

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of Corporate Director for People
to
Cabinet and All Members of Council

on

23rd September 2014

Agenda
Item No.

Report prepared by: Sue Hadley, Head of Children's Services
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Annual Report on Corporate Parenting Group
People Scrutiny Committee
Executive Councillor: Councillor Anne Jones
A Part 1 Public Agenda Item

1. Purpose of Report

To provide an annual report for Cabinet on the work of the Corporate Parenting Group (CPG) in regards to the progress and outcomes of children who are looked after by the Council.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That Cabinet note the annual report as at Appendix 1
- 2.2. That Cabinet approve the overarching priorities set for 2014/15 as at Appendix 2
- 2.3. That Cabinet note the revised terms of reference for the CPG as at Appendix 3

3. Background

- 3.1. On 1st April 2013 the Council were looking after 237 children and young people. Of these 62.4% (148) were placed with, in house foster carers including kinship carers. 19.4% (46) were placed with external foster carers and 9.7% (23) were in residential establishments. The remaining 20 were either placed at home; placed for adoption or living independently.
- 3.2. Although the overall number of looked after children remains reasonably stable throughout the year, the children change. The Council actually cared for around 310 children last year.
- 3.3. This report covers the areas considered by the CPG throughout the year and an evaluation of current performance.

4. Other Options

There are no other options to consider in relation to this report.

5. Reasons for Recommendations

None

6. Corporate Implications

6.1. Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities

This report contributes to the Council's priority to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.

6.2. Financial Implications

Services to looked after children are delivered within the allocated resources of children's services and partner agencies.

6.3. Legal Implications

The CPG will continue to monitor any impact of recent changes. This framework includes the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England regulations 2010 (updated 2014), Adoption scorecard, Sufficiency Guidance, Staying Put guidance and Local Authority responsibilities towards young people on remand.

6.4. People Implications

Delivering high quality outcomes for children in care requires commitment from all partner agencies. They demonstrate this through their contribution to the CPG, which is a sub group within the Children's Partnership.

Particular workforce challenges remain in recruiting qualified and experienced social work staff on the front line and continuous attention is paid to implementing the workforce strategy to achieve a fully staffed and suitable trained workforce.

6.5. Property Implications

None

6.6. Consultation

The revised Terms of Reference and the CPG Priorities have been considered and agreed by the CPG. Voice4All. National Youth Advisory Service (NYAS) and the Southend Foster Families Council continue to inform the CPG and the Executive Member, of areas they wish to see change or develop.

6.7. Equalities and Diversity Implications

The needs of children in care are diverse. There is a higher population of significantly disabled children and those with special educational needs (25% of

all LAC). White British children (84.7%) are over represented in the care population compared to other ethnicities in Southend's population. There are more boys than girls in care.

6.8. Risk Assessment

None

6.9. Value for Money

Over the past 5 years the numbers of LAC has shown a steady decline. The numbers of children placed in external provision over the same period has shown a proportionately greater decline than the numbers overall. As a result savings have been secured each year in external purchasing. The most recent Audit commission report showed Southend children's services as high performing at low cost.

6.10. Community Safety Implications

None

6.11. Environmental impact:

None

7. **Background Papers**

None

8. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Annual Report 2013/14

Appendix 2 – Overarching priorities 2014/15

Appendix 3 - Terms of Reference 2014/15

Appendix 4 – Report of training event January 2014 – The journey of a child through care.