

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
Tuesday 15 February 2022

Present:- Councillor Cusworth (Chair); Councillors Bird, Browne, Castledine-Dack, Z. Collingham, Cooksey, Griffin, and Pitchley; Pete Douglas, Catherine Hall, Anne Hawke, Tina Hohn, Suzanne Joyner, Sharon Sandell and Rebecca Wall.

Lisa Duvalle and 6 representatives of the Looked After Children's Council were in attendance for Minute No. 31 (LAC Council Update).

Sam Keighley and Kathryn Mudge, South Yorkshire Sports Foundation, and Zoe Oxley and Chris Siddall (RMBC) were in attendance for Minute No. 32 (Leisure Cards for LAC and Leaving Care).

Councillor Sheppard, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion) was in attendance at the invitation of the Chair for Minute No. 32 (Leisure Cards for LAC and Leaving Care).

Apologies for absence were received from Lynda Briggs, Lee Durrant, Paul Woodcock, Laura Gough, Emma Ellis and David McWilliams.

28. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23rd November, 2021.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23rd November, 2021, be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

30. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for Minute No. 32 (LAC Council Update) and Minute No. 33 (Leisure Cards for LAC and Leaving Care) as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Paragraph 1 (information relating to any individual) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

31. LAC COUNCIL UPDATE

The Chair confirmed that the recording had stopped prior to introducing this agenda item.

Consideration was then given to a presentation by representatives of the Looked After Children's Council which included a summary of recent LAC Council activities and highlighted the ongoing Capital of Culture consultations, plans for a VIP Summer Fest to be held in July 2022 and

Christmas craft sessions.

The presentation also included specific reference to the Rotherham LAC Council's Free Leisure Pass Campaign for a free leisure pass for Rotherham's Looked After and Leaving Care young people. The pass would give Looked After and Leaving Care young people aged 13-21/24 years the opportunity to engage in free leisure activities including gym and swimming across the Borough.

The benefits of such activity supported a healthy lifestyle, both physically and emotionally, and would feed into the statutory targets for the promotion of Health for Looked After Children. Positive mental health was promoted through exercise and social interaction as well as building friendships and involvement in the community.

The pass could provide a new start for Looked After Children following the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, which had seen an increase of obesity in both adults and young people as well as an increase in mental health cases; physical activity has been proven to improve peoples' mental health.

It was highlighted that a number of other local authorities within the Yorkshire and Humber already provided free leisure passes.

The young people were thanked for their excellent presentation.

To aid discussion on the next agenda item, members of the Panel sought the views of the young people on a range of issues relating to free leisure passes:-

- Ideally access to leisure facilities would be across the Borough so all LAC could access them
- It could be any leisure activity but the importance of young people being able to swim was stressed
- It was not just for the physical and mental benefits but for the social interaction particularly following the lockdowns; it would be another free space for young people to be themselves with other young people (if they chose to)
- The type of activity would vary from person-to-person with some choosing individual activities and other participating in group activities
- Not just physical activities but social activities e.g. cinema

Councillor Sheppard reported that the Council was currently looking at the cultural offer as part of the Children's Capital of Culture and also carrying out a review of the Rothercard which could link into Rotherham's Looked After Children and Leaving Care Young People being able to access other elements of Rotherham's culture and arts programme across the Borough at a discounted rate/special performance. He would welcome any feedback to incorporate into the consultation process.

It was noted that different activities took place on a daily/weekly basis. Leisure Services could provide access to an activity that already existed or would try and develop something specific as a taster session if requested.

Kathryn Mudge, South Yorkshire Sports Foundation, asked if the young people had considered the opportunity to develop skills further with sport and physical activity with qualifications? The Foundation could provide mentoring.

It was suggested that the LAC Council carry out a questionnaire with their peers to ascertain their views as to:-

- what leisure activities they would like the opportunity to take part in
- were there any other barriers other than cost to accessing the leisure centres
- given South Yorkshire Sports Foundation offer, would any young people be interested in improving their skills and becoming role models

Resolved:-

1. That the update be noted.
2. That the LAC Council carry out a questionnaire amongst their peers on the lines suggested above.

32. LEISURE CARDS FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND LEAVING CARE YOUNG PEOPLE

Sharon Sandell, Head of Children in Care, presented an update report on the progress of the task and finish working group established to discuss the longstanding request of the Looked After Children's Council that they have access to leisure activities to support their physical and emotional wellbeing.

Local leisure centres were provided by an arms length organisation, Places for People Ltd. Any extension of offer to children and young people, as requested by the LAC Council, required costing out against each one of the requests and be determined as to what preferred option could be achieved.

Leisure Services and People for Places Ltd. were working through the options to fully explore how the Council could support the LAC Council request due to the implications of the contract in place.

The report set out the options being considered with a deadline for decision of the end of March, 2022.

Discussion ensued on the report with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- The current offer available to foster carers and Looked After Young People in their care was via the Rothercard which reduced the monthly membership rate from £35 to £29. If an adult foster carer accessed membership by Rothercard, up to 4 children, 16 years and under, within a family could have free access to facilities if they were accompanied by an adult. Children under the age of 8 must be accompanied by an adult, however, children over the age of 8 could use the pool independently without a parent and without charge
- Further discussions required about the social value aspect and the correct offer
- Propositions for each age group required and ensure they engage in the right activity
- Willingness from the Council and Places for People to work together on this important piece of work
- Although other areas had “free leisure passes” it was often something very targeted e.g. swimming lessons and not a full free pass. Those that were free were geared towards a particular age group
- Offering a free pass would not automatically mean that all young people would take up the opportunity
- Worthwhile to follow up the survey the LAC Council was undertaking to establish what activities the young people wanted to access and what could be done to make it as easy as possible to do so
- There may be a whole range of activities the young people did not know about, however, they had been clear in their request for swimming
- If the young people were asking for something that could not be delivered then an explanation should be provided as to why and what could be delivered should be delivered as quickly as possible
- Care/safeguarding arrangements for the young people accessing facilities also needed to be taken into consideration

Resolved:-

- (1) That the update be noted.
- (2) That the proposal to offer a free leisure pass for swimming and gym access be processed as quickly as possible.
- (3) That the LAC Council be requested to extend an invite to Rebecca

Wall, Zoe Oxley, Chris Siddall, Councillors Cusworth and Sheppard to attend a meeting to follow up on the survey (previous Minute No. 32 refers).

33. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business to discuss.

34. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That a further meeting be held on Tuesday, 29th March, 2022, commencing at 5.00 p.m. in Rotherham Town Hall.