

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

25 April 2016

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S STRATEGY

Report of the Head of Looked After Children

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide Members with the opportunity to comment on the Looked After Children's Strategy.

2. Introduction/Background

- 2.1 Sunderland City Council Looked After Children's Strategy, 2015-2017 summarises the means by which the Council will seek to provide the range and quality of care and Adoptive placements, Social Work and Leaving Care support needed to meet both the current and anticipated needs of children and young people looked after over the next two years.
- 2.3 The Strategy recognises the need to be smarter with our resources in a time of spending reductions, with the action plan balancing the need to provide a quality, responsive approach with the Council's long-term desire to use resources to tackle the sources of service demand. Our actions are informed by a strong set of principles which ensure good quality placements, prioritising connected carer networks above all, followed by in-house and independent fostering placements. In-house and external residential placements are considered if no positive alternative exists, ensuring the best interests of children and young people are paramount throughout.
- 2.4 Our eight priorities and accompanying SMART actions are based on improvement needs identified through our performance management processes, and cover placement stability; improvements to the Adoption and Fostering Panels and associated processes; increased capacity and local placement choice, particularly around challenging behaviours; consolidating improvements in permanency rates; improving educational attainment; improving access and take-up of universal health and community activities; increasing access and sustainability of education, employment and training opportunities; and improving support for care leavers with life skills. Work on the priorities will be tailored to the individual and progress regardless of the care setting.
- 2.5 The full Looked After Children's Strategy document will be tabled at the Corporate Parenting Board Meeting.

3 Recommendation

3.1 The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to: -

- (i) make any recommendations on the content of the Strategy; and
- (ii) agree the final version of the strategy and to review the action plan as and when required.