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To: Specialist Children's Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 21 June 2011

Subject: **Proposals for a KCC Assisted Boarding Scheme & DVD regarding the Royal Alexandra and Albert School**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report outlines plans to develop an assisted boarding scheme providing opportunities for vulnerable Kent children on the edge of care to attend state and private boarding schools. This work forms part of the ongoing development of KCC's services for Looked After Children.

Members of the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee (POSC) are asked to NOTE:

- the prospectus DVD from the Royal Alexandra and Albert Boarding School; &
 - the attached business case for establishing a Kent assisted boarding scheme.
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Introduction

1. (1) 'Assisted boarding' is an approach that seeks to place vulnerable and disadvantaged children into boarding schools places. The concept is that, in families where there is a significant strain on the relationship between parent/carer and child, removing the child from the home during term time may reduce the strain on parents who are struggling to cope financially, physically or emotionally, thereby increasing the likelihood that the family will remain intact whilst also improving the child's opportunity to succeed academically. Many modern boarding schools have an excellent track record of providing not only high quality educational standards, but a holistic package of pastoral care and extra curricular activities that can provide a stable, supportive and inspiring environment for a vulnerable child to achieve their potential.

Business Case for a Kent Scheme

2. (1) Since January, the Cabinet Member for Childrens' Specialist Services has led a small working group investigating options for introducing a KCC scheme giving the opportunity for some of Kent's vulnerable children to attend state or private boarding school. As a result of this research, we have met with the Royal Alexandra and Albert School in Reigate to discuss working in partnership, and also developed a business case for the Kent scheme. This paper is attached as Appendix 1 for CSS POSC members' information.

The Royal Alexandra and Albert School DVD

3. (1) The Royal Alexandra and Albert School in Reigate is a state-funded comprehensive boarding school that is rated Outstanding by Ofsted and has 80% of children gaining five GCSEs at A*-C (63% including English and Maths). The school has about 60 children, known as Foundationers, who attend the school free of charge referred by primary school teachers and social workers, or by families directly. The outcomes for these children have been very positive, and the school have a wealth of experience in providing holistic pastoral support to them. The KCC member-led working group have undertaken some initial conversations with the Head Teacher to discuss working in partnership to secure places at the school for some vulnerable children from Kent.

(2) The 10 minute DVD due to be played at today's meeting is a prospectus for the school and gives an overall outline of the environment of the school and the benefits it can offer a child. Members should note that the DVD is a general prospectus aimed at fee-paying parents so does not specifically refer to the School's work with Foundationer pupils.

Next Steps

4. (1) We are now undertaking further discussions with the Royal Alexandra and Albert School, and with the Cabinet Member responsible for Children's Social Services at Surrey County Council, to discuss their experience of working in partnership. Meetings are also taking place internally to discuss practical arrangements to initiate and embed the scheme.

Recommendations

5. (1) SCS POSC members are asked to NOTE:
- (a) the prospectus DVD from the Royal Alexandra and Albert School; &
 - (b) the attached business case (appendix 1) for establishing a Kent assisted boarding scheme.

Background documents: None

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