

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

11TH SEPTEMBER 2008

ELECTED MEMBERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE
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**MIKE CARR - EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES &
LEARNING**

**GILL ROLLINGS – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LEARNING**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Corporate Parenting Board of the outcome of the consultation exercise carried out with elected Members during May and June 2008.

BACKGROUND

2. The Corporate Parenting Board decided to ask all elected Members how they make a difference to the lives of children looked after (17/4/2008). The then Chair of the Board wrote to all Members asking them to reflect on their work over the previous year, in the light of a briefing note on Every Child Matters, and to complete a form saying what difference they had made (see Appendix 1). The purpose of the exercise was to identify any areas for improvement and to help the Board to develop its work programme for 2008-2009.
3. The letters were distributed by the Members' Office on 8th May 2008, with a return by date of 2nd June and a follow-up reminder was sent out on 29th May 2008. Responses were received from five elected Members.

OUTCOME

4. Members made the following general comments and identified various actions under the Every Child Matters outcomes:
- The information below is outside support for the national and local initiatives detailed in the Children and Young People's Plan as well as Council regeneration to improve housing and the local economy.
 - As Deputy Mayor, the topic of children looked after is included in my 1-1s with Executive Members, covering all the aspects mentioned in this survey.

Be Healthy

- My Ward surgeries overlap a junior youth club. I always get involved and encourage the healthy eating programme, and if/when required, discourage drug use. I also work closely with enforcement agencies passing on information on drug dealers in my Ward. As a grandfather of two, I also pass on and educate through my past career as a youth worker, positive ways of looking after yourself and others.
- As a Governor, encouraged review of school meals and am the Governor with responsibility for children looked after - discussions with staff about progress etc.
- Support via Youth Council and Management Committee of Youth Centre
- Ensured Strategic Plan contained targets on Children and Young People's health, through Governor role supported introduction of healthy options on school dinners and removal of fast food vending machines.
- Recommended and supported policy to ban smoking, reduce obesity and overall health inequalities.
- Facilitated employment advice and local authority joint working to deliver advice to Asylum seekers accessing health for children.
- Neighbourhood Plan (Grove Hill). Participate in Steering Group, identify and prioritise needs and desires of residents, look at provision of leisure facilities and ways of encouraging use.
- Healthy eating promoted in community and at schools.

Stay Safe

- Again, working closely with social landlords and enforcement, I pass on information where children are in danger and or need to those in a position to help. Also acting as a role model for my own grandchildren.
- Support via Youth Council and Management Committee of Youth Centre
- Supported corporate initiatives to increase warden and policing, encouraging positive engagement with young people.
- Tackled fencing issues to restrict access to rail tracks
- Supported a wide range of diversion activities e.g. Boro Buzz and Clean Sweep.
- Facilitated employment advice and voluntary sector joint working to deliver support to homeless young people.
- Ensure that local priorities addressed through Community Councils, neighbourhood plans, street surgeries etc.
- Work with residents to assess their priorities and fears.

- Take part in discussion groups and activities with Fires Service to show youngsters the dangers of arson.

Enjoy & Achieve

- I encourage all youngsters to attend and enjoy school as a Ward Councillor and in my full time employment. I assist my grandchildren with homework and facilitate through learning IT work.
- Being a school Governor
- Recommended easier and cheaper access to leisure facilities and supported review of leisure pricing.
- Promoted volunteering opportunities for young people
- Scrutiny of Careers employment services for NEET young people
- Work as a school Governor to tackle attendance, raise aspirations, raise standards and enhance employability/employment opportunities.
- Participate in management committee of youth club to try to maximise events and attendance.
- As a school Governor at Marton Grove, try to ensure the best start is given to pupils.
- Work with community and development workers to maximise participation in events and distractions from ASB.
- Look at funding multi-use games area.
- Environmental problems highlighted.

Make a Positive Contribution

- Have been involved with citizenship with local primary school.
- Attending Youth Council
- Supported initiatives to encourage young people's volunteering and opportunities for volunteering. E.g. requested Erimus to develop volunteering opportunities for young people and to work with organisations delivering volunteering projects.
- Sought young people's input into health scrutiny work programme.
- Bring young people into the decision-making process - Youth Club Management Committee.
- Involve young people in decisions through community development.

Achieve Economic Well-being

- Regularly chat with teenagers in my Ward about the rights and wrongs of ASB. I provide references if deserved but also report their ASB to enforcement if required. Always discouraging them to stay away from crime/drugs etc. and informing them of the consequences.
- Ensuring that Youth Employment issues are on the agenda
- Asked scrutiny to examine careers and employment advice for NEETS in Pallister and Berwick Hills
- Supported initiatives that provide opportunities for young people NEET in Pallister and Berwick Hills. Supported policies to offer children looked after employment and training within the Council.
- Facilitated employment advice and local authority joint working to deliver advice to young people in care/leaving care and young people with disabilities.

- Education a priority at all levels.
 - Skill shortages assessed and plans through neighbourhood steering group.
 - Strive to uplift the whole area, employment opportunities through regeneration.
5. Whilst it is unfortunate that so few Members were able to respond, it is clear that some have a very good understanding of their role as corporate parents. There is also an understanding that improving services for all children and young people is a form of support for children looked after as they access universal services.
6. It may be appropriate for the Corporate Parenting Board to consider whether any further action is necessary in respect of this initiative. This might include the provision of additional information and/or guidance to Members. Other mechanisms might also be considered to ensure that they are aware of their corporate parenting responsibilities and the ways in which they can make a difference to the lives of children looked after.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS

7. There are no immediate financial or legal implications arising from this report. Services for children looked after cover all Wards so this report will be of interest to all Members.

RECOMMENDATION

8. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board advise the Executive to consider whether any further action might be appropriate.

REASON

9. Elected Members are expected to make children in care the primary focus for the resources and accountability of the local authority that has accepted a parenting responsibility for them.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

10. There were no background papers used in the preparation of this report.

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