

## REGULATORY COMMITTEE

### CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 20 May 2011 at 10.00am at County Hall, Lewes

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PRESENT: Councillors Stroude (Chairman), Hughes, O'Keeffe, Ost, Pragnell and Waite

ALSO PRESENT: Liz Rugg, Assistant Director, Children and Families  
Teresa Lavelle-Hill, Head of Looked After Children (LAC) Services  
Steve Hunt, Operations Manager, Fostering Service  
Carole Sykes, Operations Manager, Adoption and Permanence Service  
Graham Beal, Registered Homes Manager (RHM), Brodrick House and Homefield Cottage  
Rose Cooper, Acting RHM, Sorrel Drive  
Helen Simmons, RHM, Sorrel Drive  
Nicky Scott, RHM, Hazel Lodge and Rose Cottage  
Jane Sambrook, Lansdowne Secure Unit

#### 1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

1.1 Councillor Stroude was elected Chairman of the Panel for the ensuing municipal year.

#### 2. MINUTES

2.1 RESOLVED - to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2011 as a correct record.

#### 3. REPORTS

3.1 Copies of the reports referred to below are included in the minute book.

#### 4. CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL

4.1 A and C, members of the Children in Care Council (CICC), attended the meeting and updated the Panel on the activities and work of the CICC, including:

- The new Council met once a month for discussions on a variety of topics, one of the most recent being how to disseminate information about the work of the CICC to foster children.
- Guests and speakers were invited to the monthly CICC meetings, recent invitees being the Complaints Manager and a representative from the Advocacy Service. The CICC were then able to share that information with other children.
- The CICC had also produced a newsletter entitled 'CICC Newz', copies of which were circulated to the Panel Members.
- The CICC's website, which had been launched during the last year, was proving a useful tool in explaining its work and how children could make contact with the CICC.

4.2 In response to questions from A and C, Members explained that the focus of their work as a Panel was to ensure the health and well being of the children in the Council's care. To this end they talked with other children in care and held officers to account to ensure that they were being good corporate parents.

4.3 The Panel thanked A and C for attending the meeting and explaining the very good and interesting work being carried out by the CICC.

#### 5. EAST SUSSEX FOSTERING SERVICE: ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

5.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services outlining the performance of the Fostering Service between 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011

5.2 Members' attention was drawn, in particular, to (a) the recent establishment of a Recruitment and Assessment Team to fast track recruitment of foster carers in response to the increased numbers of Looked After Children; (b) the success of the CICC; and (c) the increase in referrals and resulting placements.

5.3 Councillors O'Keeffe, Ost and St. Pierre offered to use their contacts in the Lewes area (for example, school governors, church groups and parish councils) to identify possible venues for recruitment and retention events for potential foster carers.

5.4 RESOLVED - to note and welcome the information contained in the report and endorse the key management priorities outlined in the Fostering Improvement Plan for 2011/12.

#### 6. EAST SUSSEX ADOPTION AND PERMANENCE SERVICE: ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

6.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services outlining the performance of the Adoption and Permanence Service between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011.

6.2 Members were advised that the usual timescale for an adoption process was approximately 12 to 18 months depending upon the complexity of individual cases.

6.3 RESOLVED – to (1) note the information contained in the report and endorse the key management priorities for the Adoption and Permanence Service outlined in the report; and

(2) suggest that the management priorities should also include reference to the virtual school.

#### 7. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN STATISTICS

7.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which outlined changes to the Looked After Children (LAC) statistics in the last quarter.

7.2 Members attention was drawn, in particular, to the rise in placements of children subject to a Care Order with their parents; to the continuation of full time placements in Acorns and the Bungalow; and to the three East Sussex children subject to secure orders on welfare grounds. Secure orders were made only when there was no alternative.

7.3 RESOLVED - to note the information contained in the report.

## 8. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

8.1 RESOLVED to exclude the public and press from the meeting for the remaining items on the grounds that if the public and press were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as specified in category 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to any individual. It is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

## 9. OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS

9.1 The Panel considered inspection reports from Ofsted for the following children's homes:

- (i) Acorns at Dorset Road
- (ii) Brodrick House
- (iii) Hazel Lodge
- (iv) Rose Cottage
- (v) The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

9.2 RESOLVED - to note the reports.

## 10. CHILDREN'S HOME REGULATIONS 1991, REGULATION 33: INSPECTION REPORTS

10.1 The Panel considered Regulation 33 Reports for December 2010 and January, February and March 2011 for the following children's homes:

- 1) Acorns at Dorset Road
- (ii) Brodrick House
- (iii) Hazel Lodge
- (iv) Homefield Cottage
- (v) Lansdowne Secure Unit
- (vi) Rose Cottage
- (vii) The Bungalow, Sorrel Drive

10.2 RESOLVED - to note the reports.