

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) held at**  
**1.00 pm on Tuesday, 7 April 2015**

Present:

Cabinet Member: Councillor Ruane

Shadow Cabinet Member: Councillor Lepoidevin

Employees (by Directorate):

Chief Executives: J. Forde, N. Inglis, J. Moore

People: J. Aubury, A. Butler, K. Coughlan, C. Fooks, A. Harley, J. Moffat, A. Reynolds, K. Ritchee, J. Sembi

Resources: S. Bennett, G. Haynes, G. Holmes, R. Sugars

## **Public Business**

### **32. Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **33. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 March, 2015 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

### **34. Supported Accommodation for Young People Aged 16-24 Years - Multi-Agency Action Plan**

Further to Minute 14/14, the Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of People which indicated that Supported Accommodation is commissioned by the City Council to provide accommodation and support to young people aged 16-24, including Care Leavers, young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, Children in Need, Looked After Children, young people at risk of or involved in offending and Teenage Parents who are pregnant or have children. New contracts for Supported Accommodation were implemented in December 2013 and introduced significant changes to how this type of service operates, including the introduction of a single point of access via the Council's Placements Team.

Providers are also required under the contract to contribute to positive outcomes for young people and their further economic well-being by encouraging and facilitating their health, well-being, social inclusion and participation in further educational, training or work opportunities. To help achieve these outcomes,

providers are expected to work collaboratively with the City Council and a range of other partner agencies and services, including Route 21, Placements Team, Children and Family First Service, mental health services, Integrated Youth Support Services, health professionals, housing and other services.

To facilitate greater multi-agency working between providers and other services, a multi-agency action plan, which was appended to the report, has been developed, which focusses on maintaining young people's placement stability by improving their lifestyle and behaviour, reducing evictions, encouraging them to live healthier lives, and supporting them to engage in education, employment and training.

The Cabinet Member questioned officers on the content of the report, particularly in relation to:-

- How progress is measured against the action plan and what evidence is provided to show this progress
- How the "Voice of a Child" is fed into this process
- How regularly the contracts are monitored and by whom.

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

- (1) Notes the contents of the action plan as appended to the report**
- (2) Requests that officers arrange an informal meeting for the Cabinet Member and Shadow Cabinet Member with a Supported Accommodation provider and other relevant parties, at their venue, to consider progress in delivery against the action plan.**
- (3) That any specifics relating to providers be considered by the Corporate Parenting Board.**

**35. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Redesign Process Update**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of People which provided an update on the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) redesign process.

Five commissioning organisations from Coventry and Warwickshire have formed a "CAMHS Redesign Project" to develop a sustainable CAMHS model. National organisation and expert champions, Young Minds, have been commissioned to engage local stakeholders in the development of a new model. In their interim report, Young Minds have identified six key themes arising from the engagement work to date, including the benefits of a more joined up system and more mental health promotion (mirroring the "Future Minds" report – Department of Health and NHS England, March, 2015). Based on the key themes, Young Minds have developed an outcomes framework to convey a draft version of a potential future model. Young Minds are developing their initial findings through undertaking a

prioritisation process that considers their recommendations in the context of the resources available.

The Cabinet Member questioned officers on the content of the report, particularly in relation to:-

- The current level of demand for the service and data on drugs treatment for children
- Current and proposed targets for waiting times for treatments and the difference between “assessments” and “treatments”
- The timescale for the implementation of the new model
- Funding issues

The Cabinet Member noted that this issue would be considered by Scrutiny prior to the tendering process.

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

- (1) Notes the finding from the engagement work with stakeholders undertaken to date**
- (2) Supports the progression of the initial findings in the development of a final model to be developed and delivered within available resources**
- (3) Requests that information relating to the number of referrals to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, together with the expected number of referrals, be included in future reports on this issue**

**36. Recommendations from the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Task and Finish Group on Fostering**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of People which indicated that the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board established a task and finish group to look at in more detail the “offer” made to foster carers to support the on-going recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers.

The report detailed the work carried out by the task and finish group, who had considered the following areas:-

- Local context and background
- Feedback from foster carers
- Marketing and recruitment strategy
- Improving the “Offer” to foster carers – skills fee per child

- Council Tax rebate/reduction
- Non-financial support offer, including professional development
- Foster Friendly Employer Policy

The Cabinet Member was informed of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board's consideration of this matter at their meeting on 25 March, 2015 (their Minute 54/14 refers)

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People approves the following recommendations from the Education and Children's Scrutiny Board:-

- 1) That the proposed fee structure for a skills fee per child is implemented following consideration of feedback from foster carers. (This has already been agreed further to the Cabinet Member Children and Young People Minute 27/14 refers)
- 2) Review the end of year statement and advice provided to foster carers for fostering income and tax implications, to ensure foster carers can easily extract the relevant information for their annual tax returns.
- 3) That additional research and monitoring is done on:
  - a) the affect that any potential drop in income has on the number of staying put places offered to young people over 18,
  - b) the number of young people who would like to stay put and aren't able to as their carers don't offer staying put places,
  - c) the statutory requirements and associated funding implications of staying put places.
- 4) That a council tax rebate for Foster Carers in Coventry is not considered at this time.
- 5) That the Council pursue becoming a Fostering Friendly Employer, ensuring that this is additional to any other family friendly policy the Council may have.
- 6) That crèche and parking availability whilst training for Foster Carers should be investigated. Existing childcare provision should be the preferred option and 2 year old entitlement should also be considered.
- 7) To support the Foster Care Support Offer focused on a "team around the child" approach.
- 8) To strengthen the team around the child ethos and ensure everybody understands the value and responsibilities of each other's roles.

- 9) **To explore opportunities to influence national social work training programmes to support this culture shift.**
- 10) **That the “team around the child” approach is used to appraise social workers.**
- 11) **That the Education and Children’s Service Scrutiny Board consider the policy statement on delegations before it goes to the Cabinet Member, at their first meeting of the Municipal Year 2015/16.**
- 12) **That future reports include details relating to the recruitment and retention of foster carers.**

**37. Under 18 Conceptions - Current Situation in Coventry**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Public Health which indicated that Coventry has worked hard to embed a downward trend in the under 16 and under 18 conception rates since the implementation of the national Teenage Pregnancy Strategy in 1998 which stated that Coventry should reduce its rate by 55% as it was much higher than other areas whose target was 50%.

The Coventry under 16 and under 18 conceptions rates continue to be higher than the National and West Midlands average. However, three years moving average data suggests that the City is sustaining a downward trend in the under 16 and under 18 conception rates. Three years moving average data is used to smooth out short-term fluctuations and highlight longer-term trends, particularly where small numbers are involved (as is the case with teenage conceptions).

Coventry had a much higher rate of teenage conceptions than many other local authorities in the West Midlands by 2008, but since then, has shown a decrease in rates, which has been faster than the decrease in national rates. Coventry City council and wider partners continue to maintain a focus on reducing the rate of teenage conceptions through provision and on-going review of services, but importantly, also through looking at how all children and young people, including those most vulnerable, can be supported to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

The Cabinet Member questioned officers on the content of the report, particularly in relation to:-

- The number of outreach hours and services offered, particularly in Supported Accommodation, and accessibility to services
- The collection of data from schools
- Comparisons with other similar size Local Authority and the reasons why Coventry’s rate was higher to start with

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

- (1) **Notes the review of the current data available regarding teenage pregnancy in Coventry and endorses the actions**

**outlined in the summary of the report, aimed at continuing to reduce the teenage conception rate in Coventry**

- (2) That officers be requested to investigate the possibility of commissioning or using available academic support to undertake research on the local factors contributing to Under 18 conception levels.**

**38. Workforce Development for Children's Social Care: An Update**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of People that provided an update on the progress made against workforce development actions within the Children's Services Improvement Plan and which also provided an update on learning and development strategies and interventions which are planned and currently taking place across the Children's Social Care workforce.

Over the past 18 months, a range of learning and development programmes have been offered to the Children's Social Care workforce and the City Council needs to ensure that all learning and development interventions moving forward are linked to the Ofsted Improvement Plan, feedback from the supervision process, the performance management/appraisal process, observations of practice and internal quality assurance audit mechanisms. Workforce reform and development is a major element in improving outcomes for children, young people and families.

The Cabinet Member questioned officers on aspects of the report including:-

- How the appraisal system can identify staff who wish to pursue social care qualifications
- Opportunities to offer training at a regional level, in conjunction with other organisations

**RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People approves the approach currently being adopted by Workforce Services with regard to the learning and Development Strategy being adopted by the Children's Social Care workforce.**

**39. Outstanding Issues Report**

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People 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.

**40. Any Other Business**

There were no other items of urgent public business.

#### 41. **Coventry Children's Centres - Progress Update**

Further to Minute 21/14, the Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of People which outlined progress to date to address actions identified by the Cabinet Member at his meeting on 2 February, 2015, where the current status of Ofsted outcomes for Children's Centres and progress against actions to address recommendations in order for the Centres to achieve "Good" or "Outstanding" were discussed. It was expected that all Children's Centres would be inspected in 2015.

The Cabinet Member questioned officers extensively on a number of issues, particularly in relation to:-

- The current position for each Centre on data registration rates; how those figures are collected and presented; how they will be assessed by Ofsted; progress on this matter since the last meeting; and when data collection and analysis would be completed and be up to date
- The reasons for undertaking and the outcomes of the mock inspections held at Tommies and Flutterbies Children's Centres
- How the Centres are seeking to integrate with health partners to share information and deliver efficient and effective services that avoid duplication and ensure swifter access to appropriate services for families.
- The role that health partners could play in Ofsted inspections
- Engagement with primary schools and head teachers and the need to refresh at head teachers meetings the importance of this engagement

The Cabinet Member indicated his concern that he was not assured by the progress on this matter since the last meeting.

**RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, in noting with concern that not all the actions required at the last meeting on this matter held on 2 February, 2015 had been completed,:-**

- (1) Requests that officers continue to work to develop the Children's Centre Service Area in order to move Centres to "Good" or "Outstanding" at future inspections**
- (2) Commissions, as a matter of urgency, the undertaking of mock inspections/ assessments of Ofsted readiness at every Children's Centre, these to be carried out in as short a timescale as possible, focusing on the findings of the last Ofsted Inspection for each of those Centres and on data registration**
- (3) Requests, as a matter of urgency, that the Head of Regulated Services (Looked After Children and Early Years) contacts the Chief Executives of both University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire and the Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership**

**Trust, on behalf of the Cabinet Member, seeking a commitment that their employees fully participate in and attend Ofsted inspections.**

**42. Adoption Score Card Report**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of People which provided an update on progress made in respect of the Council's performance in relation to the Adoption Score Card as at February, 2015 and the on the recruitment of adopters.

A key priority for the Council is to improve the timeliness of the decision making for children who require adoption as well as the recruitment and approval of adopters for Coventry children. The recruitment and approval of adoptive families will be targeted at those who are able to meet the needs of older children and siblings from April, 2015. There has been an increase in the number of children adopted and since April 2013, there has been a significant narrowing of the gap between Coventry's performance with an average of 529 days and the national target (547) days in achieving adoption for children.

The Adoption Score Card had been considered by the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) (their Minute 52/14 refers).

The Cabinet Member questioned officers on issue contained in the report, particularly in relation to:-

- Budget forecasting
- Engagement with a wide range of faith communities to try and identify potential adoptive families

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

- (1) Notes the improvement made in the timeliness of decision making for children requiring adoption and matching and placing of children with their adoptive families**
- (2) Approves the recommendation made by the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) to target and prioritise the recruitment of adopters to those who are able to meet the needs of older children and siblings**
- (3) Approves a review of the adoption allowances**
- (4) Agrees to further work being carried out within the service to address the fall out of the adoption grant**

(Meeting closed at 3.45 p.m.)