

15 October 2018

Agenda Item: 8

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND SOCIAL WORK**

### **REQUEST FOR CONTINGENCY FUNDS FOR ADDITIONAL COSTS RELATED TO AN INVESTIGATION INTO CARE STANDARDS IN A CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL HOME**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval for a request from contingency to be made to the Finance and Major Contracts Management Committee to deal with the unforeseen costs related to an investigation into care standards at Minster View children's residential home.

#### **Information**

##### **Background**

2. In April 2018 concerns were raised about the quality of care being provided to some children at Minster View children's home. Senior officers immediately commissioned an independent review of practice at the home.
3. The care of vulnerable children is the Council's highest priority and all concerns are treated seriously. There are have clear policies and procedures for dealing with concerns and these have now been implemented.
4. As a consequence of commissioning an independent review and providing interim replacement staffing to ensure continuity of care for service users, the Council will face additional costs a summary of which is attached as **Appendix 1**. Committee is asked to make a request to the Finance and Major Contracts Management Committee to approve an allocation from contingency to meet these unforeseen costs.

##### **Other Options Considered**

5. The care of vulnerable children is the Council's highest priority and due to the nature of the concerns raised an independent investigation was considered to be the only viable and safe option.

##### **Reason for Recommendations**

6. The concerns and the need for temporary cover staffing and an external investigation could not have been foreseen. The Children and Families department does not hold a specific

budget to cover this type of cost and it cannot be contained within the overall departmental budget.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

7. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **Financial Implications**

8. The financial impact of approximately £175,000 comprising the need for temporary replacement staffing and an independent investigation is based upon a conclusion being reached over a seven month period. Due to the complexities of the matters to be investigated it is possible that this period may need to be extended. Costs are approximately £26,000 per month and a full breakdown is available at **Appendix 1**.
9. This cost cannot be contained within the Children & Families departmental budget and will be met by the request from contingency for up to £175,000.

## **Implications for Service Users**

10. Parents and carers of children placed in the home have been appropriately informed of developments and additional management oversight is in place to ensure care standards are maintained during this period.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1) That the Committee gives approval for a request to be made to the Finance and Major Contracts Management Committee for an allocation from contingency for up to £175,000 to fund the full cost of the replacement staffing and investigation costs related to an investigation into care standards at Minster View children's residential home.

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**Constitutional Comments (LM 21/09/18)**

11. The Children and Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the contents of the report.

**Financial Comments (SAS 05/10/18)**

12. The financial implications of the report are contained within paragraphs 8 and 9 above.

**Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.

**Electoral Divisions and Members Affected**

All.

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