

Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on Monday, 9 September 2019 in Culture Fusion, Bradford

Commenced 4.30 pm
Concluded 6.15 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
Farley Tait Thirkill	Pollard	Stubbs

Apologies: Apologies Sue Thompson – Non-voting co-opted Member

Councillor Thirkill in the Chair

8. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

9. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2019 be signed as a correct record.

10. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

There were no appeals submitted by the public to review decisions to restrict documents.

11. APPOINTMENT OF NON -VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER

Resolved –

That it be recommended to the Regulatory and Appeals Committee that the appointment of the following Non-Voting Co-opted Member to the Corporate Parenting Panel for the remainder of the 2019/20 Municipal Year be confirmed:

Sue Lowndes – Education

ACTION: City Solicitor

12. DEPARTMENT OF PLACE CORPORATE PARENTING REPORT

The Department of Place provides support and activities for Looked After Children and young people across a wide range of services. The report of the Strategic Director of Place (**Document “E”**) provided information on this work and sought feedback from Panel Members on areas for further development.

The Strategic Director Place together with the Assistant Director Sports and Leisure gave an overview of the activities they undertook as a service to support children, with particular reference to Looked After Children.

In the area of Economic Development and Housing, joint working arrangements were in place with Children’s Services to ensure young people pathways were clear.

The Youth Service provided targeted and universal open access provision to support young people, and LAC had been actively involved in a number of projects.

In the area of Sport and Culture free gym membership was available to Looked After Children.

Within Planning, Transport and Highways there was a concerted effort to encourage care leavers and young people to take up apprenticeships.

Following the overview, the Strategic Director invited feedback from the young people and Members and suggestions on how the service can improve provision for LAC.

The Community Resource Worker stated that he had had discussions with the young people prior to this meeting about the issues set out in the report. The Young People asked the following questions and made a number of suggestions around improving sport and leisure provision and access for LAC:

A number of young people commented on the cost of gym membership and that concessions should be more generous for care leavers as they already struggled with day to day expenses. A similar issue was raised in relation to the affordability of Bingley Live, given the cost of tickets.

The cost of using public transport was also raised and it was stressed that even after applying the concessionary rate, for a lot of care leavers the fares were excessive, and this further inhibited young people from accessing a whole host of leisure activities.

In response to the issues raised, the Strategic Director Place stated that as a Council there was a subsidy provided to assist with concessionary fares. On the whole public transport was run by private operators, however, representations could be made on this issue via the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

The Chair stated that Social Workers could probably do more to alert young people to the concessions that were available across the district as well as in the area of public transport. The Community Resource Worker acknowledged more information could be made available through the Leaving Care Service. He also added that a number of young people in care were unable to swim and this was an area that needed addressing, as learning to swim was an essential life skill. The Assistant Director Sport and Leisure added that subsidised swimming lessons were available to young people.

In relation to the cost of public transport, Members suggested that an approach could be made to our Council representatives on the WYCA with a view to providing additional financial help to LAC.

A Member acknowledged that gym membership for young people had been rolled out, however we need to look into extending this for families and foster carers.

In terms of the accessibility of the information available around sports and leisure provision and concessionary rates, it was suggested that a dedicated page on the Council's website would be a useful addition.

In response to a question around apprenticeship opportunities for LAC, the Strategic Director acknowledged that he would look into what priority could be given to LAC within his service area.

There followed a discussion on extending the benefits of the Max Card for LAC and to Foster Carers. In response the Assistant Director Performance, Commissioning and Partnerships stated that the Foster Carers Marketing officer could be tasked with looking into the feasibility of such an approach. The Assistant Director added that in many instances just a request to an event organiser, venue or a theatres company, resulted in either concessionary or free entry, and this could be exploited further for the benefit of LAC.

Resolved –

- (1) That Social Workers and outreach workers are made aware of what assistance and subsidies are available to Children in Care and Foster Carers in relation to leisure and sporting activities, particularly in the cost of public transport.
- (2) That the Chair of this Panel approach the Council's representative on the West Yorkshire Combined Authority on the feasibility of extending travel subsidies to Children in Care and Foster Carers.
- (3) That the Assistant Director Performance, Commissioning and Partnerships be asked to liaise with the Foster Carers Marketing Officer, with a view to extending the benefits of the Max Card for Children in Care and Foster Carers.

ACTION: *Assistant Director Performance, Commissioning and Partnerships (Recommendations 1 and 3 above)
Chair (Recommendation 2)*

13. CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT EVENT FEEDBACK

On the 10th July an event was held with the Children in Care Council to celebrate the work that has been taking place and to start to think about how participation work with children Looked After might develop over the next year. The report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services (**Document "F"**) provided feedback on the event.

The Community Resource Worker stated that the event had been a huge success and the feedback of LAC was welcomed. He added that compared to other Local Authorities regionally and nationally we had a well functioning Children in Care Council.

The development and use of social media had vastly improved communications as well as the development work undertaken with the University and Foster Carers, and it was therefore necessary that the use of social media was exploited further.

The Young People had talked to trainee social workers about the realities of being in care and what made a good social worker;

Feedback was also received on Apprenticeships as well as how to gauge the opinions of young people in care.

There was also a recognition that the voice of young people on the Care Council should be stronger, as their voice was critical to the process.

There was also a need to capture the experience of Children in Care better, but at the same time there was an imperative to maintain confidentiality and respect the wishes of the young person.

Resolved -

- (1) That work continues with the Children in Care Council to agree the actions and to put these in place.
- (2) That all those involved in the event be commended for their hard work and that the Assistant Director Performance, Commissioning and Partnerships develop this work further, with a view to producing a newsletter.

ACTION: *Assistant Director Performance, Commissioning and Partnerships*

14. WORK PLAN 2019/2020

The Panel's Work Plan for 2019/20 was submitted for Member's consideration (Document "G").

Resolved -

That the Panel's Work Plan for 2019/20 (Document "G") be noted and that items for the November meeting be looked at, with a view to moving some of the items to a later date.

ACTION: *Assistant Director Performance, Commissioning and Partnerships*

Chair

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel.