

# MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

## Corporate Parenting Board

<b>MIDDLESBROUGH AND FIVE RIVERS PARTNERSHIP</b>
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**Executive Member for Children, Families & Learning: Cllr Mike Carr**

**Executive Director of Children, Families & Learning: Gill Rollings**

**18 January 2011**

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### **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. To inform the Corporate Parenting Board of the current situation regarding the Five Rivers Partnership

### **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board advise the Executive that notice has been served on the current Five Rivers Contract and to note that there will be a tendering process during 2011 to consider other options for placement provision.

### **IF THIS IS A KEY DECISION, WHICH KEY DECISION TEST APPLIES?**

3. It is over the financial threshold (£75,000)   
It has a significant impact on 2 or more wards   
Non Key

### **DECISION IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE**

4. For the purposes of the scrutiny call in procedure this report is

Non-urgent   
Urgent report

If urgent, please give full reasons.

## **BACKGROUND AND EXTERNAL CONSULTATION**

5. The Partnership Board representatives are:
  - Executive Member for Children, Families & Learning
  - Deputy Director of Safeguarding
  - Specialist Services Manager
  - Commissioning Manager
  - Managing Director – Five Rivers Ltd
  - Practice/Operational Leads Manager – Five Rivers Ltd
  - Residential Lead – Five Rivers Ltd
6. The Partnership Board meets on a quarterly basis to provide a strategic overview for both parties and a robust forum to discuss, debate and agree solutions for any difficulties that emerge. The meetings are chaired by the Deputy Director of Safeguarding.
7. Prior to Partnership Board meetings, Five Rivers Ltd circulate a detailed report explaining the performance of individual homes, which identifies issues or areas of interest that can then be discussed at the meetings. Operational Managers meet separately on a regular basis to discuss the day to day running of the service.
8. The Board is an opportunity for both parties to share strategic plans; this has provided a useful opportunity to understand how Five Rivers Ltd is developing and at the same time, share the challenges and issues that have emerged within the Department. Over recent meetings, discussion has focused on increases in Looked After Children (LAC) numbers, budget pressures and the implications of the Comprehensive Spending Review.
9. Recent Board meetings held on 1 October and 10 December 2010 have focused on the end of the contract on 31 December 2011. Notice has been served and Five Rivers understand the reasons why Middlesbrough Council is obliged to consider a range of yet to be identified options for the future. This has allowed for early dialogue with Five Rivers Ltd about how the organisation is preparing for the future and how it could meet the needs of Middlesbrough Council.
10. Five Rivers Ltd have provided briefings on their change in ethos; the organisation is moving towards 'a journey of care for children and young people' which was recently shared at a meeting with the Commissioning Manager and Specialist Services Manager.
11. The Local Authority continues to maintain a positive relationship with Five Rivers Ltd.

## **FIR TREE**

12. The residents of Marton Avenue (Fir Tree) have raised a number of complaints which have been discussed at the last two meetings of the Board. The Specialist Services Manager has been liaising with a local Councillor and has also attended a meeting with residents in order to try and resolve the issues.

13. It is important to state that whilst Fir Tree is the focus of complaints, many of the incidents that give cause for concern are not connected with the Fir Tree residents.
14. As issues continue to be raised by the local community, regular liaison meetings have been agreed and the Specialist Services Manager will facilitate the process.

### **FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS**

15. At this stage there are no financial or legal implications.
16. The local Ward Councillors are aware of the complaints relating to Fir Tree.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

18. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board advise the Executive that the current contractual arrangements with Five Rivers Ltd will end in December 2011.

### **REASONS**

19. It is important that elected Members are aware of the proposed changes to the provision of children's homes within Middlesbrough.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

20. No background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

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