

Appendix 1

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

Executive Summary:

Following a decision at their meeting on 22 October 2014, the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board agreed to establish a task and finish group to look in more detail at the "offer" made to foster carers to support the on-going recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers.

It was recognised by the Board that not only was the recruitment of more in-house foster carers important, there was a need to improve the financial and support "offer" in order to retain existing foster carers.

The task and finish group 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

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member Children and Young People is recommended to accept the following recommendations from the Education and Children's Services 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)*
- 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 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.