

<b>Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council</b>		
MEETING	<b>Children, Adults, Health &amp; Wellbeing Policy Development &amp; Scrutiny Panel</b>	
MEETING	15 <sup>th</sup> June 2021	
TITLE:	Corporate Parenting	
WARD:	All	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b>		
Annexe A: The Pledge		

## **1 THE ISSUE**

1.1 This report will outline the effectiveness of the Local Authority in meeting their safeguarding responsibilities and progress of children in care and care leavers.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

**The Panel is asked to;**

2.1 Note the progress made to date in these duties

2.2 Note that this work will continue to be a priority within the Local Authority

## **3 THE REPORT**

3.1 As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 there were 181 children in care, and 104 care leavers aged 18-21 years. The rates of looked after children in the Local Authority have remained relatively stable over the last 3 years.

3.2 Following the publication of 'Care Matters: Time for Change' in June 2007, there has been a requirement for all Local Authorities to develop and publish a Pledge to their Looked after Children and Care Leavers. The Pledge sets out the services and support children should expect to receive, see Annexe A. There is also an audio version available that has been recorded by young people in care.

3.3 The quarterly Corporate Parenting Group Meetings are now aligned to The Pledge to enable the Local Authority to report on progress against the principles within. This includes reports and presentations from the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Team, the Commissioning Manager, the Virtual School, as well as our partner agencies such as Health. The In Care Council also attend the Corporate Parenting Group Meetings and provide an annual presentation giving direct feedback in relation to the Pledge from children and young people in care. Other agencies and presentations are provided by invitation and at the request of Elected Members

3.4 This report will focus on the key areas of The Pledge

3.5 *Your Social Worker.* All children in care have an allocated social worker and rates of stability are good. Historically, this number has been in part impacted on by systems within the Local Authority, namely the journey through relevant social work teams prior to becoming looked after. Following a recent redesign of children's services, it is envisaged that children will now experience less changes of social workers.

3.6 In order to best meet the complex needs of children in care and care leavers a redesign of our service was implemented in June 2020. Previously, children in care and care leavers were held within the same team (The Children in Care and Moving on Team). Since June 2020, we have created a new Adolescent and Care Experienced Team, which encompasses both care leavers and adolescents who are at risk of, or experiencing exploitation. The needs of many of our care leavers and young people, as well as the skills of our social workers and personal advisors, overlap in many areas and this has served to enable a clearer focus and service delivery for this cohort of young people.

3.7 The children in care team is now able to focus on children up to 18 years, but with clear links to the Adolescent and Care Experienced Team when a child reaches 16 years. We are currently developing a further pathway to enable Personal Advisors (PA's) to be allocated in a timely manner and ensure that Pathway Plans are appropriately focused on forthcoming adulthood. The team also work with children who have care plans for adoption and the redesign of the teams has enabled more focus on quality of work in this area, alongside our Regional Adoption Agency, Adoption West.

3.8 Visits to children in care are good, with 90% of children being visited within statutory timescales in 20/2021. It is important to note that covid restrictions have impacted on face to face visiting, with some visits not taking place due to symptoms or positive test results, as well as shielding etc. We have used creative methods to keep in touch with these children, i.e. through video call, messaging etc. The LA has practised in line with DFE Flexibilities introduced in 2020 in response to Covid 19. These Regulations enable virtual visits to be undertaken where face to face visits are not possible. These have been used minimally and always with Head of Service approval.

3.9 *How we make decisions:* Participation of children in care in decision making is a priority for the Local Authority. Where possible, children are seen alone during visits, in order to gain their views, wishes and feelings. The prevalence of children participating in their Children in Care reviews is high at 93%, with only 7% non-attendance. In order to further build on participation of young people in the services we provide, the Local Authority has recently

employed two Young Ambassadors. These young people are aged between 19-25 years and have experience of being looked after. The key focus of this role is participation and service development.

3.10 In 2021 we implemented a 'Long Term Matching Panel'. For those children that are unable to return home, this panel provides a place in which their care arrangements are scrutinised and formally agreed by a senior manager. This is important to ensure that children are matched with the most appropriate carer/connected person, and show good decision making from Corporate Parents. This has been an important service development.

3.11 *Your Care Plan:* All children and young people in care have a Care Plan that is regularly reviewed by the Independent Reviewing Officer. 2019/20 data shows that 97% of child in care reviews were held on time (NB data for 20/21 is not yet available, but not felt to be significantly different). The Young Ambassadors are currently reviewing the care planning documents to ensure they are designed to meet the needs of all children in care.

3.12 Outcomes for children in care in B&NES will differ depending on individual circumstances. Some children will return home to live with their parents, or with wider family members or connected persons. The rate of Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) in B&NES is high, which is felt to be an excellent alternative for children who are unable to live with their parents. This is exceptional practice and we have the highest rates of family arrangements within the South West. In recognition of the high number of SGOs in B&NES we have further developed our permanence team, to provide increased support to these carers. As a result, breakdowns of SGO placements are low, which means that children continue to live within their family network.

3.13 *Your Independent Reviewing Officer:* All children in care have an allocated Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). The appointment of an IRO for a child or young person in the care of the Local Authority is a legal requirement under section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. Since 2004 all Local Authorities have been required to appoint an IRO to protect children's interests throughout the care planning process.

3.14 Feedback is gained from the Independent Reviewing Services and whilst the number of responses from children was lower than desired, there were no negative comments received by a child. The feedback provided suggests that children and young people value the role of their IRO and have a good relationship with them.

3.15 *Where you live:* It is important that children are placed within the geographical area of their family home, in order to remain connected to their family, friends and local community, as well as remain at the same school. There are specific sufficiency challenges within B&NES Local Authority, which means that some children are placed away from the area. In 19/20 69% of children were placed outside of the Local Authority boundary, or at a distance of at least 20 miles away from their family home.

3.16 The issue of sufficiency is also a national one and in December 2019, the Children's Commissioner published their report 'Pass the parcel – children posted around the care system'. This report identified that as of 31st March 2017/2018, 41% of children and young people in care were living out of area,

with 11,352 children and young people living more than 20 miles away from their home. The report highlighted that the number of children living out of the area has risen by 13% since 2014. The report acknowledges there are a number of reasons for children being placed at such distance from their home, but often it was identified that the location of the placement was simply because there was nowhere more suitable for them locally.

3.17 Sufficiency has also been identified as a priority across the South West . Work is underway across the LA's to develop our sufficiency; this is at an early stage. B&NES actively contribute to this transformational project. This is covered in detail in section 3.59

3.18 The aspiration with B&NES is to ensure that children are placed within the Local Authority. In order to be able to achieve this the recruitment and retention of local foster carers is a key priority. The more carers the Local Authority have available the more opportunity there is for children and young people to be placed within their local area. The Children's Transformation Programme includes a project group which a focus on recruitment and retention, including investment into services to enable an increase in the numbers of local carers to provide for a wide range of placements, i.e. adolescents, children with disabilities in need of short breaks, parent and baby.

3.19 It is important to note that for a small number of children, placements at a distance from B&NES are appropriate, i.e. due to risk or complex needs. For all children placed outside of B&NES they will continue to be visited by their social worker as well as IRO and receive education and health services appropriate to need.

3.20 Recent trends show increased prevalence of adolescents entering Local Authority Care. An analysis of these children shows that family breakdown due to covid restrictions have played a part. It is important to note that our care numbers have not significantly risen, as we have continued to support many children to remain or return home using additional funding via covid grant. Due to the older age of these children coming into care, it has provided difficult to find foster placements and therefore some of these children have been placed in 16+ accommodation and support arrangements (currently not regulated by Ofsted /unregulated placements).

3.21 To understand what constitutes an unregulated setting it is useful to understand what a regulated residential setting is. The Care Standards Act 2000 defines a residential children's home as an establishment that provides 'care and accommodation' 'wholly or mainly' for children. Therefore, an unregulated setting provides accommodation and support but *not* care. The law does not set out what care is, but there are some simple rules to apply. Administering medication, cooking for young people and shopping for them will constitute care. Whereas assisting young people to learn these skills will constitute support. If a provider crosses the line and provides care on an ongoing basis, the accommodation will become an unregistered children's home and will be illegal.

3.22 The use of 16+ accommodation and support has been in place for a few years, both nationally and locally. For some children, who are unable to live in a family setting, or where there are contextualised safeguarding issues, these types of placements can best meet their needs. In November 2019 OFSTED reviewed arrangements for young people over 16 years and Care Leavers,

stating; “the oversight of commissioned accommodation, including unregulated provision, is rigorous and results in additional support to keep young people safe”.

3.23 We have seen a small increase in the use of 16+ accommodation and support in B&NES during the pandemic, for the reasons outlined above. Since March 2020 we have put into place further measures to ensure that any children in these arrangements have rigorous oversight and appropriate risk management plans. This includes all 16+ accommodation and support providers being tendered through a dynamic purchasing system (DPS), in partnership with five other local authorities.

3.24 We have also increased our scrutiny of these arrangements by both Head of Service and Manager level. All children have appropriate support packages and supervision in place. The Head of Service and Deputy Lead for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance meet bi-monthly to review all these types of arrangements. In addition to this a recent audit of all children living in 16+ accommodation and support arrangements was undertaken in March 2021. As a result of this audit we have been further reassured about practice in this area in B&NES.

3.25 Stability rates of placements are consistently good in B&NES, with over 90% of children experiencing less than 3 placements over time. It is important to note that for some children placement changes are planned and a positive outcome for the child, i.e. reunification with parent, move to live with an extended family member or connected persons, or adoption

3.26 *Friends and Family:* Care Plans take into consideration a child or young person’s needs for staying in touch with their friends and family and this is proactively facilitated by social workers and IROs. For some children, there may be substantial risks posed from such contact time, but where possible the Local Authority will assess and mitigate such risks, even when these are significant.

3.27 In 2021 B&NES are also implementing the Lifelong Links Programme, which is a new approach, developed by the Family Rights Group, and aims to build lasting support networks for children and young people in care. This is achieved by rebuilding relationships and reconnecting children and young people in care with loved ones, including family members, significant persons and previous carers.

3.28 *Your Education:* To ensure that every looked after child is supported to achieve their very best the Virtual School (VS) hold termly Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings. These are highly focused meetings dedicated to support educational outcomes. The PEP will be attended by the child’s social worker, the designated teacher at the school, the child’s carer and a member of the VS team. The child is invited to attend if they would like to, but if not, they can provide their views via the designated teacher. The child’s views are key to every PEP meeting and is normally the first part of the meeting.

3.29 Designated teachers complete the paperwork following a PEP which clearly records agreed actions and the impact they are expected to have. The V review every PEP and quality assure them before they are finalised and pupil premium plus funding is allocated. Every school has a statutory requirement to have a named designated teacher for looked after children and we provide regular

training for all our new designated teachers. The VS have good links with all the designated teachers and pupils are aware of who this person is in the school.

3.30 To ensure that every child gets a place at the best school for them, the VS have clear guidance that looked after children should only be placed in schools with OFSTED ratings of Good or Outstanding. In extreme exceptions we will place children in a school rated as requires improvement, but only where we are assured that the school can support the child effectively. Currently 94% of our statutory age children attend Good or Outstanding provisions. Where a mainstream school is not the best place for a child then we will work alongside the Special Educational Needs and D team to ensure that we find the best school to meet a child's needs. To support us in this the VS have two allocated members of the SEND team who have all our Looked After Children on their caseload. The VS also have a dedicated member of the educational psychology team who works with them two days a week.

3.31 The Virtual school will support a young person via the PEP process for as long as a child remains in education. Over the past 18 months the VS have worked hard to ensure that the quality of PEPs supporting post 16 education are the same high quality as our statutory school age children. The VS also carry out PEPs for all children who are in nursery. Once a child turns 18, it is then up to the young person and the social worker whether they would like these PEPs to continue with the young person's voice taking the lead in this decision. The VS have supported right up to university age where needed or required. The VS support schools and colleagues to provide work experience, and this is included in the PEP.

3.32 *Your identity:* All children in care have an up to date Care Plan which focuses on identity needs, including religious and cultural needs, as well as individual talents, interests and hobbies. Children's needs and interests in these areas are promoted and an annual celebration event is planned for 2021 to celebrate children in care achievements in all areas.

3.33 Life story work is important for children in care. It seeks to provide the child with an understanding of the reasons why they have come into care, as well as what has happened for them and their family whilst they have been in care. This work can take many different forms, from words and pictures, to photographs, letters, etc. Life story work will be completed with the child throughout their time in care. We are currently working to further develop our practice in B&NES and provide social workers with a range of tools to ensure that the child has a comprehensive range of information to best suit their needs.

3.34 *Your Health:* children in care are supported by the Looked After Child Health Team. The team provides for all children in care and their initial and annual health assessments, emotional and mental health, dental health, immunisations, planning for transition of health services, promoting children's development e.g. Speech and language development, achieving Healthy Weight of children and young people and good nutrition, and also ensuring specific provision for children with Education Health Care (EHC) plans

3.35 In 2019/20 53 initial health assessments, 13 Adoption Medicals and 26 Adoption Update Medicals were completed for B&NES children (all face to face contacts). In addition, 22 adoption updates were completed using relevant reports (child not seen). The Health team also work with partner agencies and

other Local Authority Health Teams to ensure that all children have regular health assessments, with 22 initial health assessments being completed for children placed outside of the Local Authority. \*The 2020/2021 Annual Health Report is due in July 2021

3.36 The Designated Nurse for LAC or a Specialist Nurse for LAC attend strategy discussions or professional meetings with social care and police colleagues as required and contribute to the individual action plans when there are concerns in relation to significant harm, i.e. substance misuse, episodes of missing, criminal or sexual exploitation.

3.37 Provision of dental care is generally good across B&NES and neighbouring counties with the majority of Looked After Children being seen by local dental practices close to their placement. If this is not possible the Looked After Children Nurse will signpost to Specialist Dental Services. Dental health assessments are a key performance indicator for the health needs of Looked After Children and Young People, reported annually. 94% of Looked After Children and Young People in B&NES had dental assessments in 2019-2020.

3.38 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children are seen for an initial health assessment by a paediatrician in the team, but are then referred to the Haven, a specialist service in Bristol, which means all their needs can be met by one service. This includes immunisations, TB testing, blood borne virus testing and mental health assessment. Preventative and health care guidance and support including nutritional advice, sexual health/relationship advice, contraception, alcohol, smoking and illegal substances and the Law in the UK regarding these issues are explained and discussed with the young person.

3.39 Emotional health and wellbeing is an important part of the initial health assessment, as well as continued assessment and monitoring through review health assessments. Early identification and treatment is critical to try and prevent longstanding serious problems with emotional health. This is supported through the use of Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQs) for children aged 5 to 15 years.

3.40 Emotional health and wellbeing is also a key focus for social workers and we work closely with our partners in Health, CAMHS and other agencies to ensure that children's needs are met. The children in care team commission a child psychologist to provide both consultation to social workers, assessment of needs and direct work with children.

3.41 *Leaving care and Moving On:* B&NES has high rates of keeping in touch with care leavers, consistently between 97-99%. At the time of writing this report, 88% of our care leavers have a Pathway Plan in place which is reviewed every 6 months. All care leavers up to 21 years have an allocated Personal Advisor (PA) that supports them in all areas of life, including housing, finances, education, employment and training, health (including mental and emotional health). For care leavers over the age of 21 years, we will continue to support them in line with their wishes and feelings.

3.42 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 provided a new duty to Local Authorities to provide PA support to all care leavers up to the age of 25 years, *if* they want this support. This duty commenced on 1st April 2018 and we have provided support to 27 additional young people between the age of 21-25.

3.43 Numbers of children Staying Put (SP) with their foster carers after 18 years are good in B&NES and we currently have 12 such arrangements. We have recently reviewed this service and our SP worker now sits within our Family Placement Team to ensure a smooth transition from foster care. We are also reviewing our policy and procedures to strengthen the service we provide to both young people and carers and seeking to support increased numbers in SP arrangements.

3.44 Aside from SP, care leavers can live in a range of housing provision, including supported living, semi-independent living and independent living. At the current time 96% of young people have suitable living arrangements as described above. Housing continues to be a challenge to young people in B&NES, especially those with complex needs. Children's Social Care are currently working with the Housing Department to identify solutions for some of our most vulnerable young people to ensure that they have stable and secure housing opportunities.

3.45 The number of care leavers in education, employment or training (EET) is 67%, with South West benchmarking figures aimed at a 70% rate. The number of young people who are not in EET has increased over previous years, which is also reflected nationally. We have therefore further developed our service within B&NES to include a skills and engagement worker within the social work team, development of an EET clinic, a focus on working with private industry in B&NES to provide work experience, training and job opportunities, as well as working with our partner agencies to increase EET figures. An EET Pathway has been developed to provide a clear aspiration for care experienced young people in B&NES and a strategic focus for this work.

3.46 The care leaver's last review health assessment is completed at the age of 17 years. A Health Passport is completed with the Care Leaver to provide up to date information about their immunisations and health needs. The Health Passport is for them to keep and can be used when accessing health services after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. An electronic version is also kept and shared with the GP. If the young person declines a review health assessment the Health Team will attempt to engage with them on the telephone or request that they complete a questionnaire about their health. The young person is informed that they may decline but can contact the Health Team directly or through their Personal Advisor at any point in the next year if they change their mind.

3.47 In 2017, B&NES care leavers service was rated as 'requires improvement' by OFSTED, although the overall judgement for Children's Social Care was 'good'. A further Focussed Visit was undertaken by OFSTED in 2019, in which Inspectors looked at the Local Authority's arrangements for care leavers only. This visit considered the recommendations from the 2017 inspection and stated, "Young people receive practical and emotional support from social workers and personal advisers who know them well. Importantly, the identification and response to risk has improved. Young people are now visited in accordance with their needs. They are very clear about their rights and entitlements, and the local offer results in tangible benefits for them".

3.48 The report continues, "Senior leaders have invested in improvements to performance data and quality assurance, including the case auditing process". Alongside this, OFSTED recognised that some improvements were recent and not fully embedded in practice, namely the application of the risk assessment

tool, timeliness and review of pathway plans. We have continued to work on these areas of development and further progress our care leavers service.

3.49 The recommendations made from this Focussed Visit have been taken forward by Children's Social Care and key area of work focusing on Pathway Planning and risk assessment.

3.50 This report will now consider specifically the impact of Covid upon our Corporate Parenting duties. The pandemic and associated restrictions have had a significant impact on many of our children in care and care leavers. For children in care, education provision has been disrupted, some aspects of health services such as dentistry and eye tests have been delayed or unavailable, and other partner agency support and community services have been significantly impacted on.

3.51 Despite this, we have worked hard in B&NES with our partner agencies to continue to provide good services to children in care. We have continued to visit children in their placements, where it is safe to do so. If this has not been possible, we have undertaken virtual visits and increased communication through messaging. Some children and young people have engaged well with this and have enjoyed the opportunity to have a video call with their social worker.

3.52 Health assessments have continued during this previous year, albeit virtually. The Virtual School (VS) have worked incredibly hard to support children who are both in school, and those in placement being home schooled. They put into place additional support and resources to both encourage and engage children in continued learning. In more recent weeks the VS has worked to assist children returning back to school.

3.53 Significant support has been provided to foster carers to ensure that they are well supported to enable them to continue to care for the children in their care. This has meant increased contact from the Family Placement Team and creative ways of working with our foster carer families so that they do not feel isolated. This has been successful, as shown in our placement stability rates, which remain consistently high.

3.54 Our care leavers have also been significantly impacted on by the pandemic. It is important to note that care leavers experience less opportunities in relation to education, employment and training due to many factors, including impact of abuse and trauma. The pandemic has served to further exacerbate these issues due to limited availability of technology to enable online education, or for some young people, they have been unable to engage with further education virtually. This was particularly the case in the first lockdown. The opportunity for work has also lessened due to the closure of non-essential businesses. The Adolescent and Care Experienced Team have worked hard to bridge these gaps for our care leavers, and we have ensured that laptops are made available when needed.

3.55 Further areas of development and service improvement via the Children's Transformation Programme.

3.56 The Children's Transformation Programme, established in March 2020, encompasses a range of initiatives focusing on children in care and care leavers,

amongst others. It provides a forum in which services are further developed, or initiated, through a multi-disciplinary group. The Transformation Programme is also able to identify budget savings where appropriate.

3.57 One project agreed for 2021/22 will further develop opportunities for young people to access employment, education and training (EET) in B&NES. As discussed above, one impact of the pandemic has led to less opportunities for EET and it is felt that this impact will continue for our care leavers over a sustained period of time. We will therefore be further developing and strengthening our pathway for EET, bring together resources from across the Council and our partner agencies.

3.58 As discussed earlier in the report, sufficiency of in-house foster placement is limited and as a result, children are placed outside of the Local Authority. The Children's Transformation Programme also includes a project which focuses on the recruitment and retention of foster carers. A successful bid was made for investment enabling us to employ a marketing apprentice and commission a marketing agency, in line with our neighbouring Authorities. Our recruitment will focus on recruiting foster carers to meet the needs of the hardest to place children, i.e. adolescents, parent and baby, as well as short breaks for children with disabilities.

3.59 We are also undertaking a review of the fee structure for B&NES foster carers, as we are not competitive in some age ranges. We have further developed our support and training package to carers, as well as facilitating a buddy scheme, in order to promote retention of carers. Furthermore, we are developing a 'Fostering Families' service which aims to support children on the edge of care and provide a fostering service to both the parent and child in order to avoid the child coming in care.

3.60 Alongside this, B&NES are also part of the South West Sufficiency Project led by the South Gloucestershire Council. This project has funding for a project manager for two years from the DfE (Oct 2020 – Oct 2022). The project is twofold; looking at how LA's can work more efficiently with the independent sector and how LA's can commission, design and deliver services together. It aims to

a) create a whole system approach; creating new models for commissioning that will compliment all existing models and give Local Authorities increased levels of sufficiency.

b) Establish new ways of working, to improve partnership working between Local Authorities, Independent providers, and agencies across the South West Region.

c) To improve placement sufficiency by placing children in Local high-quality placements at a sustainable cost for the LA's and the independent sector.

3.61 We are also implementing a Reunification Service within the Children in Care Team, as part of the Children's Transformation Project. Each year, several children leave their foster placement and return home. Currently, most of these moves are unplanned and many subsequently break down. The children returning to Local Authority care will have experienced significant disruption in their lives, failed hopes of returning to their families, and another experience of trauma and loss. Their families also will have experienced trauma and disruption.

3.62 B&NES is working with the NSPCC to embed their reunification framework. The framework supports practitioners and managers to apply structured professional judgement to decisions about whether and how a child should return home from care. It supports families and workers to understand what needs to change, to set goals, access support and services and review progress. We have support from our internal family therapy service and ongoing support once the child has returned home from the Connecting Families Team. It is planned that this service will be in place as from July 2021.

3.63 Transitions will be a key focus for 2021/22, and we are working closely with our partners in adult services and health to ensure early identification of need and smooth transitions between services in the best interests of children and young people. This is important for all our children in care, and especially children with a disability, complex needs, or at high risk.

## **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

4.1 Statutory guidance produced in February 2018 outlines the role of Local Authorities and the application of corporate parenting principles as set out in section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Local Authorities must have regard to the needs identified in the Children and Social Work Act when exercising their functions in relation to looked-after children and care leavers (relevant children and former relevant children). It should be read and applied alongside the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations volume 2: care planning, placement and case review, and volume 3: planning transition to adulthood for care leavers, resource implications (finance, property, people)

## **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

5.1 The Local Authority seeks to ensure that it meets all its corporate parenting responsibilities. Placements are identified depending on the child's assessed need. Aside from the cost of the placement, additional funding may also be agreed relating to supervision and support. Placement sufficiency is a significant area for development. A number of Children's Transformation Projects seek to increase the range of children and young people supported through connected carers and an expanded in-house fostering provision. The financial year 20/21 saw significant pressures across Children's Services, the budget for 21/22 has been increased to reflect this. Children's Services continue to keep under constant review the effective and efficient use of the financial resources allocated to it to endeavour to stay within the budgetary envelope.

## **6 RISK MANAGEMENT**

6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

## **7 EQUALITIES**

7.1 An EIA has not been carried out on this report. Any changes to service delivery identified through the Children's Transformation programme will be underpinned by an EIA.

## 8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 The council has declared a climate emergency and has resolved to enable carbon neutrality in B&NES by 2030. When considering any placement for a child, we will seek to accommodate children within B&NES, therefore avoiding unnecessary travel for the child, their family, the social worker and other professionals. Children's Services must see children in their homes, settings and community in order to discharge their statutory responsibilities. Where possible, we will seek to minimize travel and use technology.

## 9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 The Corporate Parenting Group are informed of progress against The Pledge on a quarterly basis. The services referred to within this report are directed and overseen by the Assistant Director and Director of Children's Social Care. Any significant changes to service development at discussed with the relevant authority.

## 10 CONSULTATION

10.1 This report has been authored by Rachael Ward, Head of Service, in conjunction with the Assistant Director for children and Young People Service, the Director of Children's Service and the Children's Finance Manager. It has also been shared with the Lead Member for Children and Young People.

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<b>Background papers</b>	
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	