

BARNSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is not a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has not been included in the relevant Forward Plan

Report of the Executive Director (People)
to Cabinet

6 September 2017

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PLACEMENT AND SUFFICIENCY BOARD FOR CHILDREN IN CARE (2016/17)

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present for Cabinet's consideration, the first annual report of the recently established Placement and Sufficiency Board for Children in Care.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 **That Cabinet notes the information and data contained in the Board's annual report.**

3.0 Introduction

- 3.1 The enclosed annual report (*Please see Appendix*) firstly, takes a retrospective look at the progress made by the People Directorate in order to comply with the statutory sufficiency duty as exemplified in the strategic objectives and key priorities of the Borough Placement and Sufficiency Strategy, during 2016/17.
- 3.2 Secondly, the Board's report takes a forward look at the challenges that are likely to be faced in securing sufficient, stable placements for children most in need of care.

4.0 Proposal and Justification

- 4.1 As the annual report states, the Children Act (1989) requires local authorities, as the 'corporate parent' to ensure there is sufficient accommodation for children under their care who cannot live at home and whose circumstances indicate that it would be strongly in the child's interest to be looked after by the local authority.
- 4.2 Further, the Housing Act (1996) clarifies the responsibility of local authorities in meeting the needs of young people aged 16-17 who require accommodation due to the risk of homelessness.
- 4.3 As a result, the Council must continue to consider the range of accommodation in its area which is capable of meeting the needs of children most in need of care, as part of both a prevailing statutory duty and the Council's own 'Pledge' to look after children in our care within a safe and caring home.

5.0 Consideration of Alternative Approaches

- 5.1 Please see Paragraphs 4.1 – 4.3 above.

6.0 Implications for Local People and Service Users

6.1 The annual report makes extensive reference to the Borough's Placement and Sufficiency Strategy, together with the Council's role of 'corporate parent' and its 'Pledge' to children in our care.

6.2 Through this, the Council provides an undertaking to look after all children, in need of care and from any part of the Borough, within a safe and caring home and at the same time, to:

- Promote, support and respect every child's own identity.
- Ensure they all receive a good start in life and a good education.
- Maintain the health and wellbeing of every child in need of care.
- Enable every child requiring care to make the transition to adulthood
- Involve every child in the planning and delivery of services and decisions affecting them.

6.3 These responsibilities have been reinforced through Part 1, Chapter 1 of the Children and Social Work Act (2017).

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising through consideration of the annual report, Cabinet's attention is drawn to the summary information, concerning expenditure on children's social care placements, as set out in pages 7 and 10 of the annual report (*Please see Appendix*)

8.0 Employee Implications

8.1 There are no direct workforce implications, however, in considering the annual report and any future reports, concerning services for safeguarding children, children in care and care leavers, future proposals for the regulation, professional standards and fitness to practice of child and family social workers, under Part 2 of the Children and Social Work Act (2017) should be noted.

9.0 Communications Implications

9.1 There are no communications implications emerging through this report.

10.0 Consultations

10.1 The annual report has been informed by the comments of children in care, including the Care4Us Council who are always encouraged to articulate their thoughts upon services of importance to them. The Council's Senior Management Team has been consulted on the report.

11.0 The Corporate Plan and the Council's Performance Management Framework

11.1 Achieving the strategic objectives and key priorities of the Placement and Sufficiency Strategy, accord with two of the Council's wider priorities, firstly, in ensuring every

child attends a good school and is successful in learning and work and, secondly, that all children are safe from harm.

12.0 Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 12.1 The Council's 'Pledge' to children in our care was the subject of a recent review, that was considered by Cabinet. One of the outcomes of the 'Pledge' is to promote, support and respect the identity of each child. There is an ongoing commitment towards achieving this and subsequent annual reports will go into greater detail on our progress.

13.0 Tackling the Impact of Poverty

- 13.1 A further 'promise' in our 'Pledge' is to ensure all children and young people in our care, including those leaving care are prepared for the transition to adulthood and a number of steps are being taken to enable them to better manage their finances and acquire the qualifications needed to access apprenticeships, additional skills and jobs, in a growing local economy.

14.0 Tackling Health Inequalities

- 14.1 Whilst not part of this annual report, Cabinet will recall that, during its review of progress in fulfilling the outcomes of our 'Pledge' to children in care, the percentage of those receiving regular health and dental checks remains stable and it is likely that the gap in health inequality between children in care and their peers will continue to be closed.

15.0 Reduction of Crime and Disorder

- 15.1 Similarly, whilst not part of this report, the Council's 'Pledge' and our role as corporate parent, help fundamentally improve the safeguarding and protection of vulnerable children and young people from harm and exploitation and in steering them away from risky and harmful behaviour that can also impact upon their communities.

16.0 Risk Management Issues

- 16.1 Equally, the Placement and Sufficiency Strategy is supported by an action plan, performance data set and risk log which enable action to be taken in order to manage and mitigate any risks emerging to the achievement of objectives and priorities.

17.0 Health, Safety and Emergency Resilience Issues

- 17.1 There are no implications for the health and safety of the public or employees through the annual report.

18.0 Compatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights

18.1 The Council’s role as corporate parent together with the ‘Pledge’ to children in our care, accord with the Articles and Protocols of the Convention, particularly in ensuring the rights of a child to be safeguarded from harm.

19.0 Conservation of Biodiversity

19.1 There are no implications for the local environment or the conservation of biodiversity emerging through the report.

20.0 Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

20.1 None, applicable.

21.0 List of Appendices

21.1 Appendix: Placement and Sufficiency Board for Children in Care (Annual Report 2016/17)

22.0 Details of Background Papers

22.1 Details of background papers used in the compilation of this report are available to view by contacting the People Directorate, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, PO Box 634, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 9GG

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Financial Implications/
Consultation <i>(to be signed by senior Financial Services Officer where no financial implications</i>