

**CABINET RESPONSE TO A REPORT OF THE CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ENTITLED
LISTENING EVENT - LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN MARCH 2014**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
AGENDA ITEM: 3**

**PORTFOLIO: EARLY YEARS CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (COUNCILLOR
LENT)**

Reason for this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to enable Cabinet to respond to the report of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee following a 'Listening Event with Looked After Children' convened by the scrutiny committee in March of 2014.

Background

2. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee agreed to hold this event to ensure that the views of looked after children are heard by decision-makers in the Council.
3. It was the first such event held for children under 11 years of age and it was facilitated by Tros Gynal Plant
4. The event was based around three key themes:
School and healthy living
Visiting family and where you live
Social Services

Issues

5. The report sets out five key findings that resulted from the event.
6. The findings provide the Cabinet with an opportunity to reinforce a Commitment of the Council to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and to the principle of participation by children and young people in general.
7. The report also recognises the vital role that listening to Looked After Children in particular, plays in upholding this commitment

8. The report provides a further opportunity to Cabinet to welcome the four recommendations made in the report.
9. It should also be noted that following dialogue between the Cabinet Member and the Director of Children's Services, the Directorate is actively considering effective ways to embed recommendations 2 and 4 as part of its ongoing approach to participation.
10. This is timely in light of the recommendations of the Care and Social Services Inspectorate's recent Report on its findings following an inspection in May of the Council's arrangements to support and safeguard Looked After Children. In that report it was recommended that the Council further strengthen its approach to the participation Looked After Children and this report.

Reasons for Recommendations

11. To enable Cabinet to respond to the report of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee following a 'Listening Event with Looked After Children convened by the scrutiny committee in March of 2014.'

Legal Implications

12. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report although it is noted that the recommendation supports the Council in discharging its general responsibilities in respect of consultation and the implementation of the UNCRC

Financial Implications

13. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is recommended to agree the response to the report of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee following a 'Listening Event with Looked After Children' convened by the scrutiny committee in March of 2014', as set out in Appendix A

TONY YOUNG

Director

9 December 2014

The following appendix is attached:

Appendix A – Cabinet Response to Recommendations

APPENDIX A

R1. The Cabinet must ensure that decision makers regularly engage with Looked After Children (including those aged 11 and under) wherever possible to ensure that their views are heard during the development and implementation of all social care strategies, policies and plans and individual care plans.

Response – This recommendation is accepted

The recently refreshed Looked After Children Committee will integrate regular engagement within its annual programme of work and will provide conduit for their voice in policy and strategy.

R2. Children's Services should consider this format of listening event as an effective forum for Looked After Children aged 11 and under, to express their views.

Response – This recommendation is accepted

Children's Services will utilise this approach for the future at regular intervals

R3. The Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee and / or Corporate Parenting Panel should continue to hold regular listening events with different groups of Looked After Children to help understand their perspective on areas for improvement in social care.

Response – This recommendation is accepted.

As indicated in relation to recommendation 1, this will be integrated into the work programme of the Corporate Parenting Committee.

R4. Children's Services should develop additional methods of engagement with younger Looked After Children, to enable them to be made aware of, and actively involved

in, LAC reviews, meetings and decisions that affect them.

Response – This recommendation is agreed and this will be a priority for the newly established Looked After Children Service.