

CORPORATE PARENTING CABINET COMMITTEE - 23 JULY 2012

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING CABINET COMMITTEE
HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, ON
MONDAY, 23 JULY 2012 AT 11.30 AM

Present:-

Councillor H J David - Chairperson

Councillor M E J Nott - Leader
Councillor D Sage - Deputy Leader
Councillor L C Morgan - Cabinet Member - Wellbeing
Councillor P J White - Cabinet Member - Communities

Invitees:-

Councillor D M Hughes
Councillor R D Jenkins
Councillor H Townsend
Councillor D B F White

Officers:-

C Turner - Head of Safeguarding and Family Support
M Shepherd - Head of Healthy Living
P Williams - HR Business Partner
A Rees - Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members/Officers for the reasons so stated:-

Councillor E Dodd - Holiday
Councillor M Gregory - Holiday
H Anthony - Corporate Director Children - Other Council Business
N Young - Assistant Chief Executive - Performance - Holiday
S Pryce - Head of Regeneration and Development - Other Council Business

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor D B F White - Agenda Item 4b - Safeguarding and Family Support: Intensive Family Support Service - Councillor D B F White declared a personal interest as he is employed by the Social Services Department of Swansea Council which is a partner in the Intensive Family Support Service.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee held on the 6 March 2012, be approved as a true and accurate record.

4 CORPORATE PARENTING POLICY STATEMENT

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support invited members to review the Corporate Parenting Policy Statement and consider whether any further changes are necessary. He stated that the Committee at its previous meeting on the 6 March 2012 had made amendments to the Corporate Parenting Policy Statement and considered that the revised statement be placed before this meeting of the Committee following the election in May 2012.

He outlined examples of how the Policy and the Council's commitment to improving its corporate parenting role, in that consultation with young people on how they are looked after continued routinely, in that a successful consultation event which was managed by the Independent Reviewing Officers and facilitated by Tros Gynnal which explored with young people how to improve the review process and to ensure their voices could be heard and better inform decision making.

He stated that a number of key initiatives had been developed, such as the integrated Post 16 Service (now known as Just Ask+), the traineeship, work experience and apprenticeship opportunities and the residential redesign. The views of young people on those initiatives had been ascertained through consultation events and used to inform service delivery and design.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support reported that the Corporate Parenting Policy Statement outlined the need to celebrate the achievements of looked after children and care leavers and highlighted the success of the second annual Achievement of Looked After Children Awards which had taken place in March 2012.

He drew the Committee's attention to a letter from Gwenda Thomas AM, Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services which informed elected Members of their responsibilities as Corporate Parents to the children in its care.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support also reported that the draft report of the CSSIW had been received which recognised the commitment by the Council and this Committee to its looked after children and that as part of the CSSIW's inspection the previous Chair of this Committee and the Chairperson of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been interviewed as part of the process of challenge and scrutiny.

RESOLVED: 1. That the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee reviewed the Corporate Parenting Policy Statement, subject to the following amendments:

Providing Strong Leadership

12 to read:

"Maximising the benefits to children and young people and their families on the resources available and demonstrating the effectiveness and value for money of the care and support provided".

Supporting Families and Foster Carers

17 to read:

“Facilitating better support to families and all carers to make sure that fewer children need to be looked after in the future”.

2. That the Corporate Parenting Policy Statement be placed on Bridgend and included in the pack for parents.

5 SAFEGUARDING AND FAMILY SUPPORT: INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE (IFSS)

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support reported on an update on progress of the development of the Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS), on the initial plans for the operation and function of the regional team and to receive guidance on any aspect of IFSS which needed high level local support to progress.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support reported that the Western Bay Programme Board was established with Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Councils who had agreed to collaborate on a number of regional initiatives including the establishment of an Integrated Family Support Service across the region, due to the high numbers of looked after population and high child protection numbers in the area. Given this Council's experience of establishing the Connecting Families initiative, it would also lead on the establishment of the IFSS with the Head of Safeguarding and Family Support as the project lead with Nicola Echanis heading up the project team which took responsibility for a bid for funding to the Welsh Government, which had offered £850,000 to establish an IFSS across the region. The level of grant had also been made available in 2013/14 and from 2014 a similar level of funding would be added to revenue support grant for the continuation of the service.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support reported that the recruitment process had commenced to appoint consultant social workers to the Service and accommodation for the bases was currently being identified, with the Service in Bridgend being co-located with the Connecting Families project. Mapping across services on each local authority area had begun in order to have clear care pathways for children and their families across the tiers of need. Long term ICT solutions were being sought, but in the short term agreement had been reached that each area will use its own integrated Children's System (ICS) for recording information on families. Work was being undertaken in respect of an information sharing protocol.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support reported that an IFSS Board would need to be established and would be led by Tony Clements, the Director of Social Services of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. The Board at officer level would consist of Directors and senior managers from Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea Councils, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board and the voluntary sector. The Board's membership would also include senior representatives from Education and/or Inclusion; senior representatives from Housing; Director of Primary, Community and Mental Health Services and senior representation from the Youth Offending Team and/or Probation Services or the Police. A 'critical friend' acting in a non-executive capacity would be drawn from a neighbouring local authority or Local Health Board to facilitate knowledge transfer

between pioneer and non pioneer areas and the potential to utilise services across authority boundaries.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support reported that the Integrated Family Support Team would offer the following five principles functions:-

- Provide advice and a consultancy to practitioners and agencies on engaging complex families with parental substance misuse;
- Undertake direct work with families through the application of time limited family focused interventions;
- Jointly with the case managers co-ordinate agencies, practitioners and others to access the services which the family needs;
- Spot purchase services not otherwise available;
- Providing training on Evidence Based Interventions for the wider Workforce.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support explained the role of the consultant social workers who would have management experience and several years social work experience and who would train and mentor other social workers. The senior practitioners will have three years experience in a particular field and who would mentor basic grade social workers.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support reported that the Head of ICT and Property represents the Authority on an All Wales Group which was looking at an integrated ICT system for the sharing of information on an All Wales basis.

RESOLVED: That the Committee supported the service and continued to monitor the implementation of this regional development and receive the annual report on the Integrated Family Support Team.

6 POST 16 SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support presented an update on progress on the new 'Just Ask Plus' Service which related to the ongoing development of a universal integrated post 16 service for all young people in need of supported living within the County Borough. The Cabinet in April 2012 had approved the development of a new post 16 service which included reconfiguration of existing services and the development of a specialist team to target services for all young people aged 16 to 25 living within the County Borough. The Authority's after care service and youth service 'Just Ask' provision had merged to create the new 'Just Ask Plus' integrated service for 16 - 25 year olds becoming operational on 2 April 2012 and based at the former Just Ask offices in Bridgend Town Centre. He outlined the findings of the new service model and stated that the existing services provided by the former 'Just Ask' youth service continued to be provided within the new service. A project group had been set up to drive the initiative forward has developed a number of work streams which were progressing.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support reported that the formal consultation process with staff within the former after care service relating to new job descriptions had commenced and approaching conclusion in respect of the social work and senior practitioner posts. Consultation was planned to consider the job descriptions in relation to the non social work qualified posts and unique posts within the service. A new team manager had been appointed and had taken

up the post on 6 June 2012. Funding had been agreed through the Medium Term Financial Strategy for an additional social work post to enable the new service to take on case management responsibility for all Looked After Children who are 16+.

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support also reported that the transfer of paper files to a paperless system using the Electronic Data Recording Management System (EDRMS) was underway. Discussions were taking place with the Housing Department to establish a Housing Officer post at the service to provide advice on housing and support due to the increasing number of young people presenting themselves as homeless. Interim referral and assessment tools had been developed for the service which will require amendment once the Joint Assessment Framework tools had been finalised and rolled out. The Bridgend Substance Misuse Action Team had secured funding to employ an additional full time substance misuse practitioner who would spend a specified number of hours based within the Just Ask + Service. Funding was also being sought for a keeping in touch worker to support young people not in education, employment training or training. He stated that a young person's focus group had been established to ensure their views were taken on board and listened to as the new service developed and from an initial consultation undertaken the integrated service model had received positive feedback. Outdoor activities had been organised and discussion groups to consider what services would benefit young people most within the new service and a DVD had been produced to demonstrate this. A further event was planned to take place focussing on advocacy and entitlements for young people.

RESOLVED: That the progress that had been made with regard to the current development of the Just Ask Plus service be noted.

7 INFORMAL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME - JULY 2012 - OCTOBER 2012

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support presented a report which sought approval of the proposed Informal Forward Work Programme (IFWP) covering the period from July 2012 - October 2012. He stated that the topics detailed had previously been accepted for inclusion in the Informal Forward Work Programme.

RESOLVED: That the Informal Forward Work Programme be approved.

8 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation)(Wales) Order 2007, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item as it contained exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 13 and 18 of Paragraph 14 of Part 4 and Paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Act:-

Following the application of the public interest test it was resolved that pursuant to the Act referred to above, to consider the undermentioned report in private with the public being excluded as it was considered that in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

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Minute No.

Summary of Item:

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Confidential Report of the Head of
Safeguarding and Family Support.