

Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on 5 September 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Paul Arnold (Chair), Vikki Hartstean (Vice-Chair), Adam Carter, John Cecil, Georgette Polley, Cici Manwa and Augustine Ononaji

Wendy Caswell and Jackie Enifer

Apologies: Councillors

In attendance: Janet Simon, Assistant Director, Children's Social Care and Early Help Dan Jones, Strategic Lead, Looked After Children Luke Froment, Service Manager After Care Clare Moore, Strategic Lead for the Youth Offending Service and Prevention Liz Shields, Service Manager Adoption Service Carley Banks, Children in Care Council Tina Russel, Assistant Director SET CAMHS and Partnerships Kenna-Victoria Healey, Senior Democratic Services Officer Ewelina Sorbjan, Assistant Director Housing and Development

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

11. Minutes

Members discussed the minutes from the previous meeting held on 18 July 2023 and sought that it be noted Members had an in-depth discussion on Initial Health Assessments under the Children's Social Care Performance item.

12. Items of Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business.

13. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Carter declared an interest in that a relative assisted with the Christmas Care Leavers Dinner.

14. Children's Social Care Performance 2023-24

The Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Early Help presented the report found within the agenda.

Members discussed and noted the figures relating to Initial Health Assessments (IHA) highlighting their frustration that there appeared to be a 30% reduction in IHA being completed within the recommended timeframe and yet NELFT had been provided with additional funds to assist with the IHA. The committee heard that the reasons for assessment not heard on time could be down to ensuring forms had been correctly completed to meet the needs of the child.

The Committee requested to be kept updated on the performance of IHAs.

RESOLVED

- 1. That members note improvements and good practice and areas for improvement and development in Children's Social Care and note the work that is undertaken to ensure good and improving performance.**
- 2. Members provide challenge and support to the service to continually promote good outcomes for children.**

15. Joint Housing Protocol for Care Leavers

The Strategic Lead for Looked After Children presented the report found within the agenda.

Throughout discussions the following were discussed:

- A care leaver could stay with a placement once turning 18 years old, if agreed with the Foster Care.
- Additional support was able to be provided via the Head Start Housing scheme and Aftercare Team.
- Advice and support were offered and provided by the Aftercare Team for Care Leavers such as financial advice.

Members heard how as part of the Council's statutory duty, Officers kept in touch with Care Leavers offering support in finding suitable accommodation whether that be privately renting or as part of the Head Start Housing scheme.

RESOLVED

- 1. For the Committee to note the statutory duties of the Local Authority to support young people in obtaining suitable accommodation and how we plan to meet these duties.**
- 2. For the Committee to have oversight of the joint protocols and be involved in the ongoing review of delivery across Children's Services and Housing Services**

16. After Care Service Report

The Service Manager After Care introduced the report found within the agenda.

During discussions the Committee heard there were currently 28 personal advisers within the Aftercare Team, with an additional 3 roles to be recruited too. It was commented that retention of staff was important so be able to provide continuity for Looked After Children as support was on offer and provide until the young person reached 25 year old.

Members were advised officers had worked hard to develop a care leaving form which enabled young people leaving care to give their feedback on the service, which in turn assisted with helping officers to improve the service. It was explained how annual events were held such as summer BBQs, which allowed young people to meet other care leavers and gave the opportunity to seek support if they wished.

The Chair of the Committee thanked Officers for their commitment to the young people they were supporting.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Members of the Committee are informed about Thurrock's Aftercare service and the support offered to Care Leavers.**
- 2. Members of the Committee promote Corporate Parenting.**
- 3. Members to provide feedback and challenge to the service in meeting its duties and achieving good outcomes for our young people.**

17. Report on Transitions to Adult Services for Care Leavers and Children in Care

The Strategic Lead for Looked After Children presented the report found within the agenda. During discussions it was acknowledged that Officers hoped to fill the current vacancies by the end of the year.

Members heard how young people met their personal adviser at 16 years old, this gave the opportunity to be able to build a relationship with them before they became a care leaver. It was mentioned Officers were mindful of the number of professionals there could already be in a young person's life and so this was taken into account when introducing them to their personal adviser.

RESOLVED:

Members of the committee review the work of the CLA Service and Preparing for Adulthood Team in meeting the Council's role as a Corporate Parent. In relation to the work done for Children in Care and Care leavers to transition to Adult services where it is appropriate to do so.

18. Report on 'Staying Put' Policy and Provision in Thurrock

The Strategic Lead for Looked After Children presented the report found within the agenda.

RESOLVED:

- 1. Members are informed on the updated Staying Put Policy.**

- 2. Members review and comment on the policy and note the Council's responsibility as a Corporate Parent.**

19. Verbal Update - Children in Care Council

The Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Early Help advised the Committee that the Children in Care Council (CICC) as a service had been brought back into the Council under Children's Services.

Members heard that the new lead officer for the CICC would be attending the next meeting in the new year and would be accompanied with the Chair and Vice-Chair of CICC, to give an update to the Committee.

20. Work Programme

Members discussed the work programme and asked that the following reports be included:

- An update on Initial Health Assessments
- An update on missing episodes to be included in the Children's Social Care Performance report.

The recording of the meeting can be found from the following link:
[Corporate Parenting Committee - Tuesday 5 September 2023, 7:00pm - Thurrock Council committee meeting webcasts \(public-i.tv\)](#)

The meeting finished at 8.46 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**