

## Report of Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

### Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

**Date: 6<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

### **Subject: Scrutiny Inquiry - External Placements**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

### **Summary of main issues**

1. This year the Scrutiny Board's terms of reference identify three pieces of work for the Board to undertake, related to the three obsessions in the Children and Young People's Plan.
2. At the board's meeting in June, members agreed that their first major piece of work this year would be an inquiry on the first of these areas - reducing the number of looked after children – and that their inquiry would focus on the issue of external placements. A copy of the agreed terms of reference is attached as Appendix 1.
3. The first formal session of the inquiry took place in September. At that meeting Members requested further information on a number of topics. The following information is attached:
  - Children's Placements Strategy and Sufficiency action plan (currently under review)
  - Foster Carer Recruitment and Assessment Strategy

The remaining requested information will be circulated in advance of the meeting or provided verbally at the meeting.
4. Relevant officers from Children's Services will be at the meeting to respond to members' questions and comments.
5. A number of visits and working group activities are also taking place as part of the inquiry. Members will report back on any visits undertaken at the Board meeting. The remaining visits will be reported at the November Board meeting.

**Recommendations**

5. The board is requested to consider the issues raised by this session of the inquiry.

**Background documents**

6. None.