

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
CORPORATE PARENTING SUB OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING

Thursday, 12 July 2018

PRESENT: Councillor B Oliphant (Chair)

Councillor(s): M Hall, C Davison, N Weatherley, P Craig,
K McCartney, C McHugh, S Ronchetti and M Ord

CP34 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received the report setting out the provisional work programme for the Corporate Parenting OSC for the municipal year 2018/2019.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee endorsed the OSC provisional work programme.

CP35 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors McMaster, Kirton, S Craig, Clelland and Haley. Additional apologies were received from Jeremy Cripps, Anne Page and Elaine Devaney.

CP36 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee approved the minutes of the last meeting held on 26 March 2018 as a correct record.

CP37 PERMANENCE PLANNING (ADOPTION) - CASE STUDY

The Committee received a report providing a summary of the experience of the Adoption Service in relation to 'fostering to adopt'. From the report the Committee were provided feedback from the adoptive family in relation to their experience in addition to an outline of the process in relation to the case.

It was noted that under the fostering for adoption process adopters who have undergone an adoption assessment and have been approved to adopt are given temporary status as a foster carer for the special placement. It was highlighted that this would usually be in the case of a very young child or baby for whom the final plan is adoption and where the likelihood that this plan would be agreed at court is extremely high.

The Committee were provided with further detail around the service policy and a summary of foster to adopt placements that have taken place. A case study was

presented to the Committee to illustrate the journey from the perspective of a couple who adopted their child via the foster to adopt process with positive outcomes.

It was highlighted that many prospective adopters are cautious or do not wish to 'foster to adopt' due to the risk of an adoption order not being granted at court.

It was asked what support is put in place for adopters and also birth parents. It was noted that help and support is offered via internal procedures but that support is also provided via external partners such as 'Paws'. It was also highlighted that prospective adopters' extended families are invited to an information event to give them a knowledge of the adoption process and the aftercare available.

The Committee were advised that the adoption team recruit adopters based on the number of children that are likely to become available to adopt. It was noted that other agencies have recruited adopters who then must wait a very long time to be matched to a child due to few being available which is not good.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee considered the case study and noted the report.

CP38 CARE LEAVERS OFFER - QUALITY AND IMPACT

The Committee received the report providing information on the Care Leavers Offer highlighting what was to be achieved, what else needs to be done and how this is supporting care leavers.

It was noted from the report that the following progress has been made to the Care Leavers Offer:

- Council Tax exemption for care leavers up to the age of 25
- Free leisure passes for all care leavers
- Peer mentoring
- A housing pathway with a range of options for young people which will commence in July 2018
- Improved employment, education and training offer from both within the Council and from partners
- Improved apprenticeship offers within the Council
- A commitment from a range of Council departments to offer shadowing days and mentoring
- Practical support in helping young people move home
- A greater understanding from partners about their role as corporate parents

It was further noted that a stakeholder's event is to be hosted to get greater support from local businesses and partners to include employment, training and gifts (such as free event tickets) for care leavers. It was also highlighted that a care leavers app is in the pipeline which will enable all care leavers to access local offers on their phone.

It was asked how Gateshead Council compares to neighbouring local authorities in

terms of their care leaver strategy. It was noted that Gateshead Council are ahead of the game due to having the strategy published. It was also highlighted that care leavers will keep their social worker and support worker up to the age of 25.

A question was raised regarding Gateshead Council's care leaver housing policy – it was explained that Gateshead have an excellent housing offer. It was further noted that the accommodation for care leavers over 18 years old is not monitored unless they go in to supported housing.

Concerns were raised over the CAMHS – particularly around care leavers with a multiple diagnosis for a mental health problem. It was acknowledged that those in supported housing will receive mental health support if required. It was further noted that the service works closely with the transitions team.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of the report.
- (ii) The Committee agreed to receive a further update on a final Local Offer following consultation.

CP39 REGULATION 44 REPORT

The Committee received a report outlining Ofsted regulation 44 independent visits and inspection outcomes carried out in the Council's children's homes between March 2018 and June 2018.

It was highlighted in the report that the Children's Homes have both formal inspections by Ofsted twice a year in addition to monthly independent Regulation 44 management visits.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of the report.

Chair.....