

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING CABINET COMMITTEE
HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 1/2/3, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND,
ON TUESDAY, 9 MARCH 2010 AT 4.50PM

Present: -

Councillor L C Morgan - Chairperson

Councillors

M E J Nott - Leader
D Sage - Deputy Leader
H J David - Cabinet Member - Resources
J C Spanswick - Cabinet Member - Communities

Invitees:

Councillors

M W Butcher
K S Hunt
M Thomas
K J Watts

Officers

H Anthony - Corporate Director - Children
L Harper - Head of Safeguarding and Family Support
S Pryce - Head of Regeneration and Development
P Williams - Human Resources Officer
V Watkins - Principal Officer Corporate Parenting
E Davies - Group Manager - Legal
C Branford - Cabinet and Committee Officer

44 ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

Councillor L C Morgan was elected as Chairperson for this meeting.

45 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the following Members for the reasons stated:-

Councillor A Davies - Holiday
Councillor R D Jenkins - Other Council business

46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

47 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting - Cabinet Committee held on 3 November 2009, be approved as a true and accurate record.

48 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE FOR FOSTERING, ADOPTION AND CHILDREN'S HOME

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support introduced a report the purpose of which was to seek the Committee's approval of the revised Statements of Purpose for the following service areas:

Cartrefle Children's Home
Maesteg Community Home
Pant Morfa Children's Home
Baker's Way Short Break Service
Adoption Services
Fostering Services

She explained that the Committee were required to approve these statements on an annual basis; the amendments to each of the six Statements of Purpose related to updates in respect of staffing and the change to the Directorate structure. It was noted that page 17 of the Statement of Purpose for Cartrefle Children's Home referred to the Assistant Director - Children's Services which needed to be amended to the current post title - Head of Safeguarding and Family Support.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting approved the revised individual 'Statements of Purpose' for the named service areas referred to, as appended to the report.

49 YOUNG PEOPLE'S SESSION

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support introduced a report the purpose of which was to gain the Committee's approval to formally develop a meaningful opportunity for Members to engage with young people who were, or had been, looked after.

The Principal Officer Corporate Parenting explained that previous initiatives introduced to engage young people, and provide them with the opportunity to contribute to the development of services affecting them had not been successful. Young people tended to find a formal environment daunting, and if they had initially agreed to attend, should their priorities change, they often decided not to attend. It was therefore proposed that a consultation event be held twice a year in an environment where young people felt more comfortable, such as the Aftercare Offices. This would hopefully give young people greater ownership of the decision making processes which directly affected them.

In response to questions from Members, the Principal Officer Corporate Parenting explained that the age range covered was 16 - 21, and included all those who accessed the aftercare services, other arrangements were in place to gain the views of under 16s.

Members welcomed the new proposal and looked forward to meeting with the young people, and they recognised the need for an informal setting in order to make the young people feel comfortable and encourage them to put their views forward. They acknowledged that the Council Chamber was not an appropriate setting for the young people who perhaps had difficulties with authority figures. Members emphasised the importance of placing the event in Members' calendars promptly in order to ensure that as many Councillors as possible attended.

RESOLVED: That the Committee approved the proposed arrangements for young people's sessions with Members.

50 REPORT ON ELECTED MEMBERS' ROTA VISITS TO RESIDENTIAL ESTABLISHMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN BRIDGEND

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support presented a report, which provided Members with information on rota visiting by elected members to the four children's homes managed by Children's Services. She advised that the same report had been before the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the Cabinet Member - Children and Young People felt that it should also go before this Committee. Appendix 1 outlined the visits made between April and December 2009, and the three visits made to Maesteg Community Home could be explained by the fact that the old and new rotas had overlapped. The Chairperson noted that the summary of comments revealed that some visits had been made during school hours when there were no children at the home, and suggested that Members needed to avoid school hours when making their visits. The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support agreed, and advised that rota visiting provided Members with another opportunity to meet young people in an informal setting, where they did not feel inhibited from discussing issues. Members reaffirmed their commitment to rota visiting.

RESOLVED: That the Committee received the information provided in this report and agreed to promote the engagement of all elected members in rota visits.

51 REVIEW OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING CABINET COMMITTEE'S FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support introduced a report on the Committee's Forward Work Programme. She explained that the items agreed at the previous Committee for inclusion in the Work Programme had now been incorporated, and Members were now invited to suggest any further topics for inclusion. She reminded Members that the WAG guide, 'If it were my Child' contained a section on challenge which they could refer to, and the ESTYN inspection had recommended that more reports on the educational attainments of looked after children should go to the Committee. Children's Services had been in the top quartile for the educational attainment of looked after children at key stage 4 (16 yr olds) in 2009 and this had been reported to the Committee. An action plan on young people's education, following the Welsh Audit Office study would be available for the Committee to consider by May, and a residential review would also be brought to the May meeting, following consideration by Corporate Management Board.

Members suggested that a report needed to come before the Committee on housing opportunities for care leavers indicating to what extent their needs were being met. The Head of Property and Finance suggested that information on the profile of the care population would be helpful to the Committee. Members suggested that an update report on the success of the apprenticeship scheme would also be of use. The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support advised that Members could also request items for the formal forward Work Programme, and she suggested that the Smoking Policy for foster carers and adopters which was in draft form at the moment was an item Members may wish to put forward. Members proposed that an item on the physical health and wellbeing of looked

after children should be included on the informal Forward Work Programme. The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support advised that a health assessment was undertaken for each young person entering care and the data could easily be collected and reported to the Committee.

The Principal Officer Corporate Parenting suggested that transition arrangements governing the transfer of young people with care needs into adult social care services was another possible area for the Committee to consider.

- RESOLVED:** That the Corporate Parenting - Cabinet Committee:-
- (1) approved the Informal Forward Work Programme at Appendix One;
 - (2) identified any further topics for inclusion in its Informal Forward Work Programme;
 - (3) identified any plans, politics and strategies for inclusion in its Forward Work Programme and finalise the Forward Work Programme for the period 1 May - 31 August 2010.

The meeting closed at 5.20pm.