
REVIEW OF FOSTERING SERVICE – PROGRESS REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. As part of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee 2018-19 Work Programme, the Committee requested a briefing on the progress being made in the redesign of the local fostering service in order to increase the number of internal foster carers and ensure the placement policy is fit for purpose. A copy of the presentation is attached at **Appendix A**

Background

2. This Committee has for some considerable time been concerned at the high level of placements made with independent fostering agencies. In 2017 the Committee undertook an inquiry into “Out of County Placements” and made two recommendations directly address the balance on in-house and external fostering placements.
3. The Cabinet response to these two recommendations were:

R13 To develop and implement a Placement Strategy which should include, to recruit and retain Foster Carers, including, continuous advertisement programme, additional support, allowances, and retainers, to be in place within the next 12 months

Response – This recommendation is accepted

In June 2018 a project was established in order to respond to this recommendation as part of the Improving Outcomes for Children programme. This project is developing an effective business model for the Fostering Service in Cardiff focusing on the following aspects of the service:

- the marketing of the service and the recruitment of foster carers;
- the operating model of Cardiff's fostering team;
- the support provided to foster carers once they have been approved;

- the need to reduce the cost of fostering to the Council by rebalancing between independent foster agencies and the in-house foster care service.

The Project reports to the Child Placements Board chaired by the Director of Social Services, and is developing a business model for delivery from April 2019.

R14 It ensures that a review of all vacant fostering placements, Agency, Council and Kinship options, is undertaken to verify that there is appropriate matching and stable placements for all children being Looked After.

Response – This recommendation is accepted

The fostering project is progressing this recommendation.

4. A presentation on progress to date, copy attached at **Appendix A** will be provided at the meeting, the presentation will cover, the fostering project, progress on recruitment, external dependencies and national and regional developments.

Scope of Scrutiny

5. This report enables the Committee to review, assess and comment of the continued development of the redesign of the local fostering service. In particular Members may wish to inquiry whether it will increase the number of Cardiff Foster Carers homes for children as well as increase the availability of local fostering placements, to better meet the needs of our children and young people.

Way Forward

6. Councillor Graham Hinchey (Cabinet Member for Children & Families) and Claire Marchant (Director of Social Service) Deborah Driffield (Interim Assistant Director), will present the verbal report to the Committee, and will be available to answer any questions Members may have.
7. This report and presentation will enable Members to provide any comments, concerns or recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Children & Families and Director of Social Services around the implementation of the approach, and consider any additional items for its future work programme.

Legal Implications

8. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

9. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

- That Committee reviews the information provided at the meeting and offer any recommendations, comments or advice to the Cabinet Member and / or Director of Social Services.
- Identify any areas for consideration in the development of the Committee's work programme for 2019-2020

Davina Fiore

Director of Governance and Legal Services

6 November 2019