

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Children and Young People held at
2.00 pm on Tuesday, 8 December 2015

Present:

Cabinet Member: Councillor E Ruane

Employees (by Directorate):

People: F Doyle, S Giles, J Gregg, J Sembi, R Sugars,
D Wilson

Resources: S Bennett, J Newman

Apologies: Councillor A Andrews, Shadow Cabinet Member

Public Business

22. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

23. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September, 2015 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

24. Coventry Children's Centres - Quarterly Progress Update

Further to Minute 19/15, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People considered a report of the Executive Director of People which detailed progress to date and action taken to address issues previously identified in order for the current status of Ofsted outcomes for Children's Centres in Coventry to progress to "Good" or "Outstanding" in future inspections.

The report identified progress in the following areas:-

- Development of systems to closely monitor progress and to offer support and challenge to Children's Centre leadership teams, including refining data provided for children's centres and introducing a target setting tool.
- Introduction of an Early Childhood service model which has had a marked increase in registration rates.

- Investigations into the possibility of providing Apprenticeships (the Cabinet Member noted that this would be across the whole of the Early Years Service)
- Key areas of focus as identified in the Children's Centre Improvement Strategy

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

- The provision of nursery care in Children's Centres by Adult Education and how quality of that provision is monitored
- Recruitment and retention issues caused by Children's Centres staff being on short term contracts
- The performance management of Family First Teams

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

- 1) **Notes the progress made against the recommendations from the last meeting on 15 September, 2015 and 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) **Requests that the Director of Children's Services be requested to investigate extending temporary contracts for Children's Centre staff for a period of 6 months**
- 3) **Requests that officers submit a report on Performance Management within Family First Teams to a future meeting.**

25. **Comments, Compliments and Complaints 2014-15 - Children's Social Care Services**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of People appended to which was the Annual Report 2014/15 for Children's Social Care Services which provided details of the comments, compliments and complaints received during 2014/15, the themes that arise from them and the learning and service improvements that have resulted from the feedback received.

The Cabinet Member questioned officers on the issues identified in the report, particularly in relation to:-

- Timescales for responses
- Process in place to ensure complaints are responded to

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People endorses and approves the publication of the Annual Report 2014/15 for Children's Social Care Services, Comments Compliments and Complaints

26. **Staying Put Policy**

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People considered a report of the Executive Director of People which sought approval to the Staying Put Policy, a copy of which was appended to the report.

When a young person becomes 18 they are no longer in the care of the Local Authority, however the local authority will continue to be involved in providing “leaving care” services and this can include arranging for a young person to continue to live with former foster parents. This is a different arrangement from fostering and is known as “Staying Put”. Under a Staying Put scheme, young people continue to live with their former foster carer(s) after they reach the age of 18 until they are ready to move onto independence, or reach the age of 21. There is the potential for them to remain until 25 if they are continuing in education.

Within Coventry there has been a history of Care Leavers Staying Put, as the benefits of remaining with their former foster carers are clear, particularly where young people are vulnerable, not ready to move to independence or continuing in education. This arrangement started under Coventry’s “Support Carers Scheme” and continued under the “Staying Put Scheme”. However, it has been identified that the scheme and accompanying guidance needed review in order to reflect changes to the legal framework, and to more clearly set out the implications for foster carers of entering into a “staying put” arrangement.

The purpose of the refreshed Staying Put policy is therefore to strengthen the scheme in Coventry by improving the information, advice and guidance to foster carers and providing a clear fee structure linked to an annual review. The Staying Put scheme is part of a wider offer to foster carers under the Council’s recruitment and retention strategy. It seeks to recognise the very valuable role they play in preparing young people for independence.

The Cabinet Member questioned officers on aspects of the report, particularly in relation to extending the Staying Put policy to children in children’s homes.

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

- 1) Approves the Staying Put policy and procedure as set out in the document attached to the report**
- 2) Endorses the application of the scheme to new Staying Put carers from 18 December, 2015**
- 3) Endorses the proposal to produce a children’s and young person’s guide to the scheme**
- 4) Requests the Director of Children’s Services to write to the following on behalf of the Cabinet Member:-**
 - a) To appropriate staff recognising and thanking them for their contribution to work carried out in producing the Policy.**

- b) **To the appropriate Minister regarding extending the duty to provide Staying Put support to young people residing in children's homes, including addressing the financial implications of extending the duty,**

27. **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.

28. **Any Other Business**

There were no items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.30 p.m.)