

Cabinet – Supplementary agenda No.1

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held on:

Date: 15 January 2019

Time: 3.00pm

Venue: Meeting Room 2 - Level 3, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham ME4 4TR

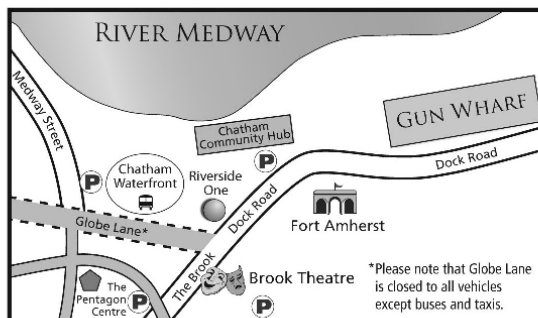
Items

9. **Sufficiency Report 2018**
Addendum Report

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Date: 14 January 2019



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CABINET
15 JANUARY 2019
SUFFICIENCY REPORT 2018
ADDENDUM REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Councillor Andrew Mackness, Children's Services (Lead Member)
Report from:	Ian Sutherland, Director of People – Children and Adults Services
Author:	Rachael Horner, Partnership Commissioning Programme Lead for Looked After Children Teri Reynolds, Democratic Services Officer

Summary

To provide Cabinet with the views of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee which considered the report on 10 January 2019.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Sufficiency Report on 10 January 2019. The comments of this Committee are set out below.
- 1.2 The Partnership Commissioning Programme Lead for Looked After Children (LAC) introduced the annual refresh of the statutory Sufficiency Report, which was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. She provided some key highlights, which included:
 - The increased number of children and young people coming into care;
 - A slight increase in the numbers of children with a longer stay in care, particularly with young people aged 10-15 years where there are more enhanced levels of need;
 - The reduction in the number of young people accommodated under Section 20 (voluntary), which indicated an improvement in permanency planning by the service;
 - The increase in the average length of time in parent and child placements;
 - The number of care leavers not in education, employment and training (NEET) remained high.

- 1.3 Members then raised a number of questions and comments which included:
- 1.3.1 **The increase in Looked After Children (LAC)** – in response to a concern raised about the rise in LAC, the Deputy Director, Children and Adults Services, explained that the number of LAC in Medway tended to fluctuate between 380 – 420 children. Medway was currently at the top end of this range but the increase was not considered so significant to cause concern. The local figures were in line with national figures which had also shown an increase.
- 1.3.2 **Children and young people placed in Medway by other local authorities** – in response to a question relating to young people placed in Medway from out of area, officers confirmed that the Sufficiency Report related to Medway children only. It was also made clear that when officers are made aware of issues with children placed from other local authorities in supported accommodation within Medway, these are referred to the relevant local authority as quickly as possible and an existing multi-agency group also provided a forum to share issues of concern and work with local providers.
- 1.3.3 **Supported accommodation** – in response to a question about the framework for supported accommodation provision and how that would ensure standards and support levels, officers explained that the framework was very detailed in its quality requirements for accommodation and support at various levels. Given the rise in LAC aged 10-15 years and with more complex needs, planning for high quality supported accommodation was a key priority for the Council.
- 1.3.4 **Addressing NEETs** – in response to a question with regards to actions to reduce the number of NEETs amongst care leavers, officers explained that a small service did operate to provide advice, information and guidance to children with additional needs, children who have offended and LAC. Some supported accommodation providers also deliver packages of care to address NEET. In addition, youth workers also provide some advice around careers where they can.
- 1.3.5 **Mentoring** – it was suggested the officers liaise with Kent County Council to determine what, if any, mentoring support services they provide for their young people and to share with them information about the service used by Medway Council.
- 1.3.6 **Foster Carers** – in response to a question about the retention rate of foster carers, given 114 had registered and 7 became foster carers. Officers explained that the conversion rate from people expressing interest to becoming foster carers was usually 1 in 10. Officers explained advertising and recruitment was a key priority and a suggestion was made that schools could be used to advertise and share information to families.
- 1.4 The Committee recommended the 2018 Sufficiency Report, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, to the Cabinet.

Lead officer contact

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