

Title of Report:	Item Called-in following an Executive Decision – Children’s Services External Placements
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	1 July 2014

Purpose of Report: To allow a review of the decision to introduce a Social Media Administrator and an increased advertising budget

Recommended Action: That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission reviews the decision.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman	
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Supporting Information

1. Executive Decision

- 1.1 On 8 May 2014 the Executive Member for Children and Young People received a report (EX2827) to identify the alternatives to the current external placement arrangements for Looked After Children.
- 1.2 The Executive Member for Children and Young People approved the following recommendations:
- (1) the benefits of an 'invest to save' opportunity be considered in respect of recruiting additional foster carers and implementation of a 3 tier foster carer model;
 - (2) responsibility for the commissioning and contract management of external placements be moved out of Children's Services and into Care Commissioning, Housing and Safeguarding;
 - (3) engagement with suitable providers be undertaken to work up a business case for developing residential services for looked after children within West Berkshire.

2. Call-In of the Decision

- 2.1 In accordance with the Council's Constitution, five Elected Members (Councillors David Allen, Jeff Brooks, Roger Hunneman, Tony Vickers and Alan Macro) called in an element of the Executive decision in relation to the Children's Services External Placements. The reasons for the call in are as follows:
- (1) There is no job description provided for the 'Social Media Administrator', and no indication of how their work would be directed or managed.
 - (2) There is no breakdown of the additional £20,000 per annum advertising budget, or an explanation of what this will be spent on.
 - (3) No business case has been made for the need to spend an additional £200,000, on social media and advertising, particularly when West Berkshire Council already employs 2.5 FTE press and publicity officers within Strategic Support, and the Family Placement team employ a Publicity and Recruitment Worker and numerous administration assistants. The Family Placement team already work alongside the Strategic Support publicity team when designing posters, information packs, web pages etc. It would therefore seem reasonable that the Family Placement Team could continue to liaise with the Council's press team when using social media, as the Strategic Support team already run a corporate Twitter account and Facebook page.

3. Role of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

- 3.1 The role of the Overview and Scrutiny and Management Commission is to review the decision and determine whether it concurs with the original decision (in which case it will take immediate effect) or refer it back to the Executive or Individual Portfolio Holder for further consideration.
- 3.2 If the Commission is of the opinion, having taken advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer or Section 151 Officer that a decision is outside the Budget and

Policy Framework approved by the Council, the Commission may refer the decision to the Council. The Council may concur with the decision (in which case it will take immediate effect) or refer it back to the Executive or Individual Portfolio Holder for further consideration.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission review the decision made by the Executive.

Appendices

Appendix A – Call in notice

Appendix B – Children’s Services – External Placements (EX2827)