

SCRUTINY ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
INTERIM SCRUTINY MANAGER	INTERNAL AFFAIRS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	24 JANUARY 2024	4
IN-DEPTH SCRUTINY REVIEW - USE OF RESIDENTIAL PREMISES AS CHILDREN'S CARE HOMES			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

Attached is the report of the Task and Finish Group appointed to carry out an in-depth review on the use of residential premises for children's care homes in the borough. The work of the Group was detailed, wide ranging and complex. The Committee is asked to consider the report with a view to agreeing its recommendations to the Executive Committee and His Majesty's Government for consideration.

SOURCE OF REFERRAL

The Planning Committee 5 April 2023

Scrutiny training event - 7 June 2023

Minutes - Internal Affairs Scrutiny Committee - 20 June 2023

Workshop of Internal Affairs Scrutiny Committee members - 22 August 2023.

Meetings of the Task & Finish Group - 27 September, 3 & 11 October, 2 & 22 November, 11 December 2023.

SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

1. is invited to consider the in-depth report which is attached at Appendix 1 with a view to agreeing its recommendations to the Executive Committee and His Majesty's Government for consideration.
2. agrees to an updated report be presented in due course to monitor progress with the implementation and delivery of the recommendations.

REPORT

BACKGROUND

1. The Planning Committee at its meeting held on 5 April 2023, requested that the regulation of children's homes be considered by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee due to an increase in the number of applications received for certificates of lawfulness of proposed use or development, commonly referred to as lawful development certificates.
2. Subsequently the Internal Affairs Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the matter at its meeting on 20 June 2023 and agreed that a Task and Finish Group be established to review the issue of the use of residential

premises for children’s care homes in the borough. At that meeting, the Committee also agreed the Scoping Document to assist in the programming of the work.

- As planning permission is not always required to change the use of a residential dwelling to a children’s care home, concern had been expressed that residential children’s homes are being established in an uncontrolled and uncoordinated manner across the borough.

REVIEW REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Since September 2023, the Task and Finish Group has met on 6 occasions taking evidence from various stakeholders and external bodies/organisations involved with children’s services/operators either directly or indirectly. The review also heard from residents impacted by the care homes in the local community. In addition, a site visit to a couple of care homes was undertaken by representatives of the Task and Finish Group.
- The primary focus of this Scrutiny Review was to gain an understanding of the planning position at Fylde and how children’s care homes are regulated by the various public bodies. In addition, it was considered important to assess the impact (if any) the current arrangements were having on the local communities/ service providers/key bodies and looked after children.
- Central to the evidence-gathering for the Review were meetings with key stakeholders. This evidence has been under-pinned by the information gained from these meetings.
- A key objective of the review was to better understand the interface that exists between these different bodies to establish what the borough council can and should be doing in the future to help improve the situation and minimise the effects on partner organisations /service providers and communities in Fylde.
- The review covers the planning position, the roles of the various bodies with the different statutory and enabling roles on the subject and the relevant legislation. The Task and Finish Group identified a number of issues of concern. From this, the report includes a number of conclusions and proposes several recommendations which are directed to Fylde Council and His Majesty’s Government for consideration.
- The Committee is invited to consider the in-depth report which is attached at Appendix 1 with a view to agreeing its recommendations. Once these are agreed the report and recommendations will be presented to the Executive Committee and His Majesty’s Government to consider the findings and recommendations.
- It is also suggested that an updated report be presented to the committee in due course to monitor progress with the implementation and delivery of the recommendations.

BACKGROUND PAPERS REVELANT TO THIS ITEM		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Minutes - IASC		CMIS > Committees > Internal Affairs Scrutiny Committee

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
Scrutiny Team	scrutiny@fylde.gov.uk	8 January 2024

Attached Documents

Appendix 1 – A review into the use of residential premises as children’s care homes - In - depth scrutiny review.