# **Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee**



Date of meeting: 07 November 2023

Title of Report: Council Tax Exemption for Plymouth City Council Foster

**Carers** 

Lead Member: Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for

Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications)

Lead Strategic Director: David Haley (Interim Director of Children's Services)

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Your Reference: Click here to enter text.

Key Decision: No

Confidentiality: Part I - Official

# **Purpose of Report**

This report sets out the proposal for implementing a Council Tax Exemption Scheme for Plymouth City Council internal Foster Parents and Connected Carers who are approved by Plymouth City Council (Foster for Plymouth) for the 2023/2024 financial year.

It is proposed that Council Tax Exemption is considered alongside a proposed new Support and Retention Offer to Our Foster Carers which is being consulted on and developed.

#### **Recommendations and Reasons**

The committee recommends to Cabinet that a Council Tax Exemption for foster carers is considered following the conclusion of the consultation on proposed new Support and Retention Offer to Our Foster Carers.

#### Reason:

This would ensure a clear and consistent support package is delivered to increase the number of new in house foster parents and to retain our existing, valued in house Foster Parents through an enhanced package of support.

# Alternative options considered and rejected

As above, the motion regarding Council Tax exemption was deferred to Scrutiny by Full Council, however we respectfully request that this is further deferred to be considered alongside a holistic package of financial and practical support for Foster Carers to aid in both recruitment and retention.

#### Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

A key priority of the Corporate Plan is Caring for People and Communities and this has relevance within this priority area.

This is also a key area of relevance in the Plymouth Children's Improvement Plan.

### Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

Increasing the number of in house fostering households and approved placements is a key element of the medium term financial plan. Our vision is to ensure that the majority of children and young people in care can be placed in family placements (foster care) in or as close to Plymouth as possible as this provides the best outcomes for children. The proportion of children in care placed with in house foster parents against those placed with Independent Fostering Agencies is not in line with our comparators and is adversely affecting the placement budget.

#### **Financial Risks**

Addressing the proportion of in house against IFA foster placements used will have significant impact on the placements budget. The proposals in relation to Council Tax Exemption are an Invest to Save proposal. There will be a cost to Plymouth City Council but this would be offset by other benefits.

# **Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

There is an impact of additional travel due to social work visiting requirements and family time together where children are placed out of area.

## Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

\* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.

#### **Appendices**

\*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	<b>Exemption Paragraph Number</b> (if applicable) If some/all of the information is confidential, you must it why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedu of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevo							
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Α	Briefing report title								

#### **Background papers:**

\*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are <u>unpublished</u> works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
	If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.  I 2 3 4 5 6 7						rt lof
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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Nigel Denning

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 30/10/2023

Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Laing, approved via email

Date approved: 30/10/2023