Public Value Review of Services for Looked After Children

Purpose of the report: Scrutiny of Services and Budgets

To submit to the Children and Families Select Committee an updated Action Plan from the Public Value Review (PVR) of services for Looked After Children (LAC).

Introduction:

1 On 14 July 2009 as part of its consideration of the paper “Leading the Way: changing the way we do business” the Cabinet agreed to undertake a three-year programme of Public Value Reviews (PVRs) to look at all services / functions provided by the Council.

2 The PVR for LAC ran from November 2009 to March 2010. It was sponsored by Andy Roberts, Strategic Director for Children, Schools and Families.

3 The purpose of the PVR was to review services provided to children and young people already in the care system in Surrey. The review was focussed upon how we can provide high quality and effective placements for LAC and ensure that related services are delivered in a personalised and efficient way in order to meet their needs and ensure best value.

4 It was completed in tandem with a range of work being undertaken within the service that included
   - An internal review of in-house fostering and residential provision and quality
   - The re-establishment and enhancement of our Corporate Parenting arrangements
   - A restructuring of the Division, including fostering, adoption and residential provision
Scope of the Review and recommendations

5  The following areas were prioritised for the review:

- In-house residential services,
- Mechanisms to support internal fostering placements and prevent use of external placements
- Homes to school transport
- Improved and more cost effective provision of services for asylum-seeking young people who become LAC, including post 18 support

6  The recommendations from the review and the related action plan were approved by Cabinet on 29th June 2010.

Conclusions:

Financial and value for money implications

7  The review has taken place within the wider ongoing work of the Children’s Service to reshape service provision over the next three years to embed good practice and ensure sustainable budgets. This process will consist of reconfiguring and reshaping services, in order to be able to effectively respond to demand while achieving efficiencies.

8  The review has identified potential net savings of £1.1million by the end of 2013/14

9  The net savings will contribute to the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Directorate savings.

Children’s Services Finance Manager to confirm financial implications

Equalities Implications

10 Social work Services provided are governed by the operating procedures of Surrey County Council and its partner agencies and as such are based on non-discriminatory practice.

Risk Management Implications

11 These children who live away from home through being looked after are the most vulnerable children in our area. It is essential that the service provided for them is of a good/high standard and they are safe and secure in our care. The service had an announced inspection in September 2010 with a finding of Adequate for services for Looked After Children. There is a continued need to retain a strong focus and momentum to improve services for Looked After Children.
Implications for the Council’s Priorities or Community Strategy/Local Area Agreement Targets

12 Looked After Children are identified as a Council priority through the Children and Young People’s Plan. SCC and partner agencies need to work together to achieve improved outcomes for Looked After Children.

Recommendations:

(a) The Children and Families Select Committee is asked to scrutinise the actions and progress made to date.

Next steps:

For the PVR Action Plan update to be presented to the PVR Implementation Steering Board on 8\textsuperscript{th} November 2010

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Sources/background papers:
Appendix 1 PVR Action Plan Update October 2010