

**CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY  
PANEL  
17 MARCH 2010  
5.00 - 7.25 PM**



**Present:**

Councillors Mrs Ryder (Chairman), Mrs Birch, Mrs McCracken and Mrs Shillcock

**Also Present:**

Councillor Beadsley

Councillor Barndard, Executive Member for Children & Young People

**40. One Minute Silence**

A one minute silence was held in memory of the Vice Chairman, Councillor Ray Simonds.

**41. Introductions**

The Chairman welcomed Janette Karklins, Director of Children, Young People and Learning to her first meeting.

**42. Minutes and Matters Arising**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2010 be agreed as a correct record.

Matters arising:

Visit to Holly House – the Chair said that she had sent a thank you card to staff and letter and Christmas card to the young person who had invited the members to look around her home. It was suggested that the next visit could be to Rainforest Walk, Penny Reuter said that she would arrange the visit.

Policy for the Education of Look After Children:- the decision for the policy for the Education of Look After Children had been made by the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning in January 2010. This would set out the responsibilities in relation to Look After Children's education.

Award Ceremony for Looked After Children – the award ceremony for Looked After Children was a success and had been published in the local newspaper. Arrangements had been made for the Mayor to visit Amy's school to present a further award.

The Pledge – Sheila McKeand updated the Panel on the progress with The Pledge. She confirmed that the Look After Children had a copy of The Pledge and topics had been discussed with the children and they had given feedback.

Members Briefing Seminar – a members briefing seminar had taken place and the attendance had been good, 21 Councillors had attended.

Performance Indicator NI148 – Penny Reuter confirmed that the information on performance indicator NI148 had been send to Councillor Beadsley.

Children In Care Council: ‘Say it Loud, Say it Proud’ – a Council meeting had taken place during the February 2010 half term, 4 young people attended. It was noted that Sarah Roberts went to the meeting to give the young people information regarding her role. Dates for the next meetings were currently being organised.

**43. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**44. Review of Terms of Reference**

Penny Reuter presented her report on achievements and review of the Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel.

Achievements regarding objectives as set out in paragraph 2.1 of the Terms of Reference included:

- The Pledge had been adopted.
- Meetings had considered performance.
- A number of celebration events had taken place.
- The Council’s corporate parenting responsibilities had been promoted.
- A member briefing had taken place.

Regarding scrutiny mechanisms Penny suggested that anonymous case studies could be used more often in the scrutiny process and to look at other methods which involved young people in a better capacity. The Terms of Reference could include linking in work with care leavers and other panels and it was suggested that the minutes of the Care Matters Steering Group could be brought to CPAP meetings.

Arising in discussion suggestions included: -

- Introducing the Children in Care Council to continue development of the Corporate Parent Advisory Panel.
- Bringing the minutes of the Children and Young People’s Trust to CPAP meetings.
- Investigating how CPAP works with other corporate bodies.
- Involving items from the Children & Young People’s Plan.
- Focus on listening to young people.
- The Chair report to Council on a regular basis to promote and give a good news item regarding the work of the Corporate Parent Advisory Panel.

Penny said that she would do more work on the Terms of Reference and then the finalised version would go to the Executive Member for a decision.

The Panel agreed:

- 1 To consider whether there are any additional objectives that could be recommended to the Executive for inclusion in the terms of reference.
- 2 To consider if there are any changes in members that could be recommended to the Executive.

- 3 To consider how its work can be linked to the work of the Children and Young People's Trust.
- 4 That the training session for the coming year is focused on the participation of children and young people.

45. **Performance Monitoring Report**

Penny Reuter presented her report giving an overview of performance of Children's Social Care for look after children during 2008/09.

Arising in discussion –

- 43% of looked after children were in the category of abuse or neglect.
- At the end of Jan 2010, 18 out of 83 children had moved placement three times or more. This was considered poor and analysis of the reasons had been presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel. There were a number of reasons for movement including pregnancy, offending and substance misuse and improvements were being made.
- 45% of looked after children were with Foster Carers within the Borough.

46. **Foster Carers' Association**

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Wayne Bowditch, Corrie Sharp and Peter Hall, Fostering 4 Bracknell Association, who gave a presentation on the work of The Bracknell Forest Foster Carer's Association –

- The purpose of the Association was to provide an opportunity for foster carers to develop a support network and get to know each other. Also to promote fostering and represent views of foster carers and a reference point for developing services.
- The Association was funded by Bracknell Forest Council, Children's Social Care and a grant from the National Lottery.
- There were four officers and quarterly committee meetings were held to discuss plans and activities.
- Activities for foster parents and children were organised which included a trip to Chessington World of Adventures, an Easter Egg hunt and Christmas parties.
- A member of the Association has organised a library of specialist books for carers to borrow.
- The Lottery grant would be used for foster carers to get to know each other by working together on outward bound type of activities.
- Wayne and Corrie meet quarterly with Shelia McKean and Helen Fenton to discuss a range of topics, feedback carer's views and learn about new initiatives. The notes of the meetings are sent out to foster carers and are discussed.
- A magazine, Bitz, was distributed by the Association and went out with Foster Carers packs and was available in the Library.

- The Association are approaching companies to obtain discounts for foster parents in the local area.
- They are currently developing contact with foster carers by email, this has not been very popular but would prove a useful way to monitor information.

Wayne emphasised that the Association was still learning and would be happy to accept help from the Panel. He said that they were trying to promote the role of the foster carer and work with the Council to encourage new foster carers.

The Chair thanked Wayne, Corrie and Peter for the presentation and the work of the association.

**47. Regional Commissioning of More Local Residential Provision for Children with Complex Needs**

Sheila McKeand gave an update of the regional commissioning of more local residential provision for children with complex needs.

Sheila said that there is difficulty with residential resources in the region for looked after children with emotional and behavioural needs. They are sometimes placed a long distance from the Borough which creates problems such as social worker visits. There is a complexity regarding providers so finance and work had been carried out with other Local Authorities to develop a tender process to bring in a provider.

A provider has been selected with a provision of 20 beds between six local authorities, this would guarantee Bracknell Forest Council one bed with ability for future expansion. This enabled a guaranteed place, cost savings over a year with minimal risk and would secure specialist placements. Sheila added that the process had been successful and would enable a better standard of care for looked after children.

The Chair thanked Sheila for the work carried out by her and the team.

**48. Employment of Care Leavers**

Sheila McKeand presented a report on the progress of plans to improve the employment opportunities for care leavers within the Borough. There were a number of initiatives working towards supporting care leavers into employment. These included:

- Care2work which is a national scheme set up in 2009 and run by the National Care Advisory Service. It monitors the strategic work plans of local authorities and negotiates with a range of national employers to develop a sustainable scheme for the employment of care leavers. Within Berkshire the Care2work advisor is in negotiation with a large company who has expressed an interest. Work will be carried out with national employers for them to take on some of the Council's care leavers.
- Public Service Award 16 is a national initiative to improve the employment opportunities and accommodation for vulnerable groups of adults. In January 2010 Bracknell Forest was successful in a bid for money to develop the service for these groups. The money will be used to appoint a fixed term project worker and a specialist housing post to work with vulnerable people on accessing housing.

Within Bracknell Forest, Children's Services and Corporate Human Resources were working together to develop a scheme where plans can be tailored to the individual needs of the young person. Care Leavers in this scheme would not be employed by the Council but fall into the voluntary/work experience category. In January 2010 there were 19 care leavers who were without education or employment, Seven of these young people would be used to match possible work experience placements within the Council.

49. **Suggested Future Programme of Meetings**

The suggested future programme of meetings was agreed by the Panel.

50. **July Training Session**

The Panel agreed that the suggested training session on Wednesday 7 July 2010 would be changed and would now be held on Tuesday 6 July 2010 at 5.30pm to 7.30pm.

51. **Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting would be held Wednesday 19 May 2010.

**CHAIRMAN**