

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) held at
1.00 pm on Tuesday, 20 January 2015

Present:

Cabinet Member: Councillor Ruane

Shadow Cabinet Member: Councillor Lepoidevin

Other Members Present: Councillor Innes

Employees (by Directorate):

People: P. Fahy, S. Giles, J. Sembi, D. Wilson

Resources: A. Bassett, S. Bennett, S. Lal, J. Newman

Public Business

10. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

11. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that approval be given to exclude the press and public under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 for consideration of the private report indicated in Minute 18 below relating to “Supported Accommodation for Young People Aged 16-24” on the grounds that that item involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as it contains information relating to the identity, financial or business affairs of an organisation (including the authority holding that information) and the amount of expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Council under a particular contract for the supply of goods or services: and that in all circumstances of the cases, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

12. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member held on 15 October, 2014 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

13. Options to Increase the Number of Looked After Children Accessing Council Apprenticeships

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of Resources which indicated that the Council currently has a well-established Apprenticeship

programme in place. The report made recommendations as to how the Council could adopt measures to encourage and support the participation of current and former Looked After Children (LAC) in the programme.

The Council developed its apprenticeship programme in 2011 and over a number of years discussions have taken place as to whether the Council should take measures to try to increase the number of LAC accessing apprenticeships within the Council. Nationally, there has been an on-going debate about increasing the number of LAC applying for and accessing apprenticeship programme. The Council currently has 102 apprentices on its Apprenticeship programme, of which 6% have LAC status.

The report detailed work already done to support by the Council's Entry to Employment Team working in partnership with Route 21, CSWP, Careers Guidance and other agencies to promote the benefits of the Council's Apprenticeship programme and indicated that, in order to support LAC in gaining apprenticeships, the Entry to Employment Team have developed a pre-apprenticeship training programme called "Access to Apprenticeships". This programme currently runs for two weeks and focuses on employability skills, confidence building, motivation and aspirations.

The report also detailed a number of proposals and initiatives which aimed to introduce a phased approach to reaching a target of 20% of all apprenticeship applications to its scheme being from LAC by 2016/17.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People approves:-

- 1. That the Council will aim to increase the overall number of Looked After Children applying for Council apprenticeships to 20% by 2017 with an interim target of 10% by the end of 2016.**
- 2. That the Council will expand the current Access to Apprenticeship programme to include experience placements up to 2 months in length and additional education components. Looked After Children will be supported to apply for the programme. This will enable them to gain knowledge and skills to support their application to access a Council apprenticeship.**
- 3. That the Council will introduce a "Buddy System" where Looked After Children who have successfully completed six months of their apprenticeship programme, can be given the opportunity to act as a "Buddy" to a new Looked After Child starting on their apprenticeship.**
- 4. That all Looked After Children will be given a full financial assessment before starting their apprenticeship and may be able to access support via a hardship grant under the Children's Act 1989.**

5. **That the Council will develop an apprenticeship talent pool, that will enable Looked After Children, who have successfully completed their Access to Apprenticeship programme, to register their interest for future apprenticeship vacancies across the Council.**
6. **That the Council will improve its communication strategy surrounding its Apprenticeship programme with particular focus on increasing the number of Looked After Children joining the programme.**

14. **Supported Accommodation for Young People Aged 16-24**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of People which indicated that the City Council has a statutory duty to provide Supported Accommodation to persons under 18 who have been assessed as requiring accommodation or because they are owed a duty under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and duties towards homeless people under the Housing Act 1996.

In 2013, following a period of lengthy consultation with all stakeholders, the City Council tendered for seven Supported Accommodation contracts to meet the varying needs of these young people. The contracts were implemented in December 2013 with the exception of one of the lots (referred to as Lot 7) that was not awarded due to bids not being received at an acceptable cost.

The contracts introduced significant changes to how this area of service operated; changes included the introduction of a single point of access and the differentiation of different levels of service to correspond with the different levels of need presenting.

Through the tender process, capacity was commissioned for 160 people in accommodation and 70 with floating support. However, since contract commencement, demand has been significantly more than available supply, which has resulted in a number of people being placed in alternative accommodation, including Bed and Breakfast, with some additional contracting taking place in order to provide capacity to meet this demand. This has placed significant financial and service demands on this area and, as a result, the expenditure has been in excess of the allocated budget. Statutory guidance confirms that Bed and Breakfast accommodation is not suitable for under 18 year olds.

Recently, one contracted provider has informed the City Council of their intention to terminate their contract from 31 January, 2015. In order to continue to provide viable Supported Accommodation beyond this date, a number of arrangements for additional capacity have been made. The fact that one contract is being terminated, plus contract Lot 7 not being awarded presents an opportunity to consider what is now required from Supported Accommodation for high level needs in order for the City Council to meet its statutory duties within the available resources.

The report contained actions and proposals to achieve short term stability post 31 January, 2015 and a longer term more robust service model for those with high needs within available resources.

A corresponding private report, detailing confidential financial matters was also submitted for consideration (Minute 18 below refers).

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member approves:-

- (1) The extension of the existing short term contracts to 31 March 2016 to provide service capacity in respect of young people with high level needs to ensure the City Council can continue to discharge its statutory responsibilities.**
- (2) The development of a revised model for those requiring Supported Accommodation that have high level needs in order to ensure that available resources and service models are appropriately focussed and that people are supported to be fully independent.**
- (3) The varying of the existing Homelessness contract Between Coventry City Council and the Salvation Army to provide accommodation with support for 16-24 year olds.**
- (4) That on delivery of Recommendation 3 above, that Bed and Breakfast accommodation is only used for people eligible for supported accommodation aged 18-24 on a short term basis where the alternative would be street homelessness.**
- (5) That officers be requested to submit reports to the Cabinet Member at his meeting scheduled in March 2015 on:-**
 - (i) A Policy regarding the appropriate use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation by the City Council.**
 - (ii) An Action Plan detailing the level of support offered by various agencies to Supported Accommodation providers to better enable them to manage issues including substance misuse, child sexual exploitation, anti-social behaviour and access to education, training and employment.**
- (6) That a report providing an update on the proposed revised model for those requiring Supported Accommodation that have high levels needs be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People at an appropriate time prior to the commencement of the tendering process.**

15. **Comments, Compliments and Complaints 2013/14 - Children's Social Care Services**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of People which provided details of the comments, compliments and complaints received during 2013/14, the themes that arise from them and the learning and service improvements that have resulted from the feedback received.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member endorses and approves the publishing of this report on the Council's website.

16. Outstanding Issues Report

The Cabinet Member noted a report of the Executive Director of Resources that identified those issues on which further reports had been requested and were outstanding, so that progress could be monitored.

17. Any Other Public Business

There were no other items of public business.

18. Supported Accommodation for Young People Aged 16-24

Further to Minute 14 above, the Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of People which detailed confidential financial matters in relation to Supported Accommodation for Young People Aged 16-24.

- (1) The extension of the existing short term contracts to 31 March 2016 to provide service capacity in respect of young people with high level needs to ensure the City Council can continue to discharge its statutory responsibilities.**
- (2) The development of a revised model for those requiring Supported Accommodation that have high level needs in order to ensure that available resources and service models are appropriately focussed and that people are supported to be fully independent.**
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providers to better enable them to manage issues including substance misuse, child sexual exploitation, anti-social behaviour and access to education, training and employment.

- (6) That a report providing an update on the proposed revised model for those requiring Supported Accommodation that have high levels needs be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People at an appropriate time prior to the commencement of the tendering process.**

19. Any Other Private Business

There were no other items of private business.

(Meeting closed at 2.20 p.m.)