



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee

31 January 2022

Report Title:	Recruitment and Retention of Foster Carers Task Group Report
Cabinet Portfolio	Children and Young People
Cabinet Member	Councillor Nova Charlton
Exempt Report	No
Reason for Exemption	N/A
Key Decision	No
Public Notice issued	N/A
Wards Affected	All
Report of	Jim Leivers Director of Children's Services JimLeivers@sthelens.gov.uk
Contact Officer	Dominic Rowan Scrutiny Support Officer DominicRowan@sthelens.gov.uk

Borough priorities	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	X
	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	
	Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all	
	Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	
	Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	
	Be a responsible Council	

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee held a Task Group between August to December 2021 into the Recruitment and Retention of Foster Carers. The Task Group's Report is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

2. Recommendations for Decision

Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- i) Approve the Task Group report and recommendations as set out in Appendix 1; and**
- ii) Submit the recommendations to Cabinet for response.**

3. Purpose of this Report

- 3.1 The Task Group's Report and its recommendations are presented to the CYPS Scrutiny Committee for approval and subsequent submission to Cabinet.

4. Background /Reasons for the recommendations

- 4.1 At the beginning of the 2021/22 municipal year, Members of the Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) Scrutiny Committee were concerned about whether there was a sufficient supply of foster carers within the borough to meet the needs of children and young people that required foster care. During the CYPS Committee's work programme planning session held in Summer 2021, Members committed to holding a Task Group to explore the recruitment and retention of Foster Carers within the borough
- 4.2 The Task Group's aims and objectives were agreed as follows:

- To understand the current recruitment process and the barriers and challenges to recruiting new foster carers
- To understand how the Council promotes fostering and engages foster carers
- To understand the impact on children and young people, and Council budgets/services of a potential shortage of foster carers in the Borough
- To discover best promotion and recruitment and retention practice undertaken in other local authorities that could be adopted in St Helens
- To understand the views of current foster carers regarding the recruitment process and retention of foster carers
- To make recommendations on how recruitment and retention of foster carers could be improved.

4.3 The Committee is requested to approve the Task Group Report and its recommendations, as set out in Appendix 1. As per the Council's Constitution, the report will be submitted to Cabinet for a response within the defined timescale. Cabinet's response to the Report will then be brought back to this Committee at a suitable date to be agreed.

5. Community Impact Assessment

5.1 No Community Impact Assessment was carried out for the purpose of submitting the report to the Committee for approval and submission to Cabinet.

6. Consideration of Alternatives

6.1 N/A

7. Conclusions

7.1 The Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee held a Task Group between August to December 2021 into the Recruitment and Retention of Foster Carers. The Task Group's Report and its recommendations are attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

7.2 The Committee is requested to approve the Task Group Report and its recommendations, as set out in Appendix 1. As per the Council's Constitution, the report will be submitted to Cabinet for a response within the defined timescale. Cabinet's response to the report and its recommendation will then be brought back to this meeting at a suitable date to be agreed.

8. Implications

8.1 Legal Implications

8.1.1 Legal implications may have to be considered if Cabinet chooses to accept and implement any of the recommendations within the Task Group Report

8.2 Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Implications

8.2.1 Social Value

8.2.1.1 Social value implications may have to be considered if Cabinet chooses to accept/support any of the recommendations within the Task Group Report

8.2.2 Sustainability and Environment

8.2.2.1 There are no sustainability or environment implications considered in the Task Group Report.

8.2.3 Health and Wellbeing

8.2.3.1 Health and wellbeing implications may have to be considered if Cabinet chooses to accept/support any of the recommendations within the Task Group Report

8.2.4 Equality and Human Rights

8.2.4.1 Equality and Human Rights implications may have to be considered if Cabinet chooses to accept/support any of the recommendations within the Task Group Report

8.3 Customers and Resident

8.3.1 Customer and resident implications may have to be considered if Cabinet chooses to accept/support any of the recommendations within the Task Group Report

8.4 Asset and Property

8.4.1 There are no asset and property implications considered in the Task Group Report.

8.5 Staffing and Human Resource

8.5.1 Staffing and human resource implications may have to be considered if Cabinet chooses to accept/support any of the recommendations within the Task Group Report.

8.6 Risks

8.6.1 Cabinet may have to consider the risks associated in deciding whether to accept/support any of the recommendations within the Task Group Report

8.7 Finance

8.7.1 Some of the recommendations within the Task Group Report will have financial implications if they are accepted and implemented by Cabinet. These implications will need to be considered by Cabinet when deciding whether to accept/support the recommendations or not.

8.8 Policy Framework Implications

8.8.1 The Task Group Report supports the achievement of Borough Priority 1 – Ensuring children and young people have a positive start in life.

8.9 Impact and Opportunities on Localities

8.9.1 There are no localities implications identified within the Task Group Report.

9. Background papers

9.1 None

10. Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1 – Recruitment and Retention of Foster Carers Task Group Report