

MINUTES of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on 15 April 2013 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors Oliver Gerrish (Chair), James Halden, Mike Revell, Joy Redsell, Charles Curtis, Angie Gaywood and Sue Gray.

In attendance: R. Minto – Service Manager (Placement Support)
P. Coke – Service Manager (Children & Families)
B. Foster – Head of Children’s Social Care
M. Boulter- Democratic Services

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

35. CORPORATE PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Councillor Halden introduced the report stating that the expenditure for the placement service warranted scrutiny by Members. It was expected to be robust but also sensitive to the information that could and could not be shared with the Committee.

Officers added that the budget for this service was one of the least controllable in the Council because the Council had a legal obligation to look after certain children and also, the courts could rule certain placements to be provided. Furthermore, there was little choice in the placements available and often the child’s particular needs could only be satisfied in very specialised placements.

Officers stated they were satisfied that the proposal would not reveal the identity of any child in care.

Councillor Gaywood felt that it would be useful to benchmark the information with other councils and officers agreed that this could be done through a particular auditing forum (CIPFA). Officers added that the council did employ a specialist to find value for money placements and barter costs. This had yielded savings in the past.

All members agreed a peer review would be welcome.

Some Members expressed their concern that they would be party to information that could reveal the identity of the child but officers stated that any sensitive information sharing would be held in exempt session and all efforts would be made to bring appropriate data to the committee. Officers clarified that they had the professional responsibility to ensure the safety of the children and the Members responsibility would be satisfied by the data provided. The

Chair added that he was party to more exempt information and would be able to ensure the appropriateness of the information received by the Committee.

Councillor Revell requested to see the data protection guidance outside the meeting.

Councillor Gaywood proposed an amendment to 2.11 of the report to read '*At the cabinet meeting in February 2013, Cllr Gerrish confirmed that he agreed with Cllr Halden's proposal to establish a regular "exempt" session in the corporate parenting committee, where members can be assured that they are setting the same standards that they would for their own children and that the council is receiving value for money from providers and placements by comparing our costs with those of other councils.*'

RESOLVED that:

- i) Corporate Parenting Committee agree to the proposals set out in 3.1 – 3.7.**
- ii) Corporate Parenting Committee task the Head of Care and Targeted Outcomes to action them in time for the start of the new municipal year, and continue to monitor and prepare information that is relevant.**
- iii) Corporate Parenting Committee ask that the chair and vice-chair set the new work programme with it in mind and be aware that each meeting may require time for exempt business.**

The meeting finished at 7.50pm.

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIRMAN

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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or alternatively e-mail mboulter@thurrock.gov.uk**