

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING CABINET COMMITTEE  
HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, ON  
MONDAY, 28 APRIL 2014 AT 10.00AM

Present:

Councillor H J David - Cabinet Member - Children and Young People and Chairperson

Councillor M E J Nott	- Leader
Councillor D Sage	- Deputy Leader
Councillor M Gregory	- Cabinet Member - Resources
Councillor P J White	- Cabinet Member - Communities

Invitees:

Councillor N Clarke  
Councillor E Dodd  
Councillor D B F White

Officers:

D McMillan	- Corporate Director - Children
S Cooper	- Corporate Director - Wellbeing
M Shephard	- Corporate Director - Communities
C Turner	- Head of Safeguarding and Family Support
N Silcox	- Group Manager - Integrated Working and Family Support
M A Galvin	- Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees

59 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members/Officers

Councillor R D Jenkins	- Other Council business
Councillor L C Morgan	- Recuperating
S Kingsbury	- No reason given
S Pryce	- No reason given
R Hughes	- No reason given

60 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

61 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: Councillor Clarke advised that in the beginning of the minutes of the last meeting where it listed the attendees, her name was shown as N C Clarke. She pointed out that she had no middle initial C.

62 CSSIW INSPECTION INTO BRIDGEND ADOPTION SERVICE

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support introduced the report, the purpose of which, was to present Committee with a summary of the outcome and key findings of the recent Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) inspection of Bridgend Adoption Service.

The Group Manager - Integrated Working and Family Support advised that under S.31 of the Care Standards Act 2000 (adoption agency registered under Part 2 Care Standards Act 2000) local authority adoption services are required to be inspected by CSSIW on a three yearly basis. Inherent within the inspection process is a requirement for the Council to provide CSSIW with information about service data and complete a comprehensive self-assessment of the service, in statement form, prior to the inspection fieldwork.

The Group Manager - Integrated Working and Family Support, then gave a resumé for the benefit of Members, of what the CSSIW inspection comprised of including areas of work that this covered.

She went on to advise that the 2013-14 Adoption Service inspection took place during October and November 2013, though the final report was not published until the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2014. Overall, the report was very positive and detailed no non-compliance notices.

The inspection report reflected what the service does well, what has improved since the last inspection and what needs to be done to improve the service in the future. Examples of these, as cited in the inspection report were outlined in paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 of the report.

The Group Manager - Integrated Working and Family Support confirmed that whilst there were four areas where practice could be improved, there were no major shortcomings identified, and therefore inspectors did not require that the Council provide them with a post inspection action plan. However, the Head of Service would agree with senior officers an action plan to address the areas noted for improvement.

A copy of the Inspection report was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Corporate Director - Children in response to a Member's question confirmed that the Adoption Service Team were moving from Sunnyside to the main Civic Offices, which would mean that all operational teams would be located together in a front facing Hub. Whilst moving did present certain problems and inconvenience, more long term this would benefit and provide more cohesion in terms of collective working.

She added that work and documents of a confidential nature would be protected as was required under statutory regulations governing the protection of children and a number of breakout rooms would be available where Officers could process work of a confidential nature.

A Member noted that in the last such report conducted by the CSSIW eight areas had been identified within the service for improvement, whilst in the latest report this had reduced to four which was positive news. He noted that there had been a total of 88 adoption cases since the last inspection, and 48 in the inspection undertaken previously to this. He asked over what length of period this increase had covered.

The Group Manager - Integrated Working and Family Support confirmed that this increase was over a three year period.

The Corporate Director - Wellbeing asked how many adoption breakdowns had occurred in this period.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support advised that there had been just two adoption breakdowns, however, these were cases approved by agencies external to the Local Authority as opposed to the Council's In-House agency.

The Leader and Deputy Leader in turn commended the findings of the Inspection Report, and thanked staff for the hard work they had committed to its positive outcomes.

**RESOLVED:** That the Corporate Parenting - Cabinet Committee noted the positive information provided with the report, together with the plans to address the areas noted for improvement.

**63 CSSIW INSPECTION INTO BRIDGEND FOSTERING SERVICES**

The Group Manager - Integrated Working and Family Support presented a report to the Corporate Parenting - Cabinet Committee on the outcome and findings of the inspection into Bridgend Fostering Service.

Section 31 of the Care Standards Act 2000 (fostering agencies registered under Part 2 Care Standards Act 2000) and S.100 of the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 require that Local Authority Fostering Services are inspected by CSSIW on an annual basis. Bridgend Foster Care was subject to this year's inspection during January 2014 and with the final report being published on the 12 of March 2014.

She then gave a resumé for the benefit of Members, of what the CSSIW inspection comprised of including areas of work that this covered.

The Group Manager - Integrated Working and Family Support confirmed that the 2013/2014 Fostering Service inspection took place in early January 2014 with the report being published on 12 March 2014. This report was generally very positive and for the sixth year in a row, no compliance issues notices were issued to the Council.

The inspection report was shown at Appendix 1 to the report. This reflected what the Inspectors believed the service does well, what has improved since the last inspection and what needs to be done to improve the service in the future. Examples of these, were cited in the report in paragraph 4.2.

She proceeded to state that whilst there were a number of areas where certain aspects of the service could be improved, Inspectors reported no major shortcomings. Consequently, they did not direct that the Council should provide them with a post inspection plan. However, the Head of Service would agree with senior officers, an action plan to address the areas for improvement.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support stated that since the publication of the inspection report, the registered Fostering Team Manager has been seconded to the post of Interim Group Manager for Regulated Services Provision and a recruitment process was underway to seek a replacement for her substantive role.

A Member of the Committee felt that this was another very positive inspection report, and whilst there had been no major concerns addressed by the CSSIW, he asked if the proposals the Inspectorate had made in order to improve the service further, were being addressed.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support confirmed that these issues had either been carried out or were currently a work in progress.

The Committee once more wished that their thanks to the hard work committed by staff in the Bridgend Fostering Service be placed on record, the results of which had been a very good Inspection Report.

**RESOLVED:** That the Corporate Parenting - Cabinet Committee noted the contents of the CSSIW Inspection Report into Bridgend's Fostering Services.

**64     STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE FOR FOSTERING, ADOPTION AND CHILDREN'S HOMES**

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support presented a report seeking approval of the revised Statements of Purpose for the certain service areas in line with regulatory requirements.

He advised that within the Children's Homes Regulations (Wales) 2002, the Fostering Services Regulations (Wales) 2003, and the Local Authority Adoption Service (Wales) Regulations 2007 there is a requirement that each of the children's homes and service areas have a 'Statement of Purpose'.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support added that the content was prescribed by the regulations and each 'Statement of Purpose' was shaped by those requirements and provides relevant information on the aims and objectives of each service area and the services and facilities provided by the individual children's home or fostering and adoption service. 'Statements of Purpose' were required for:

- Adoption Services
- Fostering Services
- Bakers Way Short Break Service
- Newbridge House Transition Unit
- Sunny Bank Complex Needs Unit

The report initially gave some background information, upon which the Head of Safeguarding and Family Support commented, and then confirmed that each 'Statement of Purpose' included an outline of the nature and scope of the service provided and gave detail about the processes adopted in order to carry out its functions. Copies of each of these 'Statement of Purpose' were attached as appendices to the report.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support advised that the amendments made to each of the five Statements of Purpose in the main related to updates in respect of staffing and changes in relation to developments of the services.

He added that the Fostering Service Statement of Purpose included changes reflected by the recent recommendation to cease delivery of Resolutions Fostering as a partnership service and other changes proposed in the restructuring within the Children's Directorate and Safeguarding and Family Support Services. The main changes relating to this were included in paragraph 4.5 of the report.

The Statement of Purpose for Newbridge House included changes in relation to the development of an outreach programme for young people who have recently made the transition to independent living. This is offered for an eight week period, with workers being flexible with times to cater for the young people's needs.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support then stated that the Statement of Purpose for Sunny Bank included the development of a Transition service in conjunction with the Fostering Service. It has developed a structured process to move children and young people from Sunny Bank when their long term plans have been fully assessed and agreed.

He then concluded by confirming the Adoption Service Statement of Purpose that reflected the Welsh Government mandated changes in relation to the developments which were

underway nationally to reshape and reform adoption services, this included the development and implementation of five regional services.

The Chairperson advised that he was pleased to note that Outreach and Transitional programmes were being developed in both Sunnybank and Newbridge House facilities for children and young people.

**RESOLVED:** That the Corporate Parenting - Cabinet Committee approved, the revised individual 'Statement of Purpose' for the named service areas referred to, as shown at Appendices to the report.

65 **STATUTORY INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONAL ADVOCACY AND INDEPENDENT VISITING SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE INVOLVED IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN BRIDGEND**

The Corporate Director - Children submitted a report updating the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee on the commissioning of the Statutory Independent Professional Advocacy and Independent Visiting services for children and young people independently of the Collaborative Advocacy Project, following a recent procurement exercise.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support, advised that Committee would be aware that since January 2012 the Council had been acting as lead commissioner and project manager to a regional multi agency collaborative commissioning project, which included five local authorities and two health boards details of which were shown in Paragraph 3.1 of the report.

He proceeded by confirming that an audit of needs undertaken identified a number of gaps in current commissioned provision, and the report outlined the groups of children and young people, involved with social services for which the authority has a statutory duty to commission and make available independent professional advocacy or independent visitor services and the current arrangements to meet these duties. This showed that the Council was not meeting all of its statutory duties to children and young people in relation to independent professional advocacy.

He further added that incrementally, partners had withdrawn from the project for their own individual reasons, which resulted in the Council proceeding on its own with the procurement of a comprehensive Independent Professional Advocacy service for all the statutory groups involved with children's social services, and an Independent Visiting service for eligible children and young people, independently to the collaborative approach, with a new contractor being undertaken for this following a procurement exercise and tendering process being carried out.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support added that the Independent Professional Advocacy and Independent Visiting contract would be in place for 2 years with an option to extend for up to 12 months following successful evaluation during year 2. The contract/service commencement date was 1 April 2014.

The new service had been widened to include all children and young people aged 0-25, who are engaged with children's social services in Bridgend. This included all Looked After Children (including those placed for adoption), Care Leavers and Children in Need as per the Children Act 1989 definition. These are the children who require the support from local authority children's social care teams, including those on, or being considered for entry onto the child protection register and disabled children and young people.

He further added that the Council was arranging for systems and processes to be put in place to ensure that children and young people in our care are aware of their rights to access advocacy, should they ever need it. This included developing and implementing protocols that ensure that an 'automatic offer' of advocacy is made to all children and young people at the point at which they become involved with Children's Social Services teams and that this offer is repeated at regular intervals.

Finally, he stated that a newsletter had been shared with members of staff within Children's Social Services providing information on this new service. A copy of this newsletter was shown at Appendix 1 to the report

The Corporate Director - Wellbeing added that it was pleasing to see this service up and running, as advocacy also featured in the Social Services Bill.

**RESOLVED:** The Corporate Parenting - Cabinet Committee:

- (1) Noted the progress made in terms of the procurement of the Independent Professional Advocacy and Independent Visiting Service to ensure all eligible Children and Young People in Bridgend are able to access the service from 1 April 2014.
- (2) Receives a further report in six months' time, detailing the impact it is making on children and young people in Bridgend.

66 **INFORMAL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME - APRIL 2014 - JULY 2014**

The Corporate Director - Children submitted a report that sought Committee approval for the proposed Informal Forward Work Programme covering the above period, i.e. this and the next scheduled meeting.

The Informal Forward Work Programme (IFWP), was shown at Appendix 1 to the report.

Members discussed the Schedule and agreed to add to the agenda for the next/future meeting(s).

- LAC Awards.
- Numbers of children who engage in sport, play and leisure activities

In terms of Item 7 of the IFWP the Chairperson asked if this report could be supplemented by a Presentation, and possibly a few case studies.

In terms of Item 8 he asked if an invitee to attend the meeting could be extended to a representative of the Local Health Board and that a representative of the CSSIW be invited to the meeting that considers Item 10 of the IFWP.

**RESOLVED:** That the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee agreed to approve the Informal Forward Work Programme appended to the Officer's report, subject to the further items being added as detailed above, and to invitations being extended to the recommended Invitees also outlined above.

**67      SPORT, PLAY AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN  
WITHIN BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH**

The Corporate Director - Communities presented a report that provided information on the progress being made in identifying the needs of Looked After Children in relation to sport, play and leisure and the development of appropriate programmes of support.

The report gave some background information, following which it advised that Bridgend County Borough Council had invested in surveys of young people's participation in sport, play and leisure since 2006. These surveys have allowed priorities to be established around age, gender, disability and geographical location. The same survey format will be used to gain information on Looked After Children and their households and to compare levels of engagement and barriers to participation identified.

Welsh Government funding is being used to undertake focus group research with Looked After Children that will assist in designing services and activities to meet identified need

Following a survey undertaken by the Bridgend Young People's Survey on sport, play and leisure, this identified that activities and opportunities should be both positive and motivating experiences and that carers may require support to address identified barriers.

In terms of areas for development of the above, the Corporate Director - Communities advised that there were a range of low cost and no cost opportunities being developed including primary school Dragon Sport clubs, secondary school 5X60 activities, free swimming lessons and free holiday play schemes supported by Town and Community Councils.

In partnership with Sport Wales, funding has been secured for a pilot programme for Looked After Children that will target improvements in skills and confidence. This will be evaluated during 2014-15 and will be a feature of the County Sport Plan for future years.

He stated that the annual service development plan of the Healthy Living Partnership with Halo Leisure has recognised the importance of support for Looked After Children and learning from other programmes will inform the design of activities.

The Corporate Director - Communities added that the 'Access to Leisure' scheme providing low cost access for society's most needy has been modified to be available for more hours and more activities and to also support whole households. The relevance of this scheme to Looked After Children and their carers would be reviewed.

A series of partnerships are evolving with professional sports organisations (e.g. Ospreys Rugby, Football Association of Wales) including motivational experiences and invitations to events for households.

He further added that the potential for sport and leisure to support the development of skills linked to employability will also be promoted to case workers and carers. The Bridgend Sports Leadership Pathway has been recognised as sector leading and has mentoring support in place.

The Healthy Living Service has also identified a variety of health and wellbeing programmes that can be promoted via the Looked After Children's teams such as MEND, Family Active Zone, promoting active households and healthy eating.

Finally, the Corporate Director - Communities confirmed, in addition a number of activities have been developed for Looked After Children in the Arts, including a very successful

programme developed with Arts Connect partners. A further specific report on arts activities for Looked After Children can be provided to the Committee if this was of interest.

He concluded his submission by giving a resumé of the report's conclusions.

**RESOLVED:** That the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee noted the report and requested that they receive a further report in 12 months' time, to include statistical information as regards how many children and young people are engaging in sport, play and leisure activities including age groups where appropriate.

The meeting closed at 12 noon.