
Cabinet Member for Children & Young People

17 February 2020

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, Councillor P Seaman

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (People)

Ward(s) affected:

None

Title:

Pathways to Care Capital Funding Approval Policy

Is this a key decision?

No - although the proposals affect more than two electoral wards, the impact is not expected to be significant.

Executive Summary:

Coventry City Council identifies a given amount of capital budget each year to facilitate permanence for children and, where appropriate, to increase internal fostering capacity. This policy identifies the criteria for these monies to be allocated and the processes that will be followed to ensure robust management oversight.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member is requested to:

- 1) Approve the Pathways to Care Capital Funding Approval Policy.

List of Appendices included:

- Pathways to Care Capital Funding Approval Policy.

Background papers:

None.

Other useful documents

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.

Report title: Pathways to Care Capital Funding Approval Policy

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 Pathways to Care is the name given to an amount of capital budget set aside by Coventry City Council on an annual basis to support permanence of looked after children cared for by Coventry City Council, facilitate increases to capacity within existing internal fostering provision or to purchase a larger vehicle where specific criteria are met. The policy outlines the criteria used for the allocation of funds, the processes that need to be followed when making payments and the criteria that will be used to recoup and funds if circumstances change.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 No other options were considered. This policy brings together existing practise to make sure all relevant professionals understand it and the criteria are applied in a fair and transparent way.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 There has been no consultation regarding this policy, as it consolidates current practise into one document.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 Once agreed, this policy will be applied with immediate effect. It will be circulated throughout the service so that all workers are aware of the policy when in discussion with carers.
- 4.2 An annual report on the spend will be produced so that the Cabinet Member can be assured of how this has made a difference to the children of Coventry.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Services

5.1 Financial implications

The existing budget earmarked from capital resources to fund Pathways to Care applications approved by the Exceptional Allowances Finance panel is up to £200k per annum. This is a finite budget and the panel review the quantity and progress of approvals throughout the year to remain within budget. Approvals made from this budget are discretionary, based on the details of each case and the criteria within the policy, and not an entitlement.

Allocations made during the last 2 financial years, and the first 3 quarters of this year, are shown in the table below:

Year	Number of applications supported	Total amount approved
2017/18	6	£173,170
2018/19	5	£106,550
2019/20 (Q1-Q3)	11	£84,533

5.2 Legal implications

Section 22(3) and (3A) of the Children Act 1989 set out a general duty that an local authority has in relation to any looked after child. It shall be the duty of a local authority looking after any child— (a) to safeguard and promote his welfare; and (b) to make such use of services available for children cared for by their own parents as appears to the authority reasonable in his case.

6. Other implications

None.

6.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)?

The policy will contribute to the Council Plan in the following ways.

Locally committed- the policy will contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of looked after children and their carers as they will have the opportunity to live in a home which is better suitable for their needs. It will contribute to keeping our children safe from harm and will contribute to looked after children getting the best start in life.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

The key risk with regard to this policy is financial. However, this is mitigated through extensive financial and legal management through the Exceptional Allowances Finance Panel. This is chaired by a senior officer from Children's Services with support from financial and legal colleagues. This makes sure all decisions are robust and within budget.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

This contributes to the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities by making sure that carers have an opportunity to make their accommodation fit to care for our looked after children.

6.4 Equality and Consultation Analysis (ECA)

This policy has been produced to consolidate existing practise within the Council. It makes sure that looked after children have their opportunities promoted and have the best start in life that can be provided. The Council works in partnership with foster carers to make this happen.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

There are no implications for, or impact on climate change and the environment.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

There are no implications for partner organisations as a result of this policy.

Report author(s):

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Tina Pinks	Lead Accountant	Place		18 December 2019
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Katherine Robinson	Operational Lead- fostering	People		18 December 2019
Paul Smith	Strategic lead- looked after children	People		18 December 2019
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Ethan Dewar	Finance Manager	Place		4 February 2020
Legal: Julie Newman	City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer	Place		3 February 2020
Director: John Gregg	Director of Children's Services	People		4 February 2020
Member:				
Councillor P Seaman	Cabinet Member for Children & Young People			

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Appendices