

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

Monday, 9 October 2017

PRESENT: Councillor B Oliphant (Chair)
Councillor(s): B Clelland, E McMaster and C Davison

CO-OPTED MEMBERS Sasha Ban

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor(s): G Haley

CP9 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Hall, Cllr S Craig and co-opted member Jeremy Cripps.

CP10 MINUTES

Resolved

- (i) The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

CP11 YOUNG PEOPLES PRESENTATION - DIGITAL ME PROJECT

An overview of the Digital Me project which ran over the summer was given. The project is a partnership of Gateshead Council and Digital Voice for Communities.

LAC who took part in the project attended to showcase the work they had done which included creating a digital avatar to illustrate their stories as well as musical projects. Digital Me provided LAC with an opportunity to express their feelings and tell their story in a creative way.

Those present also spent some time to talk with the LAC to view their individual digital portfolios. There was also an opportunity for those present to ask questions to the LAC about their life and experiences.

It was suggested that it would be good to have continuity of visitors at these meetings so that those present can meet with the LAC who attended previously to catch up on their progress.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the information was noted.

CP12 PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

A performance overview presentation was delivered.

In comparing the numbers and rates of LAC to neighbouring authorities Gateshead is in the middle with a rate of 95 LAC per 10k of the child population at 31st March 2017. These figures have seen a recent increase of 9.4% bringing about its own challenges however performance outcomes continue to be good.

Information was presented detailing the percentage of looked after children with three or more placements during the year. Gateshead Council continues to have a good record for placement stability for LAC as figures fall below the national average for LAC moves during placement.

Clarity on what “out of borough placements” are was provided. This refers to LAC who are moved geographically out of the Gateshead area. Currently around 41% of Gateshead’s LAC are placed out of the borough. Gateshead keeps ownership of all LAC placed out of the borough working in partnership with other local authorities/agencies to provide suitable care.

It was also mentioned that LAC are kept at the same school when appropriate to provide stability. If a LAC is placed out of the borough transport would be provided so that they are able to attend their normal school if this is suitable.

A point was raised regarding the use of “The Care Leavers’ App” – staff have seen this system and thought it was good but the system has not yet been purchased. It may be possible for some care leavers to trial the system in future.

A discussion took place around the gaps in provision in relation to accessing mental health support for care leavers. Work with the CCG is ongoing to make improvements as this is now a strategic priority for Gateshead Council.

A question was asked about the provision of training for foster carers on mental health/emotional wellbeing. It was said that the training provided to foster carers is excellent in Gateshead and is mandatory.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the information was noted.

CP13 SUPPORT FOR CARE LEAVERS

A summary of the Support to Care Leavers was provided.

It was explained that increased focus is being placed on care leavers and the responsibility of Local Authorities to ensure that they transition well into adulthood. In response to feedback the service has developed a care leaver’s charter representing a set of over-arching principles designed to improve the experiences of care leavers through preparation, transition and their journey into adult life.

The report has focused on:

- Support to care leavers
- Accommodation
- Financial support
- How we monitor the work or education status for young people age 17 – 21 years
- Identifying young people needing additional support
- Working with our partners

There is particular focus on developing independent living skills for young people working with social workers, personal advisers and partner organisations.

A question was raised regarding sourcing supported accommodation for young people with complex needs. This process is managed working with the transitions team and The Gateshead Housing Company so is not a reactive process; those requiring support are to be identified early so that appropriate support is put in place.

RESOLVED

- (i) The recommendations were agreed.

CP14 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received the work programme for the municipal year 2017/18, which will be a standing item on each agenda. There were no changes to note.

RESOLVED

- (i) That Committee noted the provisional programme.
- (ii) That Committee noted that further reports on the work programme will be brought to the Committee to identify any additional policy issues, which the committee may be asked to consider.

CP15 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

- (i) That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining business in accordance with the indicated paragraphs of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

CP16 REGULATION 44 REPORT

The Committee received a report on the Ofsted inspection outcomes and regulation 44 independent visits carried out in the Council's children's homes. The reports written as a result of the visits are circulated to the Service Director, Social Work, Care Wellbeing and Learning, Service Manager for Looked After Children and the Registered Manager of each home.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the information be noted.