

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of Corporate Director for People
to
Cabinet
on
20th September 2016

Agenda
Item No.

Report prepared by: John O'Loughlin, Head of Children's
Services
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Annual Report on Corporate Parenting Group
People Scrutiny Committee
Executive Councillor: Councillor James Courtney
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 2016/17 as at Appendix 2
- 2.3 That Cabinet approve the Corporate Parenting Strategy for looked after children 2016/17 as at Appendix 3
- 2.4 That Cabinet note the Corporate Parenting Group Forward Plan 2016/17 as at Appendix 4

3. Background

- 3.1 On 1st April 2015 the council looked after 229 children and young people. Of these 56.5% (129) were placed with, in house foster carers including kinship carers. 22.6% (52) were placed with external foster carers and 11.9% (27) were in residential establishments. The remaining 21 were either placed at home; placed for adoption or living independently.
- 3.2 During 2015/16, the number of looked after children increased to 262 by the end of March 2016. The impact of this has been monitored closely by the CPG throughout the year to include the impact of this on staff within children's services.

- 3.3 Performance monitoring is a central role of the CPG. This report provides information in relation to the range of indicators considered. The CPG monitors at every meeting those areas that either performed above or below the corporate targets set.
- 3.4 Following the OFSTED inspection 2016, the strategic nature of the CPG has been considered in depth. As a part of the Improvement Plan, there will need to be changes to the manner in which the CPG holds the officers to account and monitors the driving through of improvements. Therefore, whilst the attached are the documents as agreed by the group in April 2016, they have since been amended as a result of the Improvement Plan, also being presented to Cabinet, and further changes to the group's Terms of Reference and to the monitoring forward plan may be necessary. As such, further amendments will be presented to cabinet once the improvement plan is finalised and agreed.

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 and is linked to the Children & Young People's Plan 2015/16.

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

CPG will continue to monitor any impact of 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 of the Success for all Group.

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 suitably trained workforce.

6.5 Property Implications

None

- 6.6 Consultation
The revised CPG Priorities and Corporate Parenting Strategy have been considered and agreed by the CPG. Voice4All, National Youth Advisory Service (NYAS) and the Southend Foster Families Community 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 (88.5%) are over represented in the care population compared to other ethnicities in Southend's population. There are 59% boys and 41% girls in care.
- 6.8 Risk Assessment
None
- 6.9 Value for Money
Over the past 5 years the numbers of LAC had shown a steady decline, however in the past year there has been an increase of 14% in care numbers in Southend. The numbers of children placed in external provision over the same period has shown proportionately a decline. 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.
- Due to rises in the cost of some external provision along with the rise in the number of older teenagers requiring residential placements over the past year, there is currently an estimated deficit in purchasing budgets which will be monitored closely over the coming year.
- 6.10 Community Safety Implications
None
- 6.11 Environmental impact:
None
7. Background Papers
None
8. Appendices
Appendix 1 – Annual Report 2015/16
Appendix 2 – Overarching priorities 2016/17
Appendix 3 – Corporate Parenting Strategy for looked after children 2016/17
Appendix 4 – Terms of Reference 2016/17