

## **NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

### **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

#### **MINUTES**

of meeting held on **18 JANUARY 2010** at the

Council House from 2.31 pm to 4.04 pm

Councillor Mellen	(Chair)
Councillor Ibrahim	(Vice-Chair)
Councillor Collins	(for minute 32 only)
Councillor Griggs	
Councillor Klein	
Councillor Marshall	
Councillor Morley	
Councillor Urquhart	

indicates present at meeting

#### **External representative in attendance**

Ms S Parker - National Youth Advocacy Service

#### **Officers in attendance**

Ms C Brudenell	- Director of Children's Trust Transitional Programme	)	
Ms S Cain	- Adoption Service Manager	)	
Ms S Clarke	- Acting Service Manager of Children's Residential	)	Children's Services
Mr S Gautam	- Director of Specialist Services	)	
Ms J Lewis	- Head of Children in Care	)	
Ms K Marron	- Head of Curriculum and Strategy 8-13	)	
Mr K Banfield	- Head of Performance Improvement and Planning	)	Resources
Mr M Leavesley	- Committee Administrator	)	

#### **ACTION**

#### **29 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from David Cooke (Business in the Community), Katrina Curnow (Community and Culture) and Gill Moy (Nottingham City Homes).

#### **30 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Klein and Ibrahim declared personal interests in agenda item 8 (minute 36), Adoption Agency Provision – Inspection, as Council appointed members of the Adoption Panel, which did not preclude them from speaking and voting.

### **31 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2009, copies of which had been circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chair.**

### **32 SMALL GROUP HOMES**

The Board received a joint presentation from Satinder Gautam, Director of Specialist Services, and Sharon Clarke, Acting Service Manager of Children's Residential, detailing the City's proposal to move to small group home provision for some of its children in care.

The main points were as follows:

- in 2008, Children's Services Departmental Management Team agreed to the reconfiguration of residential provision in the City, including the programme plan;
- research into provision at other local authorities had been undertaken, including visits to Stoke-on-Trent, where a similar scheme had already been successfully implemented;
- the City currently had 17 mainstream placements in 3 residential units for children aged 13-16 years:
- under stage 1 of the proposals, 2 houses would accommodate 2 young people each, with 8 members of staff working with the residents towards their transition to independence;
- when the proposals were fully implemented, the City would close and dispose of Ranskill Gardens and Beckhampton Road residential units, making a cost saving over current provision and improving the outcomes for young people due to an increased one-to-one working relationship.

During discussion and in response to questions from Councillors, the following comments were made:

- the staffing hierarchy at each home consisted of a Unit Manager, Assistant Manager, 3 Senior Residential Social Workers (non-qualified) and 3 Residential Social Workers (non-qualified), on a pay scale ranging from £36,000 to £29,000 per annum. It was stated that the Unit Manager would have responsibility for multiple homes;
- the staffing level was as a result of national requirements, which included as a minimum a registered manager who was accountable at all times, and would lead to a reduction in running costs because there would be no ancillary staff at any of the homes;
- the homes would cater for 16 Plus year olds in City care and assist them with the transition to independent living (in subjects such as cooking, cleaning and financial management);

**ACTION**

- the City's current cohort of 13-16 year old children in care were looked after by 205 carers (some in City units, some in privately run units and others in foster care) and, for those over 15, by the 15 Plus Team, with each child having a dedicated worker who worked with them from 15 to independence.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) that the presentation be noted;**
- (2) that the Director of Specialist Services be requested to review the staffing hierarchy proposals for each home, to clarify whether there was a necessity for 7/8 staff at each home or if a 'flatter' hierarchy may be more appropriate.**

S Gautam

**33 ORAL FEEDBACK****(a) Visits to children's residential units**

Further to minute 25 dated 21 September 2009, consideration was given to a briefing note, copies of which had been circulated, and feedback from Councillors and colleagues regarding visits they had recently undertaken to Crocus Fields, Vivian Avenue, Beckhampton Court and Ranskill Gardens residential units, including their views on the buildings, amenities available, staffing levels and appropriateness of the provision overall in light of the current residents.

**RESOLVED that the feedback and briefing note be noted.**

**(b) National Children and Adults Conference**

The Board received feedback from Councillor Mellen and Satinder Gautam regarding their attendance at the National Children and Adults Conference, on 21 to 23 October 2009 at the Harrogate International Centre.

It was stated that there were some good presentations, including one surrounding foster caring and the support available to both the carer and those cared for, especially the amount of consultation undertaken regarding the requirements of 'challenging' children.

Another idea, first suggested in a government White Paper in 2007, was for 'Virtual Head Teachers', which was a scheme whereby each local council employed an experienced teacher to oversee the educational progress of all children under the care of that local authority as a single school may have only one or two children in care on their registers and be unfamiliar with the issues.

**RESOLVED that the position be noted.**

**(c) 11 Million Takeover Day**

Councillor Mellen reported that the 11 Million Takeover Day, held on 6 November 2009, had involved 15 young people, each of whom accompanied either an officer or Councillor, including himself, the Leader and the Chief Executive during their day-to-day work. He stated that the feedback from both sides had been that it had been a great success and that the scheme should be expanded in 2010 to include

more young people.

**RESOLVED that the feedback be noted.**

**(d) Business in the Community**

Ms Lewis updated members on the latest work undertaken by Business in the Community and the Council's Care Team regarding young people and the 'Buddy' Scheme, whereby young people worked for up to 10 days (either as 2 full weeks or a number of days spread over a few weeks) in a Council Department, enabling them to get used to a working environment.

**RESOLVED that departmental representatives in attendance today inform their Chief Officers of the scheme and request them to notify the Head of Children in Care should they wish to become part of the scheme.**

**(e) 'Big It Up' Awards**

A 'Big It Up' Awards event had been held to honour the achievements of Nottingham's teenagers and young people, aged 13-17 years, who were in the care of Nottingham City Council.

BBC East Midlands presenters Dominic Heale and Anne Davies, along with Nottingham actors Joe Dempsie, Tim Smith and Luke Gell, presented awards to 59 young people, and a special Director's Award for Outstanding Achievement was also presented to one young person on the night.

A record number of nominations had been received from adults involved in the lives of children in care, for the outstanding progress that they had made in the last year, in one of the following Every Child Matters categories:

- Enjoy and Achieve;
- Be Healthy;
- Stay Safe;
- Economic Wellbeing;
- Making a Positive Contribution.

**RESOLVED that the position be noted.**

**34 ESTABLISHMENT OF A 15 PLUS SERVICE FOR CHILDREN IN CARE AND THOSE SEEKING ASYLUM**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Specialist Services, copies of which had been circulated, informing the Board of the intention to establish a 15-Plus service to identify and address shortfalls and ensure the service providing assistance to young people with their transition from care to independence was fit for purpose. This establishment was to ensure compliance with the Children and Young Person Act 2008 (which incorporated the Leaving Care Act 2000) and key recommendations within the White Paper, Care Matters: A Time for Change.

It was reported that the 15 Plus service would ensure all young people leaving the care of the City would have a 'pathway plan', including timescales, worked up in partnership with other relevant agencies.

**ACTION**

During discussion, the following comments were made:

- those placed in care out of the County should receive the same priority as those within, as they were still the ultimate responsibility of the City Council. In response, it was stated that they did receive the same levels of attention;
- any young person unfortunate enough to be appearing in court should be accompanied by a responsible adult from the City. In response, it was stated that there was an expectation from the Directorate that this would happen on all occasions, although the City Council was not always informed of a young offender's potential court appearance.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted.**

**35 NATIONAL YOUTH ADVOCACY SERVICE NOTTINGHAM (NYAS): THEMES AND ISSUES FOR NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

Consideration was given to a report of Sarah Parker, NYAS Co-ordinator for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, copies of which had been circulated, detailing the work undertaken by NYAS Residential Visiting Advocates and Issue Based Advocates during the period April – September 2009.

It was reported that the Residential Visiting Advocates visited all City residential units on a monthly basis and the Issue Based Advocates were responsible for resolving any issues raised by a young person.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted.**

**36 ADOPTION AGENCY PROVISION - INSPECTION**

Consideration was given to a report of Ofsted, copies of which had been circulated, detailing the outcome of an Ofsted inspection on 15 October 2009 of the Council's Adoption Agency provision.

Sonia Cain, Adoption Service Manager, presented the report and stated that the overall rating of the service was 'good – the provision was strong'.

The Board commented that all aspects of the report showed that the Adoption Service Team were performing well and that the adoption provision of the City was of a high standard.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted.**

**37 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF CHILDREN IN CARE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Schools and Early Years, copies of which had been circulated, detailing the educational outcomes during 2009 of children in care and informing the Board of actions to be implemented, in partnership with schools, to secure improved outcomes in 2010.

During discussion, the following comments were made:

- there was some evidence to suggest that small group homes led to better educational attainment, although this was yet to be definitively proven;

**ACTION**

- designated teachers for children in care strengthened outcomes as personal education plans could be put in place and individual needs identified.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) that the report be noted;
- (2) that the Director of Schools and Early Years be requested to submit a report to a future meeting, having undertaken an investigation into children in care's perception of why they were under attaining at school.

**A Downing**

**38 WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10**

**RESOLVED that, subject to inclusion of an item for the March 2010 meeting, entitled 'Contribution made by other partners', the Board's work programme matrix, copies of which had been circulated, be noted.**

**J Lewis**