

Subject to approval at the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held at the County Borough Council Offices, The Pavilions, Clydach Vale on Monday 25th September, 2017.

Present

County Borough Councillor G E Hopkins – In the Chair

County Borough Councillors:-

C Leyshon, J Rosser, R Yeo, M Weaver, S Rees-Owen

Officers in Attendance:-

Mr C Jones – Director, Legal & Democratic Services

Mr G Isingrini – Group Director, Community & Children's Services

Ms A Batley – Service Director, Children's Services

Ms E Pearce – Head of Safeguarding & Support

Ms G Davies – Service Director, Access, Engagement & Inclusion

Ms J Thomas - Service Improvement, Engagement & Complaints Manager

Mr J O'Brien – Head of Youth Offending Service

Ms Z Lancelott – Head of Engagement & Participation

Ms T Prosser – Service Manager

Ms M Meredith – Residential Services Manager

Ms H Williams – Cabinet Business Officer

Others in Attendance:-

Dr T Garthwaite

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8. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair took the opportunity to welcome Members to the meeting and apologies were received from Councillor J James.

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, there were no declarations of interest declared pertaining to the agenda.

10. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

It was **RESOLVED**:

- a) To approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on the 3rd June 2017.

Councillor S Rees-Owen referred Members to page 12 of the minutes where it stated 'The Chair of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee commented that the report was useful and whether it could be referred to the committee for further comments'. The Councillor advised that following the meeting, a report in respect of the 'Accommodation of Homeless 16 and 17 Year Old Children Working with Youth Offending Teams' would be going to the Committee in due course.

11. CHANGE TO THE AGENDA

The Chairman changed the running order of the agenda in order for the training to be conducted at the end of the meeting.

12. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Business Officer provided the Board with the draft work programme for the Municipal Year 2017/18.

The Board were referred to the programme at appendix 1 of the report and it was explained that the document was fluid and could be amended at any point according to the Board's preferences.

The Chair commented that it was pleasing to see a robust programme and that the Board's Annual Report for 2016/17 should be added prior to its submission to Cabinet.

The Service Director for Access, Engagement & Inclusion advised that a report in respect of Educational Outcomes for Children Looked After would be presented to the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee and questioned whether the Board would want to consider it at the next meeting, to which they agreed.

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It was **RESOLVED**:

- a) To approve the draft work programme as a basis, which can be amended to reflect any changing priorities throughout the year;
- b) That the two additional reports be included in the programme for November:-
 - The Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2016/17
 - Educational Outcomes for Looked After Children

13. SOCIAL SERVICES COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS

The Service Improvement, Engagement & Complaints Manager provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an overview of the operation of effectiveness of the statutory Social Services complaints procedure between 1st January 2017 – 31st March 2017.

The report contained information on the number of complaints received, the nature of the complaints and any lessons learnt, as well as detailing Councillor, A.M and M.P enquiries and the number of complaints received.

The officer explained that there were 19 informal complaints received in the quarter which was slightly less than that of the previous quarter. The number of compliments received was also slightly lower but overall, consistent with those received in previous quarters.

The officer reiterated that issues with timescales were ongoing due to the complexity of the complaints but that they would continue to be monitored.

Members of the Board were pleased to note that there had been issues raised by advocates which highlighted the success of the service.

Councillor S Rees-Owen raised a query in respect of the high number of issues raised in the Cynon Valley. It was explained that there hadn't been a significant rise in the Cynon Valley and that the level of complaints remained steady, due to the caseworkers using the correct avenue efficiently.

The Councillor raised a second query in respect of the homelessness issue outlined on page 55 of the report and questioned why there were no comments included. The Complaints Manager advised that due to the complaint occurring in quarter 1, there may not have been any further comments before its closure but that it would be looked into and a report in respect of homelessness complaints would be presented to the Board at a future meeting.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- a) To note the contents of the report and the work undertaken by the Complaints Unit

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14. NYAS - QUARTER 2 COMPLAINTS

The Service Improvement, Engagement & Complaints Manager provided the Corporate Parenting Board with the quarterly narrative report on behalf of NYAS for the period 1st April – 30th June 2017.

The officer explained that during the period, 16 referrals had been received with the majority of young people aged between 17 and 20. It was explained that the most likely reason for this was because NYAS advocates delivered a series of six advocacy awareness sessions to young people and the 16+ Team at a drop in facility in Pontypridd.

Members were informed that referrals for children and young people subject of the child protection process were low in comparison to other local authorities and that no complaints had been received during the quarter.

The officer spoke of the continuous service promotion, development and training held by NYAS to ensure all children and young people in the County Borough are aware of the advocacy service and how to access it. Members were pleased to hear that RCT continued to lead the way in ensuring the active offer would help more young people achieve their outcomes.

The Chair thanked the officer for the report and added that it would be useful for the Board to receive the NYAS annual report next year, to get a better understanding of the process behind rolling out the active offer. The Deputy Cabinet Member for Children & Young People agreed that it would be important to monitor progress due to it being a new requirement with a lack of comparative data.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- a) To note the contents of the report
- b) To receive a copy of NYAS' annual report in the next Municipal Year

15. EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) for the next item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 13 of Part 4 of schedule 12A of the Act, namely information relating to a particular individual. Transparency in the conduct and capabilities of individuals will be discussed and considered. Consequently, it is considered, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing information by virtue of which the meeting is likely not to be open to the public during its consideration.

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16. REGULATION 32 REPORTS

The Residential Services Manager provided the Board with an update on the Regulation 32 visits undertaken at the three children's homes – Beddau, Bryndar and Nantgwyn.

The officer outlined a summary of the inspection outcomes and it was **RESOLVED**:

- a) To note the contents of the report
- b) To extend an annual invitation to Mr John Llewellyn Thomas to discuss the process behind his reports
- c) That the Deputy Cabinet Member for Children & Young People have further discussions with Senior Officers to determine whether there should be a mechanism in place when reporting information in respect of Independent Placement Providers for children looked after.

N.B:- The meeting came out of closed session

17. MEMBERS TRAINING

The Chair welcomed Dr Tony Garthwaite, an external consultant, to the meeting and introductions were made around the table.

Mr Garthwaite provided the Board with a presentation followed by an informal discussion in respect of 'An overview of corporate parenting and good practice'.

During the training, the Board learned of the three levels of responsibility:

- Understanding the legal/policy framework
- Knowing the profile of local children – and how well they are doing
- Considering the needs of children looked after in all decisions

Members of the Board took part in various group activities and received a second presentation from the Service Director, Children's Services, which, in turn, allowed them compare the work of the Corporate Parenting Board to the definitions of 'good practice'.

Both officers and staff were given the opportunity to voice their opinions during the session. The general consensus was that everyone felt the Corporate Parenting Board was a comfortable and safe environment where open discussions could take place focussed on ensuring the best possible outcomes for children looked after.

Following meaningful discussions, the Board were left to ponder the question 'what can we do better?' which would be looked at during future meetings, if any Board Member felt there were ways in which the Board could improve.

The Vice-Chair took the opportunity to thank Mr. Garthwaite for conducting the training session, commenting on behalf of the Board that had it been very useful for both Members and Officers.

The meeting terminated at 12:50pm

**Councillor G Hopkins
Chair**