

Cabinet Meeting Resolution

**Executive
Forward Plan
Reference**

E2355

Fostering Allowances Annual Review

Date of Meeting	8-Feb-12
The Issue	<i>Annual review of allowances paid to foster carers to look after children in care and related allowances</i>
The decision	<p>(1) To INCREASE fostering age related allowances and permanence allowances in line with Fostering Network recommendations as set out in the report;</p> <p>(2) To AGREE that there will be no change in fostering fees, savings rates for children in care, or supported lodgings as set out in the report; and</p> <p>(3) To NOTE the current level of care leavers maintenance which is linked to Job Seekers Allowance as set out in the report.</p>
Rationale for decision	The Council has duties in statute, regulations and guidance to act as a Corporate Parent and provide placements for children in its care, to promote adoption, special guardianship and residence orders as forms of permanence and to maintain and support young people moving on from care to adulthood. The proposal in this report ensures that basic living costs for these vulnerable children and young people continue to be met by the Council acting as Corporate Parent
Other options considered	<p>The Council is committed to meeting the full cost of looking after children for whom we are the Corporate Parent. Foster carers face day to day costs which increase or decrease in line with inflation, and this is taken into account by the Fostering Network in making its recommendation. Reducing or freezing allowances for Bath and North East Somerset carers against the Fostering Network recommendation would depart from the Council's 2005 commitment to cover the full costs to foster carers of looking after children and effectively ask carers to subsidise these costs. This option would risk significant damage to our efforts to recruit and retain local carers.</p> <p>The scheme of fees introduced in 2005 recognises the skills of foster carers. These fees have been increased each year in line with local authority wage and salary increases, apart from 2006 when there was no change, and the last two years when salaries have been frozen. It is not necessary or right to increase these fees in the context of a wage and salary freeze.</p>
The Decision is subject to Call-In within 5 working days of publication of the decision	