

Children and Young People's Services Select Committee

11 September 2019

Children's In-house Residential Service Strategy

Report by Executive Director People Services

Summary

The report provides a summary of the recent review of in-house residential services for children. It seeks approval for a strategic framework and proposed service model which will improve outcomes for vulnerable children and long-term care costs are minimised. The proposed strategy is attached and provides the full context and history for the review and rationale for the proposals.

The focus for scrutiny

The Committee is asked to consider the attached draft Cabinet member decision report and strategy and provide comment to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People prior to a formal decision being taken on 20th September 2019.

Proposal

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 The Council's existing children's residential estate has three open establishments which all have a 'good' Ofsted rating and three establishments which are not in use. Proposals for the three closed establishments are prioritised in the first phase of the implementation of the proposed service model (September 2019 to December 2020). The three open establishments will be the focus of the second phase of the implementation of the proposed service model (July 2020 to July 2021)

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The proposed service model for the residential estate is to maintain existing capacity and seek to specialise the type of support that is offered.
- 2.2 On this basis, the following principles were developed to underpin the strategic framework;

- Use in-house services to support the most vulnerable and complex children, whilst also providing an offer to children who are on the 'edge of care',
 - Maximise outcomes for children by keeping them in or near their homes and communities whenever this is appropriate and safe,
 - Provide a flexible service that is able to respond effectively to the wide range and high level of need in the most complex cohort of children, and
 - Make the best use of resources through utilising innovative service models to move away from 'traditional' high-cost long-term placements towards a more comprehensive service that 'wraps around' the child, including short breaks and outreach work in communities
- 2.3 The following options for the future of the residential estate were considered and discounted;

- Doing nothing (i.e. reopening homes with no or minimal change),
- Embark on a joint venture with an external provider or providers,
- Maintain existing capacity whilst specialising via a joint venture,
- Grow the existing in-house capacity, and
- Outsource all services

3. Resources

- 3.1 The report outlines revenue implications which are considered in section 4 of the draft key decision report (appendix A)

Factors taken into account

4. Issues for consideration by the Select Committee

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to focus on the following areas;

- The driving principles,
- Whether the voice and needs of children are sufficiently to the fore,
- The approach to prioritising the phases of the plan,
- The alignment of the strategy to the Council's outcomes and aims for children and the 'children first' improvement plan, and
- The financial requirements and investment plans in the context of the Council's budget constraints

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The following groups have been approached regarding these proposals prior to coming to the Committee, with the full report detailing what has been shared;
- Cabinet,
 - The Corporate Parenting Panel,

- Other local authorities undergoing similar changes,
- Children's homes demonstrating best practice,
- Staff currently within the residential service,
- UNISON, and
- Key agencies within health and education including Ofsted, Continuing healthcare, West Sussex CCG's.

6. Risk Management Implications/Equality Duty/Social Value/Crime Disorder Implications/Human Rights Implications

6.1 These implications are addressed in the individual draft Cabinet Member decision report (Appendix A).

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