

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Children and Young People held at
11.00 am on Monday, 2 December 2019

Present:

Members: Councillor P Seaman (Cabinet Member)
Councillor J Lepoidevin (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Employees (by Directorate):

People: J Gregg, P Smith, H Rennocks, L Walsh

Place: U Patel

Apologies: Councillor B Gittins

Public Business

17. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

18. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th October, 2019 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

19. Review and Extension of Coventry City Council's Community Short Breaks Offer

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which sought approval to extend the current community short breaks service offer to different locations across the city and facilitate extra sessions.

Local authorities are required by law to provide a range of short breaks for children who have disabilities. Short breaks give children and young people who have disabilities the opportunity to join in with an enjoyable activity away from their parents and carers whilst providing a break from caring responsibilities.

The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 state that a local authority must provide, so far as is reasonably practicable, a range of services which is sufficient to assist carers to provide care or to do so more effectively.

In Coventry, the duty to provide short breaks is exercised through a range of service provisions including community short breaks. This service offers group activities to children and young people aged 5-17 who have a disability and live in Coventry.

The proposal was to extend the current service offer to different locations across the city and facilitate extra sessions, within the existing budget envelope.

All children and young people who have a disability and live in Coventry are entitled to receive a short break, there are different types of short breaks available for children and families.

The report focused on the community short breaks service which is delivered by Coventry City Council. Activities are recreational and take place mainly at the Broad Park Centre and during school holidays, other community venues are utilised.

The report outlined two options. The first, finding alternative voluntary sector providers to deliver community short breaks on behalf of the Council generated very little interest and proved to be a non starter. Option 2, the recommended option was for community short breaks to continue to be run by the City Council by extending the offer within the existing budget envelope of £98k.

Parents and carers have expressed that they want the activities offered to be facilitated at a range of locations across the city, to reduce the need travel to the Broad Park Centre. They would also like a broader range of activities. The plan was to extend the provision to a range of locations across the city.

In accordance with the principles of coproduction set out in the Special Educational Needs & Disability Code of Practice 2015, the sessions would be co-designed by children, young people, parents and carers. The proposal was to transform the current service from delivering recreational activities into a service which delivered activities for children and young people that are aspirational, and outcome focused.

The Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member welcomed the report and were delighted that the service is to be maintained by the City Council and be extended to capture a wider cohort of children. Members praised and thanked officers for the work undertaken in this regard.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, having considered the options set out in the report, approves the proposal set out in Option 2 to maintain and extend the short breaks provision as a service provided by Coventry City Council

20. **Annual Adoption Report 2018-19**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Children's Services which presented the Annual Adoption Report 2018-19.

The Annual Adoption Report documents the adoption activity in Children's Services for the year 2018/19. This included a report of the activity of the Regional Adoption Agency, which Coventry City Council is part of.

An annual adoption report is a statutory requirement and provided an opportunity for the report to be considered by the relevant Council Governance processes.

Adoption work is open to continual consultation. Adopters are canvassed to offer their opinion in the development of services, and some are part of a mentoring scheme. This allowed feedback on practice in 'real time' which means that plans

and services could continually be adjusted. Older adopted children also figure in the groups delivered through Adoption Central England (ACE). This included an annual picnic for adopted children and their families. All the formal and informal processes contribute to the way adoption services are evolving.

An Executive Board oversees the work of ACE. The membership of the Board includes representation from Coventry City Council which in turn allows a Coventry perspective to be included in the work of ACE.

The report has been considered by the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) and the Corporate Parenting Board. Both meetings gave very positive feedback.

The Cabinet Member welcomed the report and acknowledged that adoption work was now starting to show an improvement across the City. The adoption rates had increased, the process was quicker and there was a wider range of adopters to call on which was a benefit of working with ACE.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People having considered the report, endorses the progress of adoption work across Coventry City for the year 2018/19. This includes partnership working with Adoption Central England (ACE).

21. **Report on the outcomes of the Corporate Parenting Board 2018/19**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which demonstrated the activity of the Corporate Parenting Board for the year 2018/19 and how the Board has contributed to improving outcomes for Coventry's Looked After Children.

The Corporate Parenting Board acts as the Cabinet Advisory Panel for looked after children. It was made up of members of the Council but it is supplemented by a number of other individuals from the Council and its partners. Importantly, it also has representation from children and young people. The meetings and work of the Board is private and therefore often goes unnoticed. The purpose of the report was to bring the work of the Board into the public domain and gives opportunity for public scrutiny.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires the Council to take account of corporate parenting principles. These were reviewed and supported through the Corporate Parenting Board.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People approves the publication of the Corporate Parenting Board 2018/19 report.

22. **Outstanding Issues Report**

There were no outstanding issues.

23. **Any Other Business**

There were no other items of business.

(Meeting closed at 11.25 am)