

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 4
22 NOVEMBER 2023	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	John Gregg Executive Director Children and Young People's Service	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Ray Bisby Cabinet Member for Children's Services	
Contact Officer(s):	Gary Jones, Service Director, Children's Social Care and Targeted Support	Tel:01733 863624 or 07484076824

FOSTER CARER COMMITTEE REPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM:	Deadline date: N/A
It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Committee:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notes the content of this Corporate Parenting Committee Report which updates the committee of service changes further to the decoupling between Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. 2. Comment on the proposed service changes with officers. 3. Monitor the ongoing commitment to providing support, training and clarity of expectations to foster carers to achieve excellent and high-quality care. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is submitted to the Corporate Parenting Committee as a regular work programme item from the Peterborough City Council Fostering Service.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Corporate Parenting Committee of service changes further to the decoupling between Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.
- 2.2 This report is for the Corporate Parenting Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 2.4.4.6 This report is to support the Corporate Parenting Committee to monitor the quality of care delivered by the City Council and review the performance of outcomes for children and young people in care, (d) Hold meetings with children and young people in care, frontline staff and Foster Carers to inform the committee of the standards of care and improvement outcomes for looked after children.
- 2.3 *How does this report link to the Children in care Promise?*

This report links to the Children in Care Promise, pledge 5, 6, 9 - We will work to keep you in a supportive and caring environment where you feel safe and happy. We will support you to maintain a healthy lifestyle and help look after your physical and mental health. We will work with you to give you all the help and support you need to make a success of moving on from care to adult life.

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	
---	-----------	----------------------------------	--

4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 This report has been prepared to update the Corporate Parenting Committee on participation activity and collaborative working with Peterborough Foster Carers, and to provide an overview of relevant service development activity.

4.2. **Overview of fostering service and priorities post decoupling.**

Following the wider 'decoupling' of children's services between Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council, the decision has been made to move away from a shared fostering service. The decision to separate was a mutual decision agreed upon by the Leader and Lead Member for Children's Services in both Councils and the Chief Executives.

The separation allows each local authority to focus its efforts on providing stable, high-quality foster care placements for children of all ages. It will see each local authority invest in a dedicated and comprehensive fostering service that actively works to meet the diverse needs of the children and Foster Carers in their region. It is important that as we embark on our Children's Services Improvement Journey more of our Peterborough children can live with Peterborough carers in Peterborough.

The official date of the separation of service is the 1st November 2023. The Support and Supervision Team will transfer over on this date, since those staff members have continued to support PCC foster carers since the two services came together in 2020. Therefore, there is minimal disruption to this team or service.

There are several vacancies in the PCC staff structure, particularly in assessment that need to be recruited to and this work is currently underway. Therefore, the PCC and CCC fostering services are currently working to a shared 'uncoupling' plan, whereby different parts of the fostering service will 'uncouple' in a strategic and planned manner.

Training will continue to be delivered jointly for PCC and CCC foster carers until at least 31st March 2024, so there will no change to the booking system. If anyone is booked onto a training course after 1st November 2023 they should plan to attend.

We will continue with our fostering recruitment joint branding into the new year and marketing campaigns will continue jointly until January 2023. To this point the recruitment of carers will remain jointly until PCC have recruited to the vacancies in the recruitment service.

4.2 **Fostering Working Groups – Progress Briefing**

The Fostering Service remains committed to the ongoing development of services provided to children in our care. Close collaboration continues with members of the Peterborough Foster Carer Committee (PFCC) and the broader fostering community to ensure that the voices and perspectives of Peterborough Foster Carers are pivotal in the planning of our fostering service.

The Peterborough Foster Carer Committee (PFCC) continue to meet bi-monthly. Foster Carers representatives on the PFCC are Mandy Nicholson, Chair of the Peterborough Foster Carer Community, Glen Crossland, Vice Chair, Andrea Hughes, Secretary & Events Coordinator and Lisa Callow as Treasurer (Lisa Callow still to be voted in officially).

The Peterborough Ambassadors continue to bolster recruitment activities within the service, increasing foster care applications from April to October 2022 to the current year. This augmentation can be attributed to an intensified focus on the 'Refer a Friend' Scheme, soliciting support from various teams and services, and targeted outreach efforts.

Cllr Jones and Cllr Bi, fostering champions have been instrumental in supporting recruitment and retention, leading to an anticipated net gain in foster carers. Peterborough Foster Carers Committee (PFCC), in tandem with the service, have introduced an informative welcome pack for new foster carers, delineating the additional support available from the fostering committee and the wider fostering community within Peterborough. This work will also include a report for senior managers citing any deficits and proposals from a foster carers point of view.

4.3 **Family time, friendships and contact**

Further to the decoupling of Peterborough City Council (PCC) from Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), it is envisaged that the family time service for PCC will revert to independent operation from CCC starting mid-November.

The PCC family time service, having operated with its own dedicated staff group, will facilitate this transition with minimal complications, albeit under the management of Michaela Berry, succeeding Service Manager Andrea Markham. Peterborough Foster Carers Committee have not reported any issues with the Family Time Service and foster carers regularly provide feedback.

4.4 **Fostering Service Annual Report**

The Fostering Services Regulations of 2011 mandate the submission of an annual written report, covering management, outcomes, and financial aspects of the Local Authority's Fostering Service. This requirement has been met for the year 2022-2023. The report encapsulates an overview of the activities of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fostering Service for the last financial year and mirrors the collaborative nature of the shared fostering service.

5. **CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

5.1 *Consider how the recommendation links to the Council's Corporate Priorities:*

The PFCC continues to ensure that the lives of children and young people are at the centre of its work, through its continued support of the fostering community in Peterborough.

With regard to the 'Prevention, Independence and Resilience', the PFCC continues to promote fostering through meetings and social media platforms, and work alongside the service to ensure that the educational, social, emotional and health needs of children and young people are met to a high standard. This enables us to support the 'Sustainable future' our young children and young people in the city.

3. *The Economy & Inclusive Growth*

- *Environment (including a summary of the outcome of a completed Carbon Impact Assessment, to be submitted in full to the Transport and Environment Team)*
- *Homes and Workplaces*
- *Jobs and Money*

Summary

The report contains no proposals for changes to service delivery and therefore there is no decision to take which may impact carbon emissions of the council or the city.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 *None*

7. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

Corporate Parenting Committee is updated on the significant changes to the shared fostering service between Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council and the impact of each Local Authority having direct control of their respective fostering services.

Peterborough City Council foster carers will be directly supported by Peterborough City Council staff and not via a shared service.

7.1 *N/A*

8. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

8.1 Corporate Parenting Committee is asked to note the changes to the Local Authority's fostering service.

Corporate Parenting Committee is invited to scrutinise the changes to the fostering service.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 *None to be considered*

10. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

10.1 The financial implications have been modelled by calculating the current establishment further to decoupling and developing the proposed interim delivery model. All roles will initially be covered with agency staff pending permanent recruitment to deliver on our statutory responsibilities.

Legal Implications

10.2 Sections 22A to 22D of the Children Act 1989 make provision for the accommodation and maintenance of a Child in Care.

Equalities Implications

None

10.3 **Other Implications**

This report relates to the services provided for Children in Care and Care Leavers and ties into the Pledge and Charter that the Local Authority respects the differing wants and needs for all.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

11.1 *None*

12. APPENDICES

12.1 *None*