

## REGULATORY COMMITTEE

### CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 21 October 2011 at 10.00am at County Hall, Lewes

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PRESENT: Councillors Stroude (Chairman), Hughes, O’Keeffe, Ost, St Pierre and Waite

ALSO PRESENT: Becky Shaw, Chief Executive  
Liz Rugg, Assistant Director, Children and Families  
Teresa Lavelle-Hill, Head of Looked After Children (LAC) Services  
Alison Borland, Head of Children’s Disability Services  
Adrian Money, Virtual Headteacher for Children in Care  
Roger Simmons, Children and Families Development Management

Janet Fairless, RHM Brodrick House and Homefield Cottage  
Anthony Julyan, Operations Manager, Children’s Disability Services  
Diane Saunders, RHM, Hazel Lodge  
Helen Simmons, RHM, Sorrel Drive and Acorns  
Martin Sutcliffe, Manager, Lansdowne Secure Unit

#### 19. MINUTES

19.1 RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2011 as a correct record.

#### 20. APOLOGIES

20.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Pragnell.

#### 21. INTERESTS

21.1 Councillor O’Keeffe declared a personal interest in Item 6, but she did not consider this interest to be prejudicial.

#### 22. REPORTS

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

#### 23. KS2 AND KS4 OUTCOMES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN 2011

23.1 The Panel received a report from the Director of Children’s Services. Adrian Money, Virtual Headteacher for Children in Care, reported that he was very pleased with the figures, especially those at Key Stage 2 which were the best achieved to date. He put the figures in context, explaining that the cohort consisted of only 16 students and the impact of such a small group on statistical significance and percentages.

23.2 Adrian Money explained that the criteria for measuring success had changed, and that emphasis had been placed on the progress made by individuals, so taking account of the student's starting point as well as final outcome.

23.3 With regard to Key Stage 4, the Virtual Headteacher reported that he was pleased to see an increase in the percentage of students achieving a qualification, especially in the light of increased challenges such as the demise of the Connexions service. As to the percentage of students achieving five A-Cs including Maths and English he acknowledged that the figure was disappointing, but reported that a Secondary level maths tutor had been recruited to work exclusively for the Virtual School.

23.4 The Virtual Headteacher explained that many schools had agreed to the Virtual School managing the Pupil Premium on their behalf, which allows the Virtual School to arrange the one-to-one support which some schools have been reducing. He highlighted his concerns regarding future agreements.

23.5 The Panel discussed the options available to foster carers and the use of exclusions. The Virtual Headteacher explained that the Virtual School was available to advise carers and to support them at school meetings. He also explained that the Virtual School challenged exclusions that they considered to be unlawful, and worked with the excluding school to achieve reintegration and increased awareness of the issues involved in educating vulnerable Looked After Children.

23.6 RESOLVED to note the report and to thank the Virtual Headteacher and his staff for their work with the children in care.

#### 24. DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRANSITIONS SERVICE

24.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which set out the progress with the establishment of the Transitions Service, which aimed to smooth the transition of severely disabled 16-25 year olds from Children's Services to Adult Social Care. Alison Borland, Head of Children's Disability Services, explained that the authority had recognised the difficulties experienced by families and carers connected to these young people, and had established the team in response. She went on to set out the key priorities of the Team: to reduce anxiety, to create aspirations and to assist in meeting potential. This is to be achieved with regard to offering young people appropriate accommodation options, supporting self-directed support and personalised budgets and engaging key partners in health and housing.

24.2 The Head of Children's Disability Services explained to the Panel that the Service had now begun to accept people, following the recruitment and training of the required staff. This had been welcomed by the families of those involved.

24.3 The Panel discussed the structure of the team and the mechanics of the transfer between services. The Panel also discussed the desirability of expanding the service to those aged 14 when the service is established and it is safe to do so, to enhance the smoothness of the transition still further.

24.4 RESOLVED to note the report.

#### 25. DEVELOPMENT OF THE LANSDOWNE SECURE UNIT AND RECONFIGURATION OF ROSE COTTAGE

25.1 The panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services. Roger Simmons, Children and Families Development Manager circulated a portfolio of images of the proposed development, which will expand the Unit from five beds to seven. He explained that full funding of £8.3 million had been secured from the Department for Education, and that planning permission had been granted. It is anticipated that the project will be completed by August 2013.

25.2 The Panel were shown the proposed layout of the new building, which forms a secure courtyard and also has a Multi Use Games Area. Other features of the new Unit include a lounge, activities room, a science and food technology room, gym and fitness suite, class rooms and bedrooms with en suite bathrooms. In response to questions from the Panel regarding sustainable energy, the Development Manager explained that a ground source heat pump would be installed.

25.3 Martin Sutcliffe, Manager of the Unit, set out the work that had been done by the staff with the consultants in order to maintain the successful features of the current Unit, and the challenges that the new development will bring.

25.4 The Panel discussed the income generating capability of the expanded Unit. Martin Sutcliffe explained that the intention was to stay at five residents while the staff became accustomed to the new facility, and then expand gradually to meet its full capacity.

25.5 Roger Simmons explained the reconfiguration of the ground floor of Rose Cottage, concerns having been raised by members about suitability at previous meetings. He explained that the office would be expanded and a new en suite shower room/WC installed. This would not impact on existing WC facilities at the home. It is expected that the works will be completed in October.

25.6 RESOLVED to note the report.

## 26. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN STATISTICS

26.1 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.

26.2 Members attention was drawn, in particular, to the continuing rise in the number of children admitted to care, with some children subject to very challenging circumstances. The Service continues to make efforts to engage the judiciary with their concerns, especially with regard to length of some Orders and the use of parent and baby placements.

26.3 RESOLVED to note the information contained in the report.

## 27. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

27.1 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.

28. OFSTED REPORTS

28.1 The Panel reports received from Ofsted on the following homes:

- (i) Brodrick House
- (ii) Homefield Cottage
- (iii) Rose Cottage

28.2 RESOLVED to note the reports.

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

29.1 The Panel considered Regulation 33 Reports for May, June and July 2011 for the following children's homes:

- (i) 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

29.2 RESOLVED to note the reports.