

# **REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting Panel**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> October 2013
<b>Subject:</b>	Housing for Care Leavers - Update Report.
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Catherine Doran Corporate Director of Children and Families
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Janet Mote, Portfolio for Children and Schools
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Enclosures:</b>	No

## **1.0 Summary and Recommendations**

- This report seeks to update the Corporate Parenting Panel of the housing assistance available for careleavers.

## **2.0 Introduction**

Every year in March the planned distribution of permanent housing (i.e. quotas) for the following financial year is agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

### **2.1**

These quotas are set following consideration of historic lettings data, future supply and demand data and assumptions. Care leavers are supported and prioritised under band B. For the leaving care quota, the number of care leavers anticipated to be ready for independent living, and therefore ready to leave care in the following financial year is also considered. The Allocations Scheme changes on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2013 but Care Leavers continue to have high priority through the quota.

### **2.2**

In the year 2013/14 the quota has been set at 20, as reported to Corporate Parenting Panel in April.

## **3.0 Issues**

### **3.1**

In 2012-13, in spite of the expectation that the number of care leavers would exceed the quota this did not happen. Indications are that although predictions of young people needing accommodation, would exceed the quota of 20 in 13-14, so far that hasn't happened. 20 care leavers have been nominated for the quota places, and so currently the quota is sufficient. Alternative housing solutions are not needed at present..

## **4. Proposed Recommendations**

### **4.1**

The planned review by the Care Leaver and Housing sub group should take place in October 2013 to see if sufficient accommodation is available or decide alternate housing is required to ensure all young people are housed in this financial year.

### **4.2**

If the quota is not sufficient we can bring forward our proposals to offer accommodation in shared housing. This would either be managed by the council or a Housing Association, leased from a private landlord. We have agreed with the Housing Benefit Service the rent levels that could be charged (and covered by HB). We could divert a Private Sector Leased property to shared housing and manage it by our PSL team. Alternatively Genesis Housing are prepared to lease a property and manage it. We consider small shared housing units for 3 care leavers to be the most suitable option, but we can agree the exact configuration if shared housing is needed. We would also need to put in place a Service Level Agreement to deal with void periods, rent arrears. and support for the residents. The Care Leaver and Housing Sub Group can finalise this. This option could be achieved within a few months of deciding it is needed, subject to agreement.

### 4.3

An alternative proposal relates to the former Children's Home (Honeypot Lane). More work needs to be done to see if this could offer a realistic development option for shared housing for care leavers. This work is underway.

### 4.4

Housing Services and Children & Families Services will continue to work in partnership in this sub group and actively manage and respond to care leavers housing needs.

## 5. Environmental Impact

There is no specific environmental impact from the issues outlined in this report.

## 6. Financial Implications

### 6.1

Where the Locata quota is utilised and any additional careleavers require accommodation, then alternate solutions will be required to provide accommodation:

- a. Renting from a private landlord will probably incur the cost of a deposit and rent in advance, plus admin costs currently equal to approximately £1,750.
- b. Renting from a housing association may require a fixed sum financial guarantee of approximately £3,000 per tenancy.

## 7. Risk Management Implications

All related risks are recorded in the Children's Services risk register. There is a significant reputational risk from a poor inspection of social care, where support to children looked after and young people leaving care are crucial to mitigate risks and demonstrate developing practice and procedure support to this cohort.

## 8. Equalities implications

CLA and care leavers are additionally vulnerable child in need. The 2009 statutory guidance "The Roles & Responsibilities of the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services" highlights the need for Local Authorities to work corporately to improve the well-being of looked after children and young people leaving care, to make their needs a priority and seek the same outcomes that any reasonable caring parent would want for their own children. CLA consistently fare worse than their peers

across a range of indicators including health, education, training, employment, homelessness and offending.

## **9. Corporate Priorities**

CLA and care leavers are additionally vulnerable by virtue of the experiences that led them into Local Authority care and in respect of the poor outcomes that many CLA and care leavers experience when compared to their peers, The Council's corporate priorities include providing care and protection to those who are most in need and this includes CLA and care leavers.

## **4.0 Statutory Officer Clearance**

Name: Jo Frost



on behalf of the  
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 7th October 2013

## **7.0 Contact Details and Background Papers**

Papers - NONE

### **Contact:**

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