures on the current fostering and adoption service and Members agreed to send any queries about the statistics to the Democratic Services Officer for future reports to the Committee.

4. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN STRATEGY

The Action Plan was brought to the Committee's attention and it was explained that reports would be brought to the Committee at regular intervals relating to each aspect of the Strategy.

In addition to the actions Members and Officers suggested that OFSTED feedback and reports on the Fostering and Adoption inspections would also be required at the Committee.

With regards to the Children in Care Council, the Committee agreed that they should not all attend as this could be intimidating and it was agreed that a couple of Members would attend in the first instance. It was also agreed that two meetings at the Children in Care Council and two meetings where their representatives visited this Committee per year would be ideal.

RESOLVED:

- i) **The Looked After Children Strategy and Action Plan is noted.**

- ii) **The Action points are worked into this Committee's work programme.**

5. FOSTER CARER'S ASSOCIATION REPORT

Officers discussed the establishment of a refreshed Foster Carer's Association. The Association would help carer's and the Council tap into the strengths and knowledge of foster carers. Running parallel with the association was the Council's work to produce a Foster Carer's Charter.

The Committee agreed that Foster Carer representation on the Committee would be welcomed. Although it was recognised that the Association needed to establish itself fully before the Council started liaising with it so as not to add too much pressure or obligation at the beginning of its life.

RESOLVED:

The Report is noted and support given to the future development of the association.

6. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee agreed to consider adding the following items:

- Impact of LILAC
- Adoption Service Inspection
- Education and Health
- Housing for Looked After Children including an invite to the Director of Housing
- Economic Well-being for care leavers
- Foster Care Charter

The Committee agreed to add the following items for September:

- OFSTED Inspection
- Pledge PIs and descriptions
- Adoption Inspection report
- Pantomime
- A briefing note on impact of LILAC

The Committee briefly discussed the problems of recruiting foster carers and it was explained that this was a competitive process between councils and Essex had recently increased its financial offer. Councillor Halden requested a task and finish group be set up to look at the issue of increasing foster carers and the Chair responded that this discussion should wait until the OFSTED report due at the next

meeting. Thurrock was considering a growth bid to compete in this area.

The meeting finished at 8.56pm.

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIRMAN

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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