

CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE SELECT COMMITTEE

Item Under Consideration: A Housing, Accommodation and Homes Strategy For Surrey

Date Considered: 02 March 2023

1. The high cost of housing and deficiency in key worker housing in Surrey is considered by managers working in Children and Families to be a significant impediment to stabilising their workforce. It was confirmed to the Select Committee at its 2 March 2023 meeting that the Council did not offer a comprehensive key worker housing scheme.
2. The Committee learned that more social workers had left than joined in the year to October 2022, when turnover was 27.8 per cent: some were moving to higher paid agency work. In the 2022 Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services, Ofsted highlighted the need to improve "the proportion of permanent staff, to reduce turnover". The CFL directorate is aiming to increase its proportion of permanent social workers to 85 per cent, from its current level of 67 per cent.
3. Committee Members spoke with Assistant Directors, Service Managers and Social Workers in a series of visits to quadrants between November 2022-February 2023. They were informed that a key point at which staff were lost was when newly qualified social workers move out of area on completing their first assisted year. They wanted to live independently but could not afford to do so in Surrey, where they face extreme housing costs. This was reported to have a significant impact on workforce. More than two in five (41.3 per cent) of social workers who left the Council in the year to January 2023 had been in the role less than two years. Some choose to commute from neighbouring counties, but the resulting high petrol costs make the Council's salary less attractive. If staff are to be enabled to stay, and agency workers persuaded to become permanent staff, key worker housing may be a powerful incentive.

Recommendation:

Key worker housing is included as a deliverable in the Cabinet report *A Housing, Accommodation and Homes Strategy for Surrey* for decision in March 2023. (Lead Member: Cabinet Member for Children and Families)

Liz Bowes, Chairman - Children, Families, Lifelong Learning Select Committee

Background papers

Pages 79-97 & 145, Children, Families and Lifelong Learning Select Committee, 2 March 2023

<https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/g8913/Public%20reports%20pack%20Thursday%2002-Mar->

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