

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Children and Young People held at
1.00 pm on Thursday, 16 January 2020

Present:

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

Employees (by Directorate):

People: J Gregg, P Smith

Place: U Patel

Apologies: Councillor B Gittins

Public Business

24. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

25. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2019 were signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

26. Coventry Fostering Service Annual Report 2018-19

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) that provided information on the work undertaken by the Fostering Service between April 2018 and March 2019.

The performance of Coventry Fostering Service is critical to the delivery of high quality local placements that can meet the diverse needs of Coventry's looked after children.

The report summarised the activity of the service over the past 12 months. It highlighted the challenge of adequately recruiting and retaining the number and type of carers who could meet vulnerable children's needs. It also emphasised the challenge of developing, supervising and supporting approved foster carers to meet the often complex range of needs that looked after children have. The report identified the growth in the number of children placed in the internal foster care estate resulting in a decrease in external placements. Furthermore, the report outlined an increase in connected persons fostering arrangements and detailed the ongoing work of the Fostering Transformation Project.

The aim of the Fostering Transformation Project is both to enable more looked after children to be placed within or close to Coventry and to decrease the reliance on more expensive, externally commissioned, placements.

At the end of 2018/19, 232 of Coventry's looked after children were placed with mainstream foster carers approved by Coventry City Council. This was a growth in the provision of these placements through the year with the total at the end of the previous year having been 189. The proportion of Coventry children placed with externally commissioned carers also fell during the year from 219 to 178.

It was reported that whilst the number of looked after children remained stable, there was a marked increase in the number who were looked after within Coventry. Added to this, Coventry was now bucking the trend of recruiting carers which was a huge boost for the City. However, it had to be acknowledged that there was still a comprehensive list of further work to develop and consolidate the service further.

The Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member commended the improvements made and acknowledged the work undertaken by the current management to bring about the improvements.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Children and Young accepts the Fostering Service Annual report for 2018/19.

27. Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020-22

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which presented the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020-2022.

Coventry City Council and all its partners always put children at the very heart of practice, this was especially so regarding our looked after children where corporate parenting was a strong feature of all organisations. The Coventry Corporate Parenting Strategy is a key document that outlines the way in which all partners would work together to make sure our looked after children and care leavers had the best outcomes. This was reflected in the One Coventry approach to delivering services to children across the city. The Corporate Parenting Strategy has been reviewed and updated and was now ready for publication.

The Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member welcomed the report and thanked officers for the work undertaken and acknowledged the work of the Corporate Parenting Board.

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

- 1. Considered and endorsed the refreshed Corporate Parenting Strategy.**
- 2. Requested that the Corporate Parenting Strategy be shared with everyone across the Council as a reminder that we are all Corporate Parents.**

28. Outstanding Issues Report

There were no outstanding issues.

29. **Any Other Business**

There were no other items of business.

(Meeting closed at 1.30 pm)