

Children and Young People Select Committee

Review of Child Placements



11 March 2010

Select Committee – Membership

Councillor Harrington (Chair)
Councillor Eddy (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Beall
Councillor Broughton
Councillor Mrs Cains
Councillor Frankland
Councillor Miss Inman
Councillor Lewis
Councillor Sherris

Co-opted Representatives (when considering education matters)

Diocesan Representative

Mr M Frank

Parent Governor Representatives

Mr P Beach
Mr R Cash

Non Voting Co-opted Representatives

Mr D Campbell
Mr G Davies
Mr R G Lupton
Mr B Percival

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee thank the following contributors to this review:

Jim Bell, Corporate Risk and Insurance Manager
Beccy Brown, Head of Communications and Marketing
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Paula Hunt, Senior Accountant
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Paul Riley, Outcomes UK
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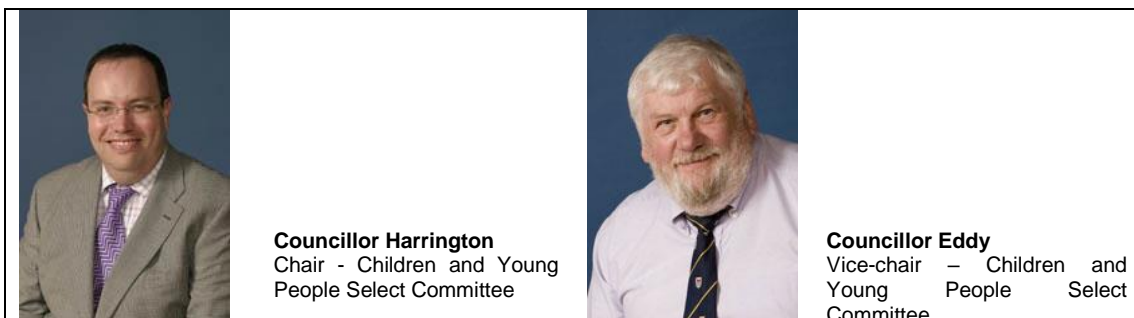
Foreword

As Chair and Vice Chair of the Children and Young People's Select Committee, we would like to thank everyone who has presented evidence (some more than once in the various stages) and their valuable contributions towards this Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation (EIT) Review. Our thanks to Graham Birtle (Scrutiny Officer) for producing this superb report after many months of hearing all the evidence, followed by debates over the recommendations that the Committee should make in its final report. Thanks also to Fiona Shayler from Democratic Services for supporting the Committee and arranging all the meetings!

In particular, we would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to three exceptionally professional and dedicated officers:-

- Our Link Officer, Shaun McLurg (Head of Children's Operations) who on his third day of appointment with Stockton Council started working on this review. Shaun has been an excellent Link Officer to the Committee. Members have really appreciated his "can do" attitude coupled with the experience he has brought to Stockton from his previous roles prior to Stockton.
- With thanks to Jane Humphreys (Corporate Director of CESC) who along with our Link Officer has provided the Committee with a wealth of information and enormous support throughout this review examining an exceptionally complex issue.
- We were delighted that Jim Bell (Corporate Risk and Insurance Officer) agreed to take the role of Independent Officer during this review. Jim's expertise in the field of "risk" has been exceptionally helpful to Members and his offer of risk assessing each of the recommendations contained within this report was gratefully received.

However, most importantly as Chair and Vice Chair, we would like to record our sincere thanks and appreciation to all Members of the Children and Young People Select Committee (and colleagues who have substituted) for their valuable contribution to this review. A number of Members brought a significant wealth of expertise on this subject to Committee. Along with the huge support Members have received from officers during this review, we are delighted to present such a comprehensive report which we hope the Cabinet of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council will endorse.



Original Brief

What services are included?

Children's Placements:

- In house Fostering Agency
- In house Residential
- In house Adoption Agency
- In house residential and respite provision for children and young people with special/additional needs
- Externally purchased foster placements
- Externally purchased adoption placements
- Externally purchased residential placements

The Thematic Select Committee's / EIT Project Team overall aim / objectives in doing this work is:

To identify options for future strategy / policy / service provision that will ensure that the needs of the children and young people placed are met (measured against the five Every Child Matters outcomes)

Please give an initial indication how transformation will enable efficiencies and improvements to be delivered by this EIT review?

- Inform a view about the balance of internal and external placements
- Inform the commissioning plan e.g. in respect of negotiating better prices, especially in relation to volume/jointly commissioning with other LAs which is linked to quality rather than availability at short notice
- Inform the revision of the Looked After Children Strategy
- Inform the development the Aiming High for Disabled Children Strategy

Key Responsibilities

Chair / Member Sponsor	Councillor David Harrington
Scrutiny Officer	Graham Birtle
Lead Officer	Shaun McLurg, Head Of Childrens Operations
Independent Officer	Jim Bell, Corporate Risk and Insurance Manager
Finance Officer	Paula Hunt, Senior Accountant

1.0 Executive Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 This Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation (EIT) review covered a huge and extremely complex area. In order to provide some structure the review was divided into separate, but linked, workstreams. Where recommendations are made they have each benefited from the Independent Officer providing his professional perception of the likely risks involved in their adoption or rejection. More detail of the risk analysis can be found in the main body of the report following each recommendation.

Fostering

- 1.2 Stockton Borough Council's Children, Education and Social Care (CESC) department maintains its own fostering service provision and also 'spot' purchases placements with the independent and voluntary sector when required.
- 1.3 Stockton Borough Council is involved in a North East regional project which is considering how collaborative arrangements between the authorities can make fostering services more efficient.

R1 The Committee acknowledge the work that the Corporate Director for Children, Education, Social Care is doing with the Regional, Improvement and Efficiency Partnership and the work with the Director colleagues in the sub-region and the Committee would recommend that this continues. (para 4.8)

- 1.4 The Review Project Board identified that the service needs to be able to meet the current and future demand for placements, able to recruit more foster carers who are able to take placements of sibling groups, teenagers and who are able to commit to children in the long term. Recruitment and marketing is a specialism but this is often an added pressure for social workers and, as such, Stockton may well improve its ability to recruit and compete with other providers if its recruitment and marketing strategy was professionalised.

R2 The Committee recommend the creation of a specific full time officer post to deliver the marketing of the fostering service on a 2 year fixed term contract. The location of the officer is to be determined as this post could be part of the Council's centralised communication team or be located within the children's services department. (para 4.20)

Placements with Family and Friends

- 1.5 Stockton Borough Council's responsibility for assessing family and friends as foster carers is jointly owned by the Child Placement Team and the integrated service areas. A protocol is in place which identifies the circumstances under which a referral should be made which states that priority is given to those cases where it is envisaged that the fostering arrangement will continue in the medium to longer term. For cases considered to be a short term measure the children's team make arrangements to have their suitability to foster assessed.
- 1.6 The Committee was alerted to the tension between the legislation, which promotes family and friends wherever possible, as giving preference over 'stranger' foster carers. Fostering service regulations and standards require that family and friends foster carers be assessed in the same way as 'stranger' foster carers.

- R3 The Committee recommend that the Council develop a kinship care policy which will identify the levels of advice, information and support that would be available in differing circumstances. Any developments within the policy would be subject to available finances. (para 4.45)**

Children with Complex Needs

- 1.7 Stockton's Special Education Needs (SEN) Section manages the local authority's statutory responsibility to identify, assess and provide for children with SEN. This includes securing out of borough residential placements for a small number of children and young people whose needs are unable to be met by Stockton Borough Council provision.
- 1.8 The team's strengths lie in the specialist, experienced teaching and support staff who can provide individualised teaching, re-integration and promote access to alternative provision as necessary. However, a number of challenges are recognised to exist. These include an increase in the number of secondary aged students with increasingly complex mental health needs being referred which is putting pressure on the provision at Redhill; providing for an increasingly diverse and personalised curriculum in a range of settings and across a wide range of ages; the development of a new single hospital with increased emphasis on community based services; and the building at Redhill not being wholly fit for purpose.

- R4 The Committee recommend to increase availability of sub-regional provision for "hard to place" children / young people with Complex Needs and that officers be given the flexibility to develop the appropriate provision on a Borough-wide basis should this be necessary. The Committee support and encourage the continuing work of the Tees Valley Directors' Group in this regard. (para 4.62)**

Residential Care

- 1.9 Stockton Council place some young people out of borough in variety of settings and for a number of reasons. This includes specialist placement when it is required and there is no local provision, secure accommodation, 52 week residential school, crisis intervention, respite provision, and sex offenders who require specialist/therapeutic help.
- 1.10 As of 31 March 2009, the Authority had 33 looked after children placed out of the area, of these, 15 were placed within external residential placements, at an annual cost in excess of £2.5 million. The placement costs are high in comparison with in-house provision due partly to capacity with only 6 long-term residential placements within Stockton and also due to the complexity of some of the placements.

- R5 The Committee recommend that, subject to further appraisal of the financial implications, Stockton Borough Council develop additional local authority residential provision for looked-after children. (para 4.90)**

Other Issues

- 1.11 Towards the end the Committee had discussions with officers to determine any other aspects that should be considered before the review concluded. Adoption services, which the Committee learned about when taking evidence along with fostering services, was not chosen but at its final meetings the

Committee was again informed of concerns that would benefit from its views and opinions being presented elsewhere.

1.12 In particular, an increase in the number of adopted children being referred to Social Care and the Children and Mental Health Service (CAMHS) was being experienced. Increasingly children are being diagnosed with attachment disorders or difficulties, which in turn can place considerable pressure upon the adoptive family. The expected challenge will be to develop a coordinated response to adoption support from all of the agencies who may come into contact with the children.

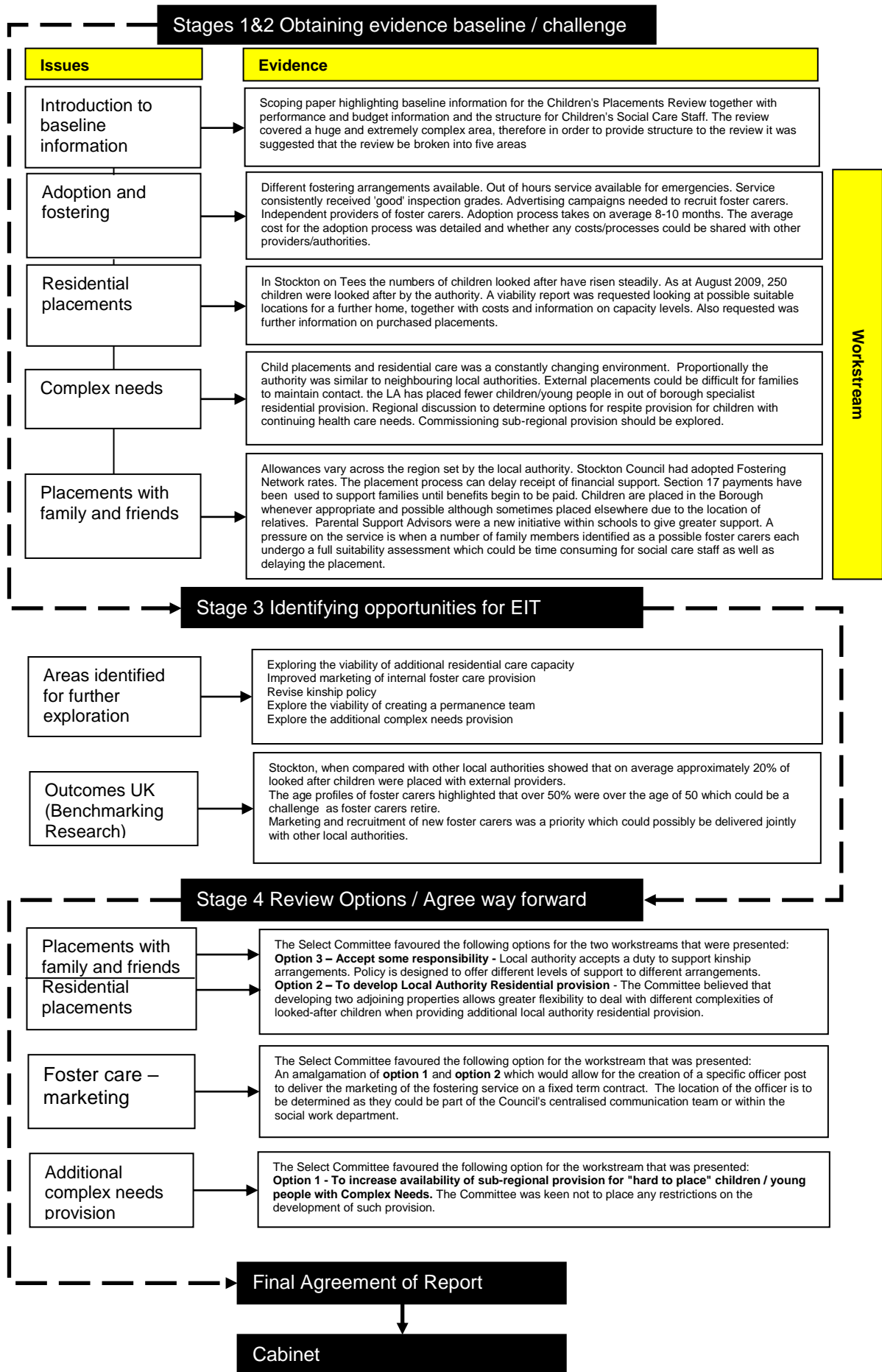
R6 The Committee recommend that the Council look to explore with Children's Trust partners opportunities to commission therapeutic interventions for children who have been adopted. (para 4.101)

1.13 In addition, children being placed for adoption are in need of skilled and time - intense preparation work prior to being placed.

1.14 The Committee believe that the challenge for Stockton Council is to be able to work with looked after children moving into permanent care via adoption, permanent fostering, or kinship care, in a way that offers the right support at the right level for as long as it is needed.

R7 The Committee recommends that the Council and its partners in the Children's Trust explore ways of raising awareness of adoption issues and the role of agencies within the Children's Trust. (para 4.104)

2.0 EIT Review Flowchart



3.0 Background

- 3.1 On 20th April 2009 the House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Select Committee published its report of Looked-After Children. It found that "...recruitment efforts are vital to increasing the supply of placements, which affects children's prospects for choice, individualisation and stability," and that "...the Government has placed a new duty on local authorities to ensure a sufficient supply of placements locally, but has not paid enough attention to strengthening local authorities' hands in achieving it.
- 3.2 Its evidence found that despite falling numbers of children in care, the rising unit costs of placements has led to a substantial increase in expenditure. The average cost per looked-after child per week across all placements was £774. For children in residential homes the average was £2,428, and for foster care £489. 71% of looked-after children are cared for in foster placements, living with an individual in their family home.
- 3.3 Recognised as an issue for Stockton Borough Council it was decided that the Children and Young People Select Committee lead an Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation (EIT) Review of Child Placements. This would explore whether the Borough is meeting the assessed needs of the individual children, i.e. is the available provision (either in-house or purchased) sufficient, are we getting value for money, and is there potential for commissioning the services in a more cost effective way without compromising the focus on achieving the five "Every Child Matters" outcomes.
- 3.4 The current national context is one of promoting a mixed economy utilising a variety of public and government control, and moving increasingly towards local authorities working in partnership with external providers. Although external placements are purchased this is usually on a spot basis because there are no suitable and/or available in-house resources. The exception is the planned purchase of placements for children with special educational needs.
- 3.5 The following initial information compared available Stockton Borough Council's performance with that of the average in England.

Baseline Indicators for 2008 Annual Performance Assessment	SBC	Eng
Looked after children per 10,000 population aged under 18 -2007-08	52.4	54.1
Percentage of looked after children cases which should have been reviewed during the year that were reviewed on time during the year – 2007-08	99%	90%
Percentage of looked after children at 31 March with three or more placements during the year – 2007-08 (BVPI 49)	10%	11%
Number of looked after children adopted during the year as a percentage of the number of looked after children at 31 March (excluding unaccompanied asylum seekers) who had been looked after for six months or more on that day – 2007-08 *BVPI 163)	6.9%	8.8%

- 3.6 Assisted by a Project Board led by the Head of Childrens' Operations the Committee took evidence based on five identified workstreams for which detail is given below. Additional supporting information is appended to this report.

4.0 Evidence/Findings

Fostering Services

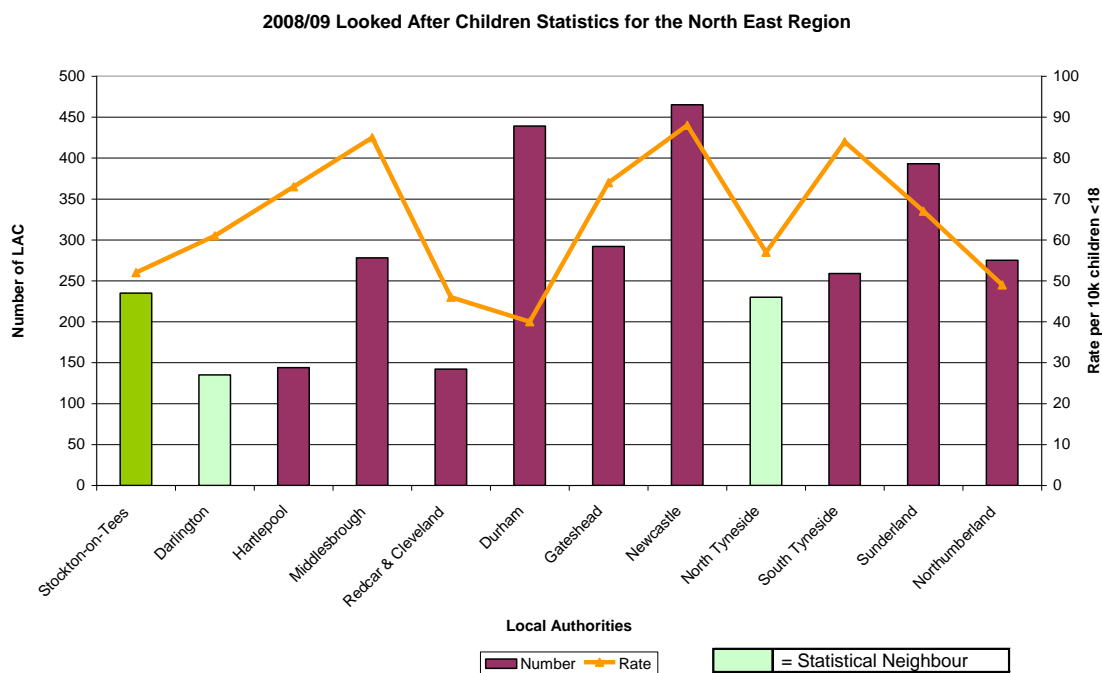
- 4.1 Children who are looked after by the local authority are either on a Legal Order, which allows the LA to share parental responsibility with parents, or by a voluntary agreement of parents or those with parental responsibility under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. Others can be remanded into Local Authority care by the courts. Regardless of how a young person came to be 'looked after' the Local Authority then has a duty to provide appropriate care, support and accommodation that meets the needs of the individual.
- 4.2 Stockton Borough Council's Children, Education and Social Care (CESC) department maintains its own fostering service provision and also 'spot' purchases placements with the independent and voluntary sector when required.
- 4.3 The Fostering Service provides a range of suitable, safe and high quality foster care placements for looked after children by: -
- Recruiting, preparing and assessing prospective foster carers and their families.
 - Supervising and developing foster carers.
 - Supporting foster carers and their families
 - Retention of foster carers.
 - Working in partnership with the child's Social Worker to identify a suitable placement in accordance with the child's assessed needs.
 - Working in partnership with the child's Social Worker to maintain and support the child in placement.
 - Working in partnership with independent fostering agencies and members of the Regional Consortium to identify suitable placements for children.
 - Adherence to National Standards.
- 4.4 Stockton Borough Council is involved in a North East regional project which is considering how collaborative arrangements between the authorities can make fostering services more efficient. The project was commissioned by the North East Improvement and Efficiency Partnership in order to develop options for collaboration between Local Authorities that will:
- Increase the range and quality of placements provided by local authority fostering services for children from the area.
 - Maintain children in stable placements in or close by their home area wherever possible.
 - Demonstrate an efficient use of resources and opportunities for savings.
 - Share best practice in the services run by participating authorities and encourage innovative solutions to the challenges faced by fostering services.
- 4.5 Outcomes UK, a consultancy firm and part of Foster Care Associates Ltd (FCA), the largest independent provider of fostering services in the UK have undertaken the NEIEP project and provided evidence to the Committee as to some of the findings as they pertain to Stockton Borough Council.
- 4.6 The Committee read with interest the findings and options in the various reports dealing with the issue of fostering and adoption as it affects the councils in the north east region. Of particular interest was the sub-regional fostering element that could be applied to the Tees Valley authorities that already enjoy close communication and, in other service provision, shared

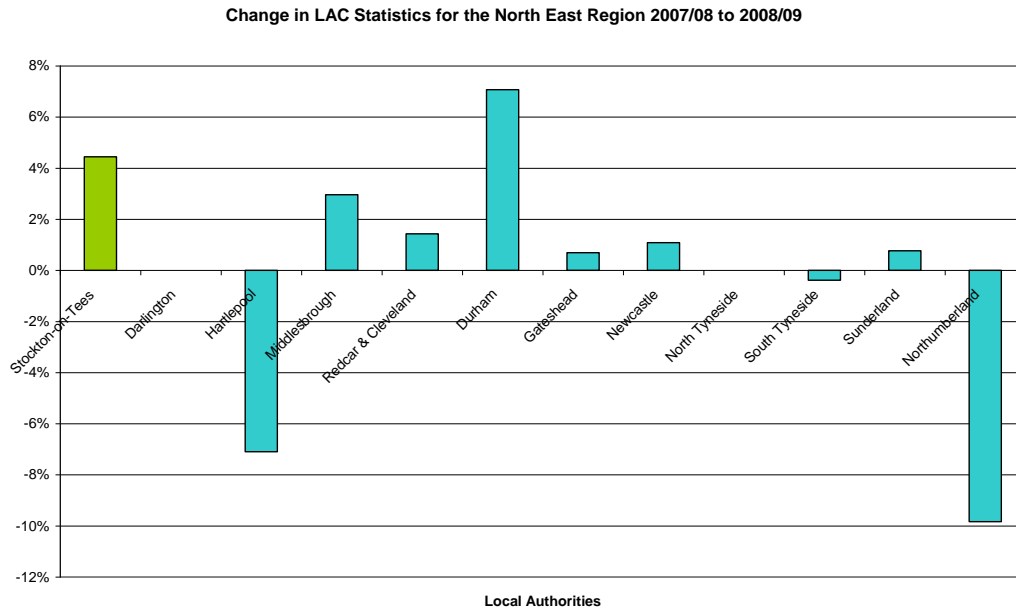
working or partnership arrangements. The work of this Committee is in no way meant to preclude possible support of shared arrangements in the future for fostering or adoption services with other local authorities that may be introduced.

- 4.7 The Committee herein record its thanks to Outcomes UK for the support and information given to it during the review of child placements as it assisted the provision of comparator information with other north east councils. Such information gave an indication of possible alternative practice that could be explored to further develop Stockton Council's provision.
- 4.8 **The Committee acknowledge the work that the Corporate Director for Children, Education, Social Care is doing with the Regional, Improvement and Efficiency Partnership and the work with the Director colleagues in the sub-region and the Committee would recommend that this continues.**

Risk Assessment: This is considered a risk neutral proposal with positive opportunities for achieving benefits and no adverse implications for service aims, objectives, efficiency and performance.

- 4.9 The cost to recruit foster carers in Stockton is a third of the north east average at £2,000. Foster carers in Stockton are remunerated at the higher end of the Fostering Network scale and there are fewer levels used. The cost per in-house fostering placement in Stockton is over £50 more than the north east average of £300 per week. The cost is apportioned accordingly - 85% carer costs, 15% service cost.
- 4.10 Stockton-on-Tees' looked after children rate is below average although the Borough experienced an above average LAC increase over last year. Due to the lower number of looked after children Stockton has a lower than average number placed with in-house fostering service whilst the proportion of looked after children placed externally equals the north east average.





4.11 The following tables show that whilst the number of foster carers in Stockton remains constant the Fostering Service has to deal with a 10 per cent turnover of carers which is the average for North East councils. To replace the foster carers lost to the service Stockton has an average number of enquiries in the north east, and above average conversion to approval, but longer than average time to recruit and assess. Stockton-on-Tees fostering costs appear to be below average spend on carer recruitment and assessment.

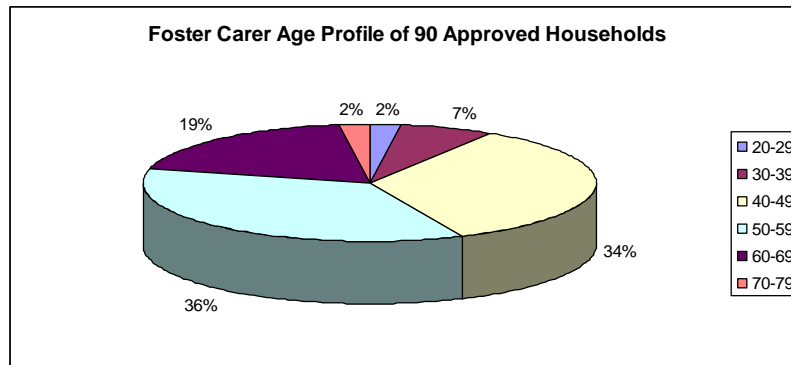
2008/09 Data	Stockton-on-Tees	Darlington	Hartlepool	Middlesbrough	Redcar & Cleveland	Durham	Gateshead	Newcastle	North Tyneside	South Tyneside	Sunderland	Northumberland
No. Enquiries	81	97	23	22	106	515	243	546	157	236	205	332
No. Enquiries per FC Household	0.9	1.6	0.3	0.3	1.4	2.8	1.5	2.7	1.1	2.4	1.0	2.3
Time to Assess FC	39	26	32	54	38	52	32	28	32	26	36	36
Approved Foster Carers	8	6	17	2	15	30	22	55	17	16	18	17
% Approved from Enquiry	10%	6%	74%	9%	14%	6%	9%	10%	11%	7%	9%	5%

= Statistical Neighbour

2008/09 Data	Stockton-on-Tees	Darlington	Hartlepool	Middlesbrough	Redcar & Cleveland	Durham	Gateshead	Newcastle	North Tyneside	South Tyneside	Sunderland	Northumberland
Approved Foster Carer Households	90	59	80	85	74	183	157	201	139	99	196	144
Approved Foster Carers	8	6	17	2	15	30	22	55	17	16	18	17
Deregistered	9	6	12	13	17	25	9	29	22	16	30	28
Net Change	-1%	0%	6%	-13%	-3%	3%	8%	13%	-4%	0%	-6%	-8%

 = Statistical Neighbour

4.12 More than a third of foster carers are aged between 50 and 59 whilst over a fifth of carers are 60+ which could have a significant impact on service provision if new foster carers are not recruited.



4.13 Stockton-on-Tees Fostering Service has an average number of caseloads per social worker in the north east. It provides limited, below average respite provision, above average training provision and typical Emergency Duty Team (EDT) cover rather than good practice targeted support.

2008/09 Data	Stockton-on-Tees	Darlington	Hartlepool	Middlesbrough	Redcar & Cleveland	Durham	Gateshead	Newcastle	North Tyneside	South Tyneside	Sunderland	Northumberland
Ave SSW Caseload	16	15	13	14	10	10	17	11	12	14	22	16
Post-Approval Carer Training Days	279	116	64	n/a	202	870	540	965	n/a	n/a	1650	660
Respite Provision	25	48	Carers	n/a	n/a	Carers	Carers	1577	450	Carers	2580	336
Out of Hours Support	EDT	EDT	EDT	EDT	EDT	EDT	EDT + Foster Carer Specific	EDT + Foster Carer Specific	EDT + Foster Carer Specific	EDT + Foster Carer Specific	EDT	EDT + Foster Carer Specific

 = Statistical Neighbour

4.14 The Project Board identified the following key service challenges and developments. The service needs to be able to meet the current and future

demand for placements, able to recruit more foster carers who are able to take placements of sibling groups, teenagers and who are able to commit to children in the long term. Recruitment and marketing is a specialism but this is often an added pressure for social workers and, as such, Stockton may well improve its ability to recruit and compete with other providers if its recruitment and marketing strategy was professionalised.

- 4.15 Recruitment is key to all aspects of fostering as having sufficient placement choice and a range of skilled foster carers taking appropriately matched and supported placements improves the council's ability to offer stable placements to the children. This in turn will enable children to develop to their full potential.
- 4.16 The Committee was aware that Newcastle City Council had rebranded its fostering services which increased potential foster carer interest exponentially. It appeared that the service was not marketed as part of Newcastle City Council but instead positioned itself alongside independent foster agency provision. The Committee was keen to explore such marketing techniques to see if that could be replicated in the borough.
- 4.17 A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis was undertaken to determine options for possible actions to rectify the issues identified. For more detail see appendix 1. A number of recommendations may require financial pump-priming as a temporary measure to develop the rectifying actions.
- **Option 1** - Create a specific permanent post for marketing of the fostering service and set a discrete budget for recruitment activity (Cost - approx £52,000 with potential net savings of £48,000 (If reduced use of Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placement by at least 2 placements then this option will be cost effective))
 - **Option 2** - Employ a Marketing person to a fixed term contract (i.e. 3 yrs) with option to extend contract if successful (Cost - approx £52,000 with potential net savings of £48,000 (If reduced use of IFA placement by at least 2 placements then this option will be cost effective))
 - **Option 3** - Commission an established and experienced marketing firm (May cost in the region of £30 -£40 per hour. Need to reduce use of IFA placements by 4 in first year to be cost effective)
- 4.18 When discussing the above options the Committee was supported by Beccy Brown, Head of Communications and Marketing who had been involved in an EIT Review of Communication, Consultation and Engagement during 2009. That review recommended:
- a) That a centralised Communications team be created which combines all media, marketing, employee communications, web development and internet content responsibilities within the Council. Strategic leadership of the team will be provided by a Head of Communications.
 - b) That the procurement of marketing services, advertising, printing, design services, brand development and photography be centralized and delivered by the communications team through 4 year framework agreements.

- 4.19 As a result the Committee was mindful that its views should not contradict what had been agreed at Cabinet on 26th November 2009.
- 4.20 The Committee therefore agreed that an amalgamation of **option 1** and **option 2** would be an appropriate response. **The Committee recommend the creation of a specific full time officer post to deliver the marketing of the fostering service on a 2 year fixed term contract. The location of the officer is to be determined as this post could be part of the Council's centralised communication team or be located within the children's services department.**

Risk Assessment: In general the strengths/benefits identified in the SWOT analysis are considered to outweigh the risks, and exploiting this opportunity is likely to result in the service exceeding its expected outcomes in a time-bound situation that can then be reviewed for continuing sustainability.

The proposal will also support the effective implementation of shared objectives in relation to a more co-ordinated and strategic approach to corporate communication.

Placements with Family and Friends

- 4.21 Family and friend placements are often referred to as kinship care, either term able to describe a variety of arrangements. The arrangements can be formal or informal and is not dependent on the legal status of the child.
- 4.22 The Committee learned that there are possibly three distinct groups of children who may become involved in kinship arrangements, these are:
- Children looked after or who were looked after immediately prior to the kinship arrangements being made.
 - Children who were in receipt of services from Social Care and where the Social Worker was actively involved in the decision and process of the child living with someone other than a birth parent, due to safeguarding action.
 - Children where Social Care did not play a role in making the kinship arrangements at all or were only involved in offering initial advice and guidance.
- 4.23 Allowances vary across the region set by each local authority. The Fostering Network had set a recommended allowance rate and Stockton Council had adopted these rates.
- 4.24 Members raised concerns about the inability of formally approved foster carers to claim child benefit for a fostered child within the household although acknowledged that they were in receipt of foster care payments, a legal requirement. It was suggested a policy framework could be developed in respect of payments to family and friends who were not approved foster carers as part of an overall package of kinship care and also the level of support given to families. This could deal with the issue encountered when applying for benefits in respect of the children as the process meant that they had a delay in receiving the financial support and that Section 17 payments were used to support families until benefits began to be paid.

- 4.25 Members were concerned about the placement of children and were informed that normal practice would be for children to be placed within the Borough whenever it was appropriate and possible although children were sometimes placed out of the Borough due to the location of relatives. Contact was maintained with the family and the child in placement and links were also made with the relevant local authority.
- 4.26 The Committee was reassured that cultural/religious differences are always taken into account although it was difficult to recruit BME foster carers and adopters who constitute a small percentage of the local population.
- 4.27 Specific evidence was given to the Committee dividing kinship care into the following four distinct categories, 'placed with 'family and friends' foster carers under fostering regulations', 'made subject of a Special Guardianship Order', 'made subject of a Residence Order', and at the request of the Committee, 'private fostering arrangements'.

Family and friends as foster carers

- 4.28 The legislation prioritises and emphasises the importance of kinship care and requires the Local Authority to seek out and determine if family and friends are suitable to care for the child before placing them with foster carers outside of family and friends referred to later as 'stranger' foster carers.
- 4.29 Fostering Service Regulations 2002 allow a local authority to make an immediate placement of a child with someone who is not an approved foster care, provided that the person is a relative or friend of the child and the local authority are satisfied that the arrangement will not compromise the safety and welfare of the child.
- 4.30 Standard 32 of the fostering service National Minimum standards requires the Fostering Service to be sensitive to the pre-existing relationship in assessing and approving family and friends as foster carers, to assess and meet the support and training needs in the same way as for other foster carers and to ensure that the mechanisms to assess the family and friends carers are designed in a way that encourages their consideration as carers.
- 4.31 Stockton Borough Council's responsibility for assessing family and friends as foster carers is jointly owned by the Child Placement Team and the integrated service areas. A protocol is in place which identifies the circumstances under which a referral should be made which states that priority is given to those cases where it is envisaged that the fostering arrangement will continue in the medium to longer term. For cases considered to be a short term measure the children's team make arrangements to have their suitability to foster assessed.

Special Guardianship

- 4.32 Special Guardianship arose from the Prime Minister's review of Adoption in the year 2000. The review identified that there was a need for an alternative legal status for children that offered the security of adoption without the legal severance from the birth family. The order gives the Special Guardians parental responsibility, shared with the birth parents but allows the guardians

to exercise parental responsibility to the exclusion of birth parents on most issues.

- 4.33 A local authority can not apply for a Special Guardianship Order or apply on an individual's behalf. The service the local authority provides assesses a person's suitability to be a Special Guardian making recommendations to the court where the application has been lodged. The support needs are also assessed and offered to meet the children and Special Guardians needs. Support services include counselling, advice and information, financial support, and assistance including mediation services.
- 4.34 Within Stockton Borough Council there are clear arrangements for the assessment of an applicant's suitability to be a Special Guardian and there is an increasing recognition of the need to support these arrangements. The Council contracts with an independent agency to provide specific aspects of the prescribed support services.

Residence Orders

- 4.35 A Residence Order under section 8 of the Children Act 1989 gives the person with the order parental responsibility for a child under 16 years (or 18 years if the child has disabilities) so that parental responsibility and decision making is shared between the person holding the order and the birth parents.
- 4.36 There are no discrete services for this specific group of children. Stockton Borough Council does, however, have a policy that covers arrangements for approved Local Authority Foster Carers who are willing to apply for a Residence Order in respect of the child they have in placement and where the Local Authority positively support this proposal.
- 4.37 This policy has developed in practice, over time and has begun to include not only those children who were formally fostered by the holder of the residence order but also those who have the care of children. Children in receipt of services from Social Care and where the Social Worker was actively involved in the decision and process of the child living with someone other than a birth parent, due to safeguarding action and where the Local Authority had instigated care proceedings are also covered by the Council's policy.

Private Fostering

- 4.38 A Private Fostering Arrangement is made between the parent, (or person with parental responsibility) and the carer, without the involvement of the local authority.
- 4.39 A private fostered child is defined in section 66 of the Children Act 1989 as one who, being under the age of 16 (or under 18 if disabled), is cared for and accommodated by someone other than a parent or close relative (grandparent, brother, sister, aunt and uncle, whether of the full blood or half blood or by affinity, and step parent as defined in section 105 of the Act).
- 4.40 Privately fostered children are not looked after children and local authorities are not involved in the making of such arrangements. Within Stockton Borough Council the services provided include responding to and monitoring private fostering arrangements, assessing their suitability and monitoring

compliance to relevant matters, ensuring the welfare of the child is safeguarded, and offering advice to the private foster carer.

- 4.41 All local authorities are inspected by OFSTED in respect of private fostering arrangements. Stockton was inspected in July 2008 and was rated 'good' showing a generally strong performance and capacity to improve.
- 4.42 The Project Board identified the following key service challenges and developments. The Committee was alerted to the tension between the legislation, which promotes family and friends wherever possible, as giving preference over 'stranger' foster carers. Fostering service regulations and standards require that family and friends foster carers be assessed in the same way as 'stranger' foster carers.
- 4.43 Also highlighted to the Committee was the need for family members who are identified as possible foster carers to undergo a full suitability assessment. If a number of family members came forward all are required to be assessed which could be time consuming for social care staff as well as delaying the placement.
- 4.44 A SWOT Analysis was undertaken to determine options for possible actions to rectify the challenges identified. For more detail see appendix 2
- **Option 1** – Accept responsibility for all children living in Kinship arrangements (Potential Savings – None, although in the longer term it may be that savings from use of Independent agencies are made due to an improvement in the capacity to place in-house)
 - **Option 2** – Accept no responsibility and have a view that families are responsible for looking after their own. (Potential Savings – None)
 - **Option 3** – Accept some responsibility (Potential Savings – None)
- 4.45 The Committee supported **Option 3. The Committee recommend that the Council develop a kinship care policy which will identify the levels of advice, information and support that would be available in differing circumstances. Any developments within the policy would be subject to available finances.**

Risk Assessment: This recommendation affords opportunities for increasing the fostering resource base and improving the level of service currently provided in this area. There are potential financial and support services capacity implications that will need to be carefully managed and monitored, but a focused risk-based approach will help ensure that the expected benefits will materialise.

Additional Complex Needs Provision

- 4.46 The Committee considered a number of activities delivered by some of the service units sited within the Complex and Additional Needs (CAN) Team. In particular the work of the Special Education Needs (SEN) Section, Hartburn Lodge, OASIS, The Children with Medical Needs Team were explored.

SEN Section

- 4.47 Manages the local authority's statutory responsibility to identify, assess and provide for children with SEN.

- 4.48 This includes securing out of borough residential placements for a small number of children and young people whose needs are unable to be met by Stockton Borough Council provision.
- 4.49 In 2009/10 the authority agreed to fund 15 residential places at Westlands School for children diagnosed with BESD (Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties) at a unit cost of approximately £29,000 each. In exceptional circumstances additional funding could also be provided for enhanced levels of support up to an extra £54,000 per student to secure additional Care Assistant support. None of the aforementioned provides 24 hour care 365 days of the year.
- 4.50 The budget for Out of Borough independent specialist provision in 2009/2010 was over £1.4m. The Committee learned that the projected budget did not include the potential costs for any young people identified between September 2009 and March 2010 indicating the likelihood overspend against this budget. During 2008/9 an overspend of £161k was achieved due to unpredictability of provision needed, the costs of individual placements, and a limited range of external providers.

Hartburn Lodge

- 4.51 Provides targeted short break and overnight provision for a number of children with complex disabilities. There are up to 6 beds available per night over 364 days.
- 4.52 The budget for 2009/2010 is £624,689. Officers projected an overspend of approximately £5,000 as a result of a within year increase in sleeping allowance as determined through Job Evaluation.
- 4.53 Although having a well established, stable and qualified workforce providing sustained high quality support to families a number of challenges were raised with the Committee. It was recognised that the number of challenging young people was increasing and there is a lack of clarity around the role of provision made by Tees, Esk, and Wear Valley Mental Health Trust for young people with major health needs and what the implications would be if this provision should end.

OASIS

- 4.54 Based in Thornaby the centre provides evening, weekend and school holiday period short breaks/activities for children and young people aged 8 to 18 with complex needs. The numbers attending each session vary between 4 and 9 with a total of 52 young people accessing this within a four week rolling period.
- 4.55 In addition the team also is commissioned by Leisure and Cultural Services and the Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC) Grant also commission the provision of Summer Holiday Play schemes/activities for children aged 3 to 18 across four venues (Ash Trees School, Abbey Hill School, Oasis and the Early Support Nursery). In 2009 approximately 140 children attended the play schemes. From 2010 the holiday scheme will be expanded through use of AHDC funds to secure Easter play/activity schemes as well.

- 4.56 The budget for 2009/2010 is £300,685 with no projected overspend. The Summer Play scheme is funded by additional income of £46,000.
- 4.57 Whilst enjoying the same strengths as Hartburn Lodge, OASIS's challenges differ in that there will be a need to provide for short break/nursery provision for pre-school children from 2010 in response to the national increase in nursery hours. This is being developed in collaboration with the Early Support Nursery, the piloting of a play scheme for 2 year olds, the need to develop after school and day care provision for under 8s, and developing additional independence training facilities.

Children with Medical Needs Team

- 4.58 Based within Redhill Children's Centre and North Tees University Hospital the team provides up to 10 hours per week tuition for children and young people of statutory school age who are unable to attend school due to specific medical and mental health needs.
- 4.59 The budget for 2009/2010 is £296,635 with no projected overspend. In addition, to secure up to 10 hours of tuition additional grant funds of around £35K are utilised.
- 4.60 The team's strengths lie in the specialist, experienced teaching and support staff who can provide individualised teaching, re-integration and promote access to alternative provision as necessary. However, a number of challenges are recognised to exist. These include an increase in the number of secondary aged students with increasingly complex mental health needs being referred which is putting pressure on the provision at Redhill; providing for an increasingly diverse and personalised curriculum in a range of settings and across a wide range of ages; the development of a new single hospital with increased emphasis on community based services; and the building at Redhill not being wholly fit for purpose.
- 4.61 A SWOT Analysis was undertaken to determine options for possible actions to rectify the challenges identified. For more detail see appendix 3
- **Option 1** – To increase availability of sub-regional provision for “hard to place” children/young people with Complex Needs (Potential Savings - up to £200k per annum from DSG (Dedicated Schools Grant) and at a possibly similar level from SBC budget)
 - **Option 2** – To enhance the local specialist support for children and young people with Complex Needs in order to maintain them within the Borough – this embraces educational provision, mental health/challenging behaviour support and widening the remit of the Complex Needs Social Work team to include groups such as ASD and ADHD, etc. The intention would be to enable a rapid early and maintained response to prevent an escalation of need. (Potential Saving – Although difficult to quantify but Out of Borough placement costs run up to £200,000 per young person (plus incidental costs))
 - **Option 3** – To implement both Options 1 and 2 above
- 4.62 The Committee supported **Option 1**. **The Committee recommend to increase availability of sub-regional provision for "hard to place" children / young people with Complex Needs and that officers be given the flexibility to develop the appropriate provision on a Borough-wide basis should this be necessary. The Committee support and encourage the continuing work of the Tees Valley Directors' Group in this regard.**

Risk Assessment: The SWOT analysis identifies worthwhile benefits and rewards to be derived from increasing sub-regional provision through a partnership approach. The recommendation to explore and develop the project is judged a low risk proposal intended to avoid missing chances to improve on the delivery of services and/or their cost-effectiveness in the future. However, there are also significant risks attached to the ultimate achievement of successful outcomes and these will need to be identified and carefully managed as the process proceeds to ensure that risk taking is well-balanced.

Residential Placements

- 4.63 Stockton Borough Council is responsible for the provision of accommodation for children in need in the area requiring accommodation as a result of there being no person who has parental responsibility for a child in need or where the person caring for that child is prevented, for whatever reason, from parenting that child in a suitable manner.
- 4.64 Stockton Borough Council has its own provision which consist of two long term homes each providing 3 places. There is a further home, which provides 6 accommodation places for a period of time while specific tasks are achieved. For those young people leaving care, Stockton Borough Council has 7 Supported Lodging providers. In addition there is further accommodation for care leavers and homeless 16, 17 and 18 year olds moving on from local authority provision although this was not within the remit of this review.

Rochester Road Children's Home

- 4.65 The home is a three bedroom Tristar property providing care and accommodation for up to three young people of either gender from 11 to under 18 years of age at any one time in need of a placement for the duration of their childhood. Each young person has their own room and staff sleep on the ground floor in a room that doubles up as a staff office.
- 4.66 In 2008/9 the budget was £305,097 with the cost per child at £2,462 per week.
- 4.67 The last 3 yearly key inspection ratings rated the care and accommodation as 'outstanding' showing that the provision is of exceptionally high quality.

Routledge Road Children's Home

- 4.68 The home is a four-bedded terraced Tristar property providing care and accommodation for up to three young people of either gender from 10 to under 18 years of age at any one time in need of a placement for the duration of their childhood. Each young person has their own bedroom and the fourth doubles up as a sleepover room for staff and a working office.
- 4.69 In 2008/9 the budget was £277,619 with the cost per child at £2,118 per week.
- 4.70 The last key inspection ratings rated the care and accommodation as 'outstanding' showing that the provision is of exceptionally high quality.

Princess Avenue Children's Home

- 4.71 Princess Avenue is a purpose built Children's Home with six bedrooms for young people and provides places in an emergency or the short term, or for a period of time in order that specific tasks can be achieved. Placements are offered to girls or boys aged 11-16 years of age on admission and up to just before the young persons 18th birthday.
- 4.72 In 2008/9 the budget was £519,972 with the cost per child at £1,859 per week.
- 4.73 The last key inspection ratings rated the care and accommodation as 'good' showing that the provision is strong.

Supported Lodgings Scheme

- 4.74 Supported Lodgings is a scheme run by the local authority where providers are family based offering a place in their home to a young person leaving care. Stockton has seven family providers who are paid a fee for each placement.
- 4.75 Supported Lodgings placements cost the Council a 'fee', which is paid to the family provider. The level of fee paid depends on the assessed needs of the young person. Some of the costs are claimed back from Housing Benefit and the young person's contribution.

	Fee to provider maximum	Housing Benefits contribution	Young Person contribution minimum	Total placement cost per week to Local Authority
High Support	£268.70	£112.00	£15.00	£141.70
Some support	£198.70	£112.00	£15.00	£71.70
No support	£125.70	£112.00	£15.00	(£1.70)

- 4.76 There are no legislative requirements to register the scheme or any external body that inspects the scheme. Stockton Borough Council, as a matter of good practice, monitors the performance of each of the family providers using the 'Fostering' model. It is anticipated that the Government will introduce requirements to register such schemes in the future with a government body and will inspect them. The department would welcome their introduction as it is expected that any inspection will demonstrate the exceptionally high standard of the service.

Out of Area Placements

- 4.77 Stockton Council place some young people out of borough in variety of settings and for a number of reasons. This includes specialist placement when it is required and there is no local provision, secure accommodation, 52 week residential school, crisis intervention, respite provision, and sex offenders who require specialist/therapeutic help.
- 4.78 As of 31 March 2009, the Authority had 33 looked after children placed out of the area, of these, 15 were placed within external residential placements, at an annual cost in excess of £2.5 million. The placement costs are high in comparison with in-house provision due partly to capacity with only 6 long-term residential placements within Stockton and also due to the complexity of

some of the placements. The average cost of a residential placement is in excess of £3,000 whilst the average weekly cost of secure residential placement is £4,500.

- 4.79 Stockton Borough Council place children and young people in registered placements which assure appropriate systems are in place to provide young people in out of area placements with the same opportunities to succeed as those with in-house provision.
- 4.80 The Committee was supportive of the actions of the service to provide the best care for looked after children in the variety of settings outlined above.
- 4.81 It was recognised that the success of the two long term homes and the stability of those young people placed there have at times left a 'bottleneck' in short term crisis home provision. With only 6 long term residential placements available in Stockton, young people often have to wait in short term accommodation for a local place or have to be placed out of the area because of capacity. An extension to in-house provision could reduce the problems experienced in Princess Avenue allowing for the opportunity to remodel that service with a view to enhancing the Foster and Preventative Services. Using Princess Avenue as originally designed could again provide short stays / respite for young people, as part of an overall plan, focusing on tasks and supporting the young people and carers to maintain or find long term placements or avoiding young people being 'Looked After' in the long term. This could help to stabilise young people and engage them in appropriate services.
- 4.82 The Committee supported the view to extend in-house provision as such provision has been shown to be cost effective in comparison to the private and voluntary sector and average costs when compared to other local authorities. The average cost of in-house provision is £2075 per week compared to an average of £3319 with the independent sector.
- 4.83 There will continue to be a need for emergency placements, however more planned placements in residential care would make it easier to plan and manage supply and demand in the market.
- 4.84 Placements outside of the borough would always be needed including the small but likely demand for secure placements or alternatives. The Committee agreed that it is not cost effective to have such provision in-house as the level of need is unpredictable and Members were informed that a regional study was underway to examine this issue further.
- 4.85 Members requested options so that in-house needs could be met rather than relying on out-sourcing provision. It was requested that a viability report be produced looking at possible suitable locations for a further home, together with costs and information on capacity levels. Members also wished to receive further information on purchased placements with details such as costs and notice periods.
- 4.86 The Committee was supplied with the following based on its request for more information.
- 4.87 Over the last 3 years, there have been up to 12 young people Looked After in external residential provision at any one time. The following table shows the

type of placements and costs and how many young people have been in placement during January of a given year.

Jan 2007		
Type of Placement	No of y. people placed	Av. Cost per year.
Secure Unit	2	£351.000
Residential Home	2	£243.000
Residential School	4	£147.000
Jan 2008		
Type of Placement	No of y. people placed	Av. Cost per year.
Secure Unit	2	£247.000
Residential Home	4	£191.000
Residential School	4	£125.000
Jan 2009		
Type of Placement	No of y. people placed	Av. Cost per year.
Secure Unit	1	£255.000
Residential Home	5	£197.00
Residential School	6	£126.00

- 4.88 When the Committee met in November there were 9 young people placed out of the area and a further 5 young people needing placements. The following table shows cost and type of placements projected for 2009/10.

Type of Placement	No of young people	Average cost per year Per placement
Residential Home	7	£179.000 = £1,253,000
Residential School	7	£136.000 = £952,000
Secure Accommodation	1	£255,000 = £255,000

- 4.89 A SWOT Analysis was undertaken to determine options for possible actions to rectify the challenges identified. For more detail see appendix 4

- **Option 1** – To continue to spot purchase residential care as required. (Potential Saving – none, unless the demand for places is reduced. This is unlikely given current trend)
- **Option 2** – To develop Local Authority Residential provision. (Potential Saving - There are a number of models and savings range from £11,000 and £443.000 per annum)
- **Option 3** – To commission a private/voluntary sector provider to establish a local children's home. (Potential Saving - Travelling and social work time. Costs for contact for families would reduce)

- 4.90 The Committee supported **Option 2**. **The Committee recommend that, subject to further appraisal of the financial implications, Stockton Borough Council develop additional local authority residential provision for looked-after children.**

Risk Assessment: This is considered a high risk venture in terms of financial implications, strategic approach, staffing and operational capacities etc. To

mitigate the possibility of unsuccessful outcomes, the recommendation is subject to an approved business plan and robust management controls to balance benefits with the resources available.

4.91 A viability paper developed for the Committee to deal with increased residential capacity allowed for detailed discussion regarding ways in which option 2 could be procured. Three models were offered and considered by the Committee:

4.92 **Model 1** – a 3 bedded home managed by a Team Leader with 2 assistants. Suitable for young people with less challenging behaviour and waking night cover not provided. This replicates the current model already in Stockton.

Potential Savings

Total Cost	£360,827
Cost of Agency Provision	£494,000
Total Savings	£109,438

4.93 **Model 2** – a 3 bedded home managed by a Team Leader with 2 Assistants. Waking night staff. Teaching Assistant, term time only. This model would be suitable for the more challenging and hard to place young people who would require 24 hour supervision. Costs for teaching assistant could be met from the education budget.

Potential Savings

Total Cost	£428,182
Cost of Agency Provision	£494,000
Total Savings	£65,818

4.94 **Model 3** – 2 three bedded homes with 1 Manager overseeing both homes and an Assistant Team Leader in each with Education support during term time only. This model allows further financial savings given one manager would be supporting both homes and could be a combination of options 1 and 2.

Potential Savings

Total Cost	£754,745
Cost of Agency Provision	£988,000
Total Savings	£233,000 (£116,500 per home)

4.95 The Committee favoured Model 3 and were informed that 2 three bedroom semi-detached properties had been identified from the Council's housing stock in Redcar Road, Thornaby, a previous local housing office.

4.96 Although requiring refurbishment, plans had been drawn to establish its viability. Capital would be required and a detailed estimate was not available. The building had the added benefit of being able to provide a large education room where teaching could be delivered for those children and young people who are more difficult to engage.

4.97 The Committee believed that developing two adjoining properties allows greater flexibility to deal with different complexities of looked-after children when providing additional local authority residential provision.

Other Issues

- 4.98 At the outset of this review the main themes were selected for further investigation. Towards the end the Committee had discussions with officers to determine any other aspects that should be considered before the review concluded. Adoption services, which the Committee learned about when taking evidence along with fostering services, was not chosen but at its final meetings the Committee was again informed of concerns that would benefit from its views and opinions being presented elsewhere.
- 4.99 In particular, an increase in the number of adopted children being referred to Social Care and the Children and Mental Health Service (CAMHS) was being experienced. Increasingly children are being diagnosed with attachment disorders or other emotional difficulties post adoption, which in turn can place considerable pressure upon the adoptive family. The expected challenge will be to develop a coordinated response to adoption support from all of the agencies who may come into contact with the children.
- 4.100 The Committee is aware that looked after children, whether fostered or adopted, have had traumatic experiences in their lives and the children can exhibit behaviours associated with attachment disorders, and some are diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or appear on the Asperger or autistic spectrum. CAMHS provide a therapeutic service but this is not always appropriate so adoption support services could benefit from finding alternative and possibly more suitable therapeutic services.
- 4.101 **The Committee recommend that the Council look to explore with Children's Trust partners opportunities to commission therapeutic interventions for children who have been adopted.**
- 4.102 In addition, children being placed for adoption are in need of skilled and time - intense preparation work prior to being placed. Inspections have highlighted that where life story work has been undertaken it is of a high quality although the approach to this work isn't consistent.
- 4.103 The Committee believe that the challenge for Stockton Council is to be able to work with looked after children moving into permanent care via adoption, permanent fostering, or kinship care, in a way that offers the right support at the right level for as long as it is needed. Recognition that adoption and kinship care is a life long process the Council needs to ensure that its policies and practices respond to these families in a timely and thoughtful manner.
- 4.104 **The Committee recommends that the Council and its partners in the Children's Trust explore ways of raising awareness of adoption issues and the role of agencies within the Children's Trust.**

Risk Assessment: The two final recommendations are considered acceptable opportunity risks worth taking to enhance the ability of the service to develop meaningful dialogue with partnership organisations. This should lead to more effective decision making and implementation of shared objectives in order to achieve better outcomes that separately they would not have been able to do. There are no obvious downside implications at this stage of the proposed joint working arrangements.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 In 2007 the Committee carried out a review of the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities. Councillors, along with other professionals and agencies within Stockton, are charged with the duty of acting as corporate parents to children/young people who are looked after by a local authority and are either accommodated, in care or remanded/detained.
- 5.2 That review found that looked after children were the most vulnerable group within the borough. Statistics showed that Stockton's looked after children were more likely to come into care at a younger age. The most common reason for children coming into care in Stockton was neglect, which reflected the national picture. In addition, there were particularly high incidences of domestic violence and drug related issues that contribute to children being brought into care.
- 5.3 As a natural extension to the review in 2007 this review was the Committee's first as part of the three year programme of efficiency and improvement reviews across all the Council's activities in response to the slow down in the national economy and the impact this will have on the borough's Medium Term Financial Plan, coupled with increased expectations and demand for services from residents. Even without the financial drivers for improved efficiencies, the EIT programme's aim is to maintain high performance, continue to improve satisfaction and enable further improvement across the borough.
- 5.4 The Committee diligently approached its task of reviewing child placements for some of the most at risk young people in Stockton Borough taking exhaustive measures to ensure its understanding of the issues before deliberating a measured response to the various workstream challenges and developments which can be seen throughout this report.

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Appendix 1

Foster care –marketing Potential Options

<p>1</p>	<p>Option 1 Create a specific permanent post for marketing of the fostering service and set a discrete budget for recruitment activity Post will be responsible for – Developing a robust recruitment strategy with clear targets Professionalise recruitment material Create and pursue publicity opportunities Run recruitment campaigns Monitor recruitment activity</p>	<p>Cost Approx £52,000</p> <p>Potential Savings of</p> <p>Net saving £48,000</p>		
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="213 667 711 1839"> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase publicity/exposure to potential fostering applicants • Increase awareness of need of foster carers • Service will influence and drive the campaigns • Better use of media opportunities • Professional approach places us on an equal footing with our competitors • Marketing is undertaken by officer who has a specialist knowledge base and time • Social work staff freed up to assess and support carers. • Gives dedicated time and focus to this area of work • Ability to plan more effective campaigns that target need. • Increases the number of enquiries • Increase number of approved foster carers • Increase placement choice • Increase placement stability • Decrease number of children placed outside of the borough • Decrease number of higher cost placements made with independent fostering agency </td> <td data-bbox="711 667 1203 1839"> <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional cost –finance will be required to implement this option • Other LA may not want to participate in collaborative arrangements in marketing therefore reducing ability to share cost • Increase in enquiry rate –service may not be able to respond in timely manner • Increase in enquiry rate = increase in social worker workloads </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase publicity/exposure to potential fostering applicants • Increase awareness of need of foster carers • Service will influence and drive the campaigns • Better use of media opportunities • Professional approach places us on an equal footing with our competitors • Marketing is undertaken by officer who has a specialist knowledge base and time • Social work staff freed up to assess and support carers. • Gives dedicated time and focus to this area of work • Ability to plan more effective campaigns that target need. • Increases the number of enquiries • Increase number of approved foster carers • Increase placement choice • Increase placement stability • Decrease number of children placed outside of the borough • Decrease number of higher cost placements made with independent fostering agency 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional cost –finance will be required to implement this option • Other LA may not want to participate in collaborative arrangements in marketing therefore reducing ability to share cost • Increase in enquiry rate –service may not be able to respond in timely manner • Increase in enquiry rate = increase in social worker workloads 	<p>(If reduces use of IFA placement by at least 2 placements then this option will be cost effective)</p> <p>How long before any cost benefit is realised?</p> <p>12-18 months.</p> <p>What resources will be required to implement the option?</p> <p>Staff Recruitment materials</p> <p>Agreement with other LA</p> <p>Protocols</p>
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase publicity/exposure to potential fostering applicants • Increase awareness of need of foster carers • Service will influence and drive the campaigns • Better use of media opportunities • Professional approach places us on an equal footing with our competitors • Marketing is undertaken by officer who has a specialist knowledge base and time • Social work staff freed up to assess and support carers. • Gives dedicated time and focus to this area of work • Ability to plan more effective campaigns that target need. • Increases the number of enquiries • Increase number of approved foster carers • Increase placement choice • Increase placement stability • Decrease number of children placed outside of the borough • Decrease number of higher cost placements made with independent fostering agency 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional cost –finance will be required to implement this option • Other LA may not want to participate in collaborative arrangements in marketing therefore reducing ability to share cost • Increase in enquiry rate –service may not be able to respond in timely manner • Increase in enquiry rate = increase in social worker workloads 			

	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use post to market the adoption service • To use post to coordinate publicity in relation to private fostering regulations • If we have a significant increase in approved foster carers we can charge other LA for use of any vacant placements • To explore potential of this post being a joint post with Tees wide LA fostering services and share costs • To develop network of marketing officers within the region to share knowledge and experience and pool appropriate resources 	<p>Threats/Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails to deliver –enquiry rate doesn't increase or enquiry rate increases but does not convert into more approved foster carers. • If enquiry rate increases dramatically and we are unable to respond in a timely manner we may lose potential applicants to other fostering services • Presence in the borough of other independent providers of fostering services –our competitors 	
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2	<p>Option 2 – Employ a Marketing person to a fixed term contract (i.e. 3 yrs) with option to extend contract if successful Tasks to be same as option 1</p>		<p>Costs As Option 1</p>
	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As option 1 • Allows LA to terminate the post if not successful 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As option 1 • Fixed term contract may not attract the right person 	<p>Potential Saving of? As Option 1</p> <p>How long before any cost benefit is realised? As Option 1</p>
	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As option 1 	<p>Threats/Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As option 1 	<p>What resources will be required to implement the option? As Option 1</p>

<p>3</p>	<p>Option 3 Commission an established and experienced marketing firm to Develop a robust recruitment strategy with clear targets Professionalise recruitment material Create and pursue publicity opportunities Run recruitment campaigns Monitor recruitment activity</p>		<p>Costs Enquiries have concluded that these organisations may cost in the region of £30 - £40 per hour. Potential for this to cost twice as much as option 1 staffing.</p>
	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As option 1 • Experienced firm should be able to get going quickly and therefore timescale for seeing results should be shorter • An established firm should have more resources to call upon (staffing, materials and experience) 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability • Not likely to be a local firm with local knowledge • They are likely to be offering same advice and service to our competitors • Need to work very hard at ensuring the fostering service is influencing recruitment strategies and campaigns • Potential lack of control and oversight of the service 	<p>Potential Saving of?</p> <p>Need to reduce use of IFA placement by 4 in first year to be cost effective</p>
	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As option 1 	<p>Threats/Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As option 1 	<p>How long before any cost benefit is realised?</p> <p>12 months</p> <p>What resources will be required to implement the option?</p> <p>Advertising budget</p> <p>Commission the service</p>

Appendix 2

KINSHIP CARE POLICY - POTENTIAL OPTIONS

1	<p>Option 1 – Accept responsibility for all The Local authority accepts that they have a duty to offer defined support and services to all children living in Kinship arrangements. Policy is developed to ensure that there are robust services and the service and support including financial support is accessible to all</p>		<p>Potential Saving of? <i>None although in the longer term it may be that savings from use of Independent agencies are made due to an improvement in the capacity to place in house</i></p> <p>How long before any cost benefit is realised? <i>Longer term</i></p> <p>What resources will be required to implement the option <i>Significant Finance</i> <i>Support services identified and developed</i> <i>Policy and Protocol with partners and other services</i> <i>Staff training</i> <i>Legal advice</i></p>
	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables children to live within kinship arrangement. • Does not discriminate against a particular group of children – fair access to services and support • Reduces threat of legal challenge by a kinship carer • Staff have a clear framework in which to work and offer services • Continuity of service delivery for kinship carers • Potential for a reduction in number of referrals for crisis intervention • Potential for a small decrease in number of children becoming looked after by the local authority • Decrease the need for LA fostering and residential provision • Potential for a small decrease in use of care proceedings 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial pressure – potential for a dramatic increase in the use of financial support • Unable to predict future demand • need to create a service which is able to respond to a wide range of needs and have capacity and flexibility to change with demand • Need to increase staff base to deliver service • It will be ahead of any potential governmental policy/guidance • Potential to give a message that families shouldn't accept responsibility for their own. 	
	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop existing preventative and support services including those offered by independent and voluntary / 3rd sector organisations • Change of approach from intervention and removal of children to support and maintenance within the family. 	<p>Threats/Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial • Policy may not be sustainable or realistically implemented 	

<p>Option 2 –Accept no responsibility and have a view that families are responsible for looking after their own. Local authority decides not to provide defined support services including financial support to Kinship carers. Expectation would be that a child would need to be identified as a child in need and support accessed via this route if appropriate.</p>		<p>Potential Saving of? None</p> <p>How long before any cost benefit is realised? N/A</p> <p>What resources will be required to implement the option? None</p>
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No, or less demand on financial resources • Don't have to create any additional service provision 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't recognise that children in kinship care are a vulnerable group of children who require a specialist service • Potential increase in number of children looked after via local authority fostering and residential services as a result of the kinship arrangement breaking down • Potential increase in number of children requiring services as children in need • Increases the potential for ad-hoc arrangements being agreed via court negotiations or worker and family • Current economic climate reduces the capacity of some families to be able to afford to care for the children which increases number of children living in poverty. 	
<p>Opportunities None identified</p>	<p>Threats/Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal challenges • Current media interest in how LA /Government are supporting kinship arrangements • Leaves the council vulnerable to criticism and challenge from a number of potential sources • Cost implications associated with the placement of placing children re entering care and need to purchase placements via the independent sector • Potential impact upon workloads for all officers involved with children in need, safeguarding and looked after children cases. 	

<p>Option 3 – Accept some responsibility Local authority accepts a duty to support kinship arrangements. Policy is designed to offer different levels of support to different arrangements e.g. greater support including financial support arrangements to those children previously looked after or where the local authority has opened care proceedings.</p>		<p>Potential Saving of? <i>none</i></p>
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets support to the most vulnerable group of children. • Enables children to live within kinship arrangements • Staff have a clear framework in which to work and offer services • Potential for reduction in number of children re entering care. • Potential for a reduction in number of referrals for crisis intervention • Decrease in demand for Local authority fostering and residential provision • Potential savings in the future on spend for independent provision as demand for in house provision is reduced which increases capacity as children will only need these placements if they don't have a family member able to safely care for them. • Reduces risk of legal challenge by kinship carer • Potential to increase fostering resource base via the family member becoming interested in fostering other children 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires greater financial expenditure than current spend • Unable to accurately predict what the increase in financial resources will need to be • Potentially Increases the number of children looked after however will also increase the number of children eventually discharged from care into SGO or RO arrangements • Potential increase in workload for staff and need for increased staffing in all areas including social workers , solicitors and fostering officers required to assess family members as foster carers • Greater number of legal proceedings initiated and impact on workload of Legal services and officers • Potential legal challenge for discriminating against those children where Social care are not involved 	<p>How long before any cost benefit is realised? <i>N/A</i></p> <p>What resources will be required to implement the option? <i>As option 1</i></p>
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to increase fostering resource base via the family member becoming interested in fostering other children • Opens up awareness of need for foster carers to a potentially untapped group 	<p>Threats/Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of children looked after and capacity of the support services to manage the increase in service delivery demand • Impact upon neighbouring local authorities if court services and family advocates are appreciative of this approach and start to demand a similar approach from them. 	

Appendix 3

CAN Potential Options

<p>1</p>	<p>To increase availability of sub-regional provision for "hard to place" children/young people with Complex Needs</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides continuity of access to local services Reduced travel and time costs for professionals Quick and easy access of professionals as a means of de-escalating problems Quick and easy re-alignment of resources to meet changing needs Provides greater safeguarding assurances/oversight Potential for the development of regional expertise/centre of excellence Overall cost savings Can be used at an earlier opportunity (possibly in an out reach capacity) as part of a prevention strategy Secures local specialist health input through a possible joint funded partnership. Children and Young people placed closer to home Can be extended to cover post 16 group who are currently funded by the LSC in expensive Independent Specialist Provider provision (e.g. across Tees valley some 25 students are placed in post 16 out of area ASD provision - the funding for such students will soon move to LAs) <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial set up costs <u>will be high</u> Need to secure robust partnership arrangements which provide continuity of funding and which are not susceptible to LA funding issues (e.g. one LA hosting a joint arrangement recently introduced mid year a management fee) Levels of expertise may not be readily available in the area Employment matters such as whether staff are employed by one or more LA or are employed by some third party and attendant risks Savings unlikely to be made in the short term but are more likely to be felt in <u>2 or more years</u>. 	<p>Potential Savings of</p> <p>We would expect that once the transitional costs of commissioning a new local provision have been met there could be annual savings of up to £200K from DSE (and at a possibly similar level from SBC budget).</p> <p>But these set up costs will be high.</p> <p>How long before any cost benefit is realised?</p> <p>See above</p> <p>What resources will be required to implement the option?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A building adapted to provide 52 week care and on site educational programmes Specialist staffing Robust partnership agreement with Tees Valley LAs Partnership agreement with CAMHS or other Mental Health providers Possible partnership agreement with Third sector provider of specialist provision to minimise some of the risks around developing and maintaining such provision <p>Threats/Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs associated to facility not running at full occupancy Can only be realistic if all the partners work together Facility will not meet every need and some young people will still need out of borough provision SEN Tribunals can over-rule local decisions OFSTED inspections of facilities If placement does not have positive impact what comes next and at what cost? Spending priorities and pressures to make savings within PCT may see no/reduced resources available to support such provision Budget pressures on all LAs may prevent the start-up funds being available Pressure to place young people inappropriately within facility - whilst it needs to be flexible it is not a one size fits all <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of a sub regional Centre of Excellence with attendant benefits for families, young people and professionals. Partnership opportunity with third/independent sector to minimise financial risks to each LA Partnership working with other LAs Close partnership across CESC - such provision would not be an educational resource, it would not be a social care resource it would be a Children's Services Resource closely aligned with the Campus Stockton developments under BSF. Provides opportunity for developing intensive therapeutic interventions to support troubled and vulnerable young people. The development of a pooled budget with agreed contributions from key partners.
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<p>2</p>	<p>To enhance the local specialist support for children and young people with Complex Needs in order to maintain them within the Borough – this embraces educational provision, mental health/challenging behaviour support and widening the remit of the Complex Needs Social Work team to include groups such as ASD and ADHD, etc. The intention would be to enable a rapid early and maintained response to prevent an escalation of need.</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having available a team of professionals with the capacity for a rapid response • Providing highly skilled and highly focused support • Specialist knowledge and expertise available for generic staff, families, schools, etc. • Builds on current best practice model around ASD • Will secure better co-ordinated responses through the Team Around the Family model • A clear interface with the Aiming High agenda in the Borough • Takes the Complex Needs agenda to the next logical step • Potential for a reductions in costly out of Borough placements • To facilitate aspects of the DCSF 21st Century Schools Agenda <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To secure and maintain such provision there will be cost implications at a time when the LA has less overall funds available (it might be possible to re-align resources from elsewhere or to take the line of "invest to save") • Securing a single accommodation to bring all teams together • Being highly specialist recruitment may be an issue and local cover for any vacancies might be difficult • The Aiming High Funds for PCT (unlike for LA) were not ring fenced and hence are dependent on PCT spending priorities and fiscal pressures. • Pressure on PCT budgets is likely to prevent investment in such 	<p>Potential Saving of?</p> <p><i>Difficult to quantify but Out of Borough placement costs run up to £200,000 per young person (plus incidental costs)</i></p> <p>How long before any cost benefit is realised?</p> <p><i>There would be an initial cost in setting up the specialist staff but savings would be likely immediately thereafter</i></p> <p>What resources will be required to implement the option?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Amendments to the PCT CAMHS contract to secure focused interventions <input type="checkbox"/> Funding for additional specialist LA staff <input type="checkbox"/> Robust PCT agreements to support development of provision <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership with local special schools <input type="checkbox"/> Training
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will provide increased capacity to field social work teams by removing responsibility to manage issues around these groups of young people • Will support family resilience • Has potential to reduce out of borough placements • Will raise skill levels in schools and across the community enabling youngsters to live/be educated locally • Greater partnership working with third sector 	<p>Threats/Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs at a time of financial pressure • Recruiting the necessary workforce • Co-location could impact on existing links with other services • Aiming High grants only guaranteed until end of March 2011. Intelligence suggests there may be some continuation but political and fiscal priorities will influence what that looks like. 	

3	<p>To implement both Options 1 and 2 above.</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above <p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above <p>Threats/Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above <i>Inevitably the biggest risk for these proposals either singly or together is the cost of implementation against a time of financial pressure</i> 	<p>Potential Saving of? <i>See above</i></p> <p>How long before any cost benefit is realised? <i>See above</i></p> <p>What resources will be required to implement the option? <i>See above</i></p> <p>□</p>
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Appendix 4

ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL CAPACITY – POTENTIAL OPTIONS

1	Option 1 – To continue to spot purchase residential care as required.		Potential Saving of? <i>None unless the demand for places is reduced. This is unlikely given current trend.</i>
	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to buy bespoke tailor made packages for young people including education. • Placements often out of area and in some cases this is positive to remove young person from negative environment • Supply and demand – no empty beds. • No staffing responsibilities. 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost. • Lack of appropriate education packages locally, often leads to placements being a considerable distance from Stockton. • Distance places pressure on social work time. • Contact with family and friends more difficult. • Loss of links with local area placing strain on young person's identity and networks. • Access to CAMHS may be limited. • Often further cost for therapeutic input. 	How long before any cost benefit is realised? N/A
	Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop closer links with Private Sector regionally. 	Threats/Risks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited influence on homes/placement culture and ethos. • No control over admissions or notice to discharge young people in placement. • Blocking of crisis beds in Stockton may continue, due to high cost of this option. • No control of in terms of inspection process and outcomes for young people. 	What resources will be required to implement the option <i>Significant continued Finance</i> <i>Continued support services</i> <i>Continued monitoring by Resource Manager and Children's Rights Officer</i> <i>Reviewing Officer/Social Work time will continue to be required out of area</i>

<p>Option 2 – To develop Local Authority Residential provision.</p>		<p>Potential Saving of?</p>
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced current cost of placements. • Existing provision is high quality and outstanding. • Recognised good outcomes for young people in own local authority provision. • More young people placed locally in line with Care Matter agenda. • Strong links with Multi Agency partners. • Good staff retention. • Strong management expertise... • Strong partnerships in relation to local move on accommodation post 16, 17 and 18 years. • Young people maintain contact with families and friends. • Promotion of local culture and identity. • Continuity of school placement and health care. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited places. • Matching can be difficult. • Vacancies not available as required and waiting lists may be in place. • Education not available for those where their educational needs cannot be met locally within existing provision... 	<p><i>There are a number of models and savings range from £11,000 to £443,000 per year.</i></p> <p>How long before any cost benefit is realised?</p> <p><i>If housing stock is available then savings will be made within the first year. However if capital is required to develop provision then setting up costs will be higher and timescales for savings can only be established following estimated funds needed. (This is work in progress).</i></p>
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return young people back to their local area. • Prevent young people leaving local area. • Develop partnership with CAMHS further to deliver more therapeutic services. • Develop local education provision and bespoke packages. • Opportunity to redesignate short term unit to allow respite and planned intervention to support families in crisis. • Opportunity to develop further and sell to other local authorities. particularly if education packages were available. 	<p>Threats/Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blocking short-term crisis beds. • Staffing responsibilities e.g. conduct sickness etc. can increase costs to local authority. • Education provision may not be available thereby jeopardising placements 	<p>What resources will be required to implement the option?</p> <p><i>Setting up costs of £21,000 Staff Recruitment and training. Premises/Property Commitment from partners in education and health Possibly some capital funds – amount to be determined</i></p>

<p>Option 3 – To commission a private/voluntary sector provider to establish a local children’s home.</p>		<p>Potential Saving of?</p>
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More young people placed locally. • Access to multi agency partners. • Young people able to maintain contact with family and friends. • Continuity of school placement and health care. • No staffing responsibilities. • More young people placed locally in line with Care Matter agenda. • Promotion of local culture and identity. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost. • Limited choice re Admission Criteria (ability to say no) and give notice to end placements. • Cost of void beds. • Education provision limited locally for more challenging children. • Less control about mix of group. 	<p><i>Travelling and social work time. Costs for contact for families would reduce.</i></p> <p>How long before any cost benefit is realised? <i>Immediately</i></p>
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to develop partnership with provider and extend provision. • Develop local education provision and bespoke packages. • Work in partnership with other unitary authorities to develop more specialist provision. 	<p>Threats/Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No management control. • No control over admission or discharges. • Potential for poor OFSTED inspections and poor outcomes for young people. 	<p>What resources will be required to implement the option? <i>Costs would be redistributed from current out of area placements 1</i></p>