

Cabinet Meeting Resolution

**Executive  
Forward Plan  
Reference**

**E2491**

**Annual Review of Fostering, Adoptive and Special Guardianship allowances**

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	16-Jan-13
<b>The Issue</b>	<i>Annual review of fostering and related allowances</i>
<b>The decision</b>	<p>(1) To INCREASE fostering age related allowances and permanence allowances in line with Fostering Network recommendations;</p> <p>(2) To AGREE that there will be no change in fostering level one fees, family link rates, savings rates for children in care, or supported lodgings;</p> <p>(3) To AGREE a small increase to level two fees – to reflect drive for in-house placements for teenagers with complex needs; and</p> <p>(4) To NOTE the current level of care leavers maintenance, which is linked to Job Seekers Allowance.</p>
<b>Rationale for decision</b>	<p>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 proposals ensure that basic living costs for these vulnerable children and young people continue to be met by the Council acting as Corporate Parent.</p>
<b>Other options considered</b>	<p>A revised local scheme of fees and allowances for foster carers was introduced in April 2005. Our age related allowances since 2005 have been based on the Fostering Network recommended rates and thus cover the full direct and additional costs of looking after a child in foster care. This was based on the Council's commitment to meet 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 frozen for three years but a small increase is recommended for the enhanced fee – to ensure competitiveness with Independent Providers and continue with the effective growth of our in-house provision.</p>

**The Decision is subject to Call-In within 5 working days of publication of the decision**