

Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Thursday 4 January 2024

Homes for Children in Our Care

Recommendations

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. Supports the recommendation for Staffordshire County Council (SCC) to open three (6) in-house Local Authority run children's homes.
- b. Supports the recommendation to request a Contribution of £0.3m in 24/25 from the Council's transformation fund to meet upfront costs incurred during the transition process (invest to save).
- c. Supports the recommendation for SCC to join the West Midlands Framework for the Provision of Residential Placements – from October 2024
- d. Supports the recommendation for SCC to join the West Midlands Foster Care Framework from April 2024.

Local Member Interest:

N/A

Report of Councillor Mark Sutton, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People

Summary

1. Seeking approval to:

- a. Open six (6) in-house Local Authority run children's homes. This is to help compliment the current homes and provide smaller homes for our children & young people (C&YP) who have more complex needs. The aim is to help maintain some control over the market by enabling SCC to take C&YP that the private sector is reluctant to take without a significant increase in their fees.
- b. For a contribution of £0.3m in 24/25 from the Council's transformation fund to meet upfront costs incurred during the transition process (invest to save).

- c. Join the West Midlands Framework for the Provision of Residential Placements 2024. The current flexible framework contract expires in December 2024. The plan is to implement a new framework earlier, by October 2024. The aim is to encourage more providers to join which aims to widen choice, specialisms and achieve better value for money. This contract is led by Coventry on behalf of the West Midlands region.
- d. Join the West Midlands Foster Care Framework 2024. This framework is to replace the existing framework which has been in place since April 2020 and expires in March 2024. The current framework has been successful in maintaining costs and has helped access a wide market. The current contract may be extended by 3 months given timescales are tight. The current contract is led by Sandwell on behalf of the West Midlands region.

Report

2. Please refer to Appendix 1: Cabinet Report.

Strategic Plan

3. The Placement Sufficiency Strategy, aligned to the Council's Strategic plan, aims to increase sufficiency to meet the needs of children & young people in our care with the most complex needs. The recommendations within this paper / Appendix 1 are aligned to this overarching aim.

Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity

4. N/A

Community Impact

5. Please see attached –

Appendix 3 - CIA (LA run children's homes)

Appendix 4 - CIA (residential framework)

Appendix 5 - CIA (West Midlands Fostering Framework)

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Cabinet Paper (17/1/2024) - Homes for Children in Our Care

Appendix 2 - Time Line

Appendix 3 - CIA (LA run children's homes)

Appendix 4 - CIA (residential framework)

Appendix 5 - CIA (West Midlands Fostering Framework)

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