
4 December 2014

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member (Policy and Leadership) - Councillor Mrs Lucas OBE

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director - People

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Appointment of Special Advisor on Child Protection Issues to the Leader of the Council

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

This report deals with an extension of the appointment of Mr Donald Hamilton (retired Designated Family Judge) as the Special Advisor on Child Protection to the Leader of Council.

It is proposed that as the improvement plan for Children's Social Care in Coventry continues its implementation the Leader of the Council's oversight of the increased measures being introduced to protect those children in Coventry who are at risk of harm or suffering harm would be enhanced by the continued support of Mr Donald Hamilton as her Special Advisor on Child Protection.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Members (Policy and Leadership) is recommended to:

1. Endorse the extension of the appointment of Mr Donald Hamilton as the Special Advisor on Child Protection to the Leader of the Council until 31st December 2015.
2. Recommend to the Corporate Parenting Board (Cabinet Advisory Panel) the invitation of Mr Donald Hamilton, in his role of Special Advisor on Child Protection to the Leader, to

attend the Corporate Parenting Board, and other meetings of relevant council bodies where permitted.

List of Appendices included:

None

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Appointment of Special Advisor on Child Protection Issues to the Leader of the Council

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 On the 10th October 2013 an Extraordinary Meeting of Council was held to consider the Serious Case Review Report into the death of Daniel Pelka. Daniel Pelka (a Coventry child) was murdered in March 2012 by his mother and her partner); Daniel has sustained a long history of abuse leading up to his death. A Multi- Agency Serious Case Review was commissioned to investigate and analyse the circumstances into Daniels abuse and death.
- 1.2 The Serious Case Review made 15 recommendations to local partners, covering domestic abuse, referral and assessment processes, training of staff, practise in schools and health as well as the requirement to disseminate messages to the Children's workforce.
- 1.3 In addition to the resolutions made by Council at the Extraordinary Council meeting the Leader advised the Council that she had appointed His Honour Judge Hamilton (Retired) to be her Special Advisor on Child Protection Issues, with immediate effect. Mr Donald Hamilton, as a retired Designated Family Judge, has a wealth of experience and knowledge around Child Protection and is ideally placed to offer the Leader an independent and experienced consultative role in this challenging area. Mr Donald Hamilton has the authority and experience to command the respect both internally within the City Council and externally with a range of partner organisations such as the West Midlands Police, Health Services and other agencies.
- 1.4 In March 2014 an Ofsted inspection of Children's Services found the provision of services (including Child Protection) as inadequate. A number of arrangements were put in place in order to provide robust governance and oversight of the delivery of improvements to Children's Social Care and Child Protection in the City.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 The Leader of the Council has benefitted from the expert advice of Mr Donald Hamilton over the last year. One option is to discontinue this arrangement and for the Leader to no longer have on going access to this particular specialist advice. This option is not recommended as the improvement plan for children's services remains at an early stage and the work required to improve Child Protection Services in the City continues at pace.
- 2.2 The recommended option is to extend the appointment of Mr Donald Hamilton as special advisor to the Leader for a further 12 months to allow the Leader access to this valuable resource as the implementation plan around Child Protection Services in the City continues. Also to recommend to the Corporate Parenting Board (Cabinet Advisory Panel) the invitation of Mr Donald Hamilton, in his role of Special Advisor on Child Protection to the Leader, to attend the Corporate Parenting Board, and other meetings of relevant council bodies where permitted.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 None

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 The appointment of Mr Donald Hamilton as specialised advisor to the Leader would be implemented from today for a further 12 months (until 31st December 2015).

5 **Comments from Executive Director, Resources**

5.1 **Financial implications**

For undertaking the role of Special Advisor to the Leader Mr Donald Hamilton receives an honorarium of £6,000 for the year. This will be funded from within existing budgets.

5.2 **Legal implications**

Appropriate measures are in place concerning protecting the confidentiality of the work undertaken by Mr Hamilton

6 **Other implications. None**

6.1 **How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

6.1.1 Protecting vulnerable children and families is a key priority for the City Council and the role of Mr Donald Hamilton as specialised advisor to the Leader of the Council will support in the Leader's oversight of this priority.

6.2 **How is risk being managed?**

The improvement plan for Children's Services receives independent oversight from other key individuals and boards; including the independently chaired Improvement Board .

6.3 **What is the impact on the organisation?**

None

6.4 **Equalities / EIA**

None

6.5 **Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

None

6.6 **Implications for partner organisations?**

Improvements in Child Protection across the City is a multi – agency agenda.

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Brian Walsh	Executive Director	People	09/11/2014	20/11/2014
Members: Councillor Ann Lucas (Cllr Townshend on her behalf)	Leader	Policy and Leadership	20/11/2014	21/11/2014

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