

Councillors	Cllr Weston [Chair], Cllr Berryman, Cllr Stennett, Cllr Morris & Cllr Opoku.
Apologies	Cllr Hare & Cllr Peacock. Cllr Berryman (Lateness).
Also attending	Margaret Dennison (Interim Director of Children’s Services) Sarah Alexander (Assistant Director – Safeguarding and Social Care), Jo Moses (Interim Head of Children in Care & Placements), Fiona Smith (Virtual School Head), Annie Walker (Deputy Head of Service - Children in Care & Placements), Denise Gandy (Director of Housing Demand– HfH, Lynn Carrington (Designated Nurse – Children in Care), Dr Fayrus Abrusrwil (Designated Doctor – Children in Care), Anneke Fraser & Philip Slawther (Clerk).

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred Members present to agenda Item 1 as shown on the agenda in respect of filming at this meeting, and Members noted the information contained therein’.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Hare and Cllr Peacock.

Cllr Berryman gave apologies for latesness.

3. ACTIONS FROM THE MEETING WITH ASPIRE

NOTED: The suggested areas for future discussion from the meeting with Aspire.

- Safety and how the Committee can support LAC and their foster carers to feel safe.
- Support in accessing employment.

4. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

6. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th January were AGREED.

The Chair requested that a letter be drafted to the Minister of State for Children & Families in relation to a disparity in the relative cut-off points for care-leavers and access to housing services. **(Action: Chair/Sarah Alexander).**

In relation to previous suggestions by the Committee regarding UASC, officers advised that letters had been sent out to some existing foster carers. The Committee queried whether a communications piece could be placed in the Ham & High, as well as Haringey people. It was suggested that this could be part of a communication drive in the run up to the existing 'fostering fortnight' campaign. The Director of Children's Services suggested that the communications campaign should be done in the weeks prior to the launch of fostering fortnight for maximum effect. The Head of Service for CIC and Placements agreed to pick this up with the fostering recruitment lead and communications. **(Action: Jo Moses).**

In response to a query about the bespoke fostering advert on Sky TV, the Committee was advised that this was unsuccessful and resulted in only one application. The Committee agreed that it was important to explore all avenues to encourage foster carer applications.

7. PERFORMANCE AND LAC ISSUES

RECEIVED a report from the Director of Children's Services setting out the performance data and trends relating to looked after children. Report included in the second dispatch agenda pack (pages 1 to 18).

NOTED in response to the discussion:

- The Committee was advised that the biggest reason behind children ceasing to be looked after was because they had returned home. The DCS estimated that there was around a 50% churn rate within LAC, which was suggestive of an underlying care population.
- In response to a query around 82% of visits to CIC recorded as being completed within the relevant timescales, officers advised that of the remaining 18%, the visits had taken place in the vast majority of cases but the report had not been written up due to the social worker having court commitments.
- In response to a query around Social Worker caseloads and whether these were considered manageable, officers advised that overall levels were reasonable but some individual social worker caseloads were too high. The service had a number of newly qualified social workers and some staff on restricted caseloads on health grounds, which resulted in experienced staff having additional workloads.
- In response to a further enquiry, officers advised that newly qualified social workers had a protected caseload and it was estimated that if they were performing well this would likely be in place for one year.
- In response to paragraphs 2.12 and 2.15, officers advised that performance figure to February 2017 was a typographical error and that the report should read February 2018.

- The Committee commented that performance levels overall were positive and that significant progress had been made overall during the four-year term of the administration.
- The Chair thanked the officers present for their hard work in supporting the Committee.

AGREED to note the report.

8. SIGNS OF SAFETY

RECEIVED a presentation from the AD Safeguarding and Social Care, Sarah Alexander, which set out the child protection framework used by the Council and the key principles, disciplines and practises contained therein. Report included in the agenda pack (pages 5-11).

NOTED in response to the discussion:

- The Committee queried whether there was any feedback from children and families who had come in contact with the model. Officers advised that there had been a lot of feedback and that their views had been incorporated in to the evaluation of the framework. Feedback from across the country had been overwhelmingly positive. One of the key advantages of the framework was simplicity and the fact that children and families could understand the process involved.
- In response to a question about the extent that Signs of Safety was rolled out across the authority, officers advised that it had been rolled out across Children's Services but that it was most widely used in safeguarding and child protection assessments.

9. ASPIRE PLEDGE

The Committee received a copy of the Aspire pledge as adopted by Full Council in July 2017. The Committee were asked to consider any areas for amendment before it was re-adopted by Full Council in the new administration. Aspire confirmed that they were happy with the pledge.

The Committee AGREED that the Aspire pledge should be readopted by Full Council in the municipal year 2018/19, without amendment.

10. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

N/A

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of any other business.

Future meetings

NOTED that this was the last scheduled meeting of the current administration.

The meeting ended at 20:40 hours.

Cllr Elin Weston
Chair

CHAIR: Councillor Elin Weston

Signed by Chair

Date