

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

A meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board was held on 30 September 2010.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Carr (Chair), Councillors Junier, Mawston, McIntyre, Rooney and J A Walker.

**OFFICERS:** R Broad, S Harker, C Kendrick, S Little, I Parker, N Pocklington, G Rollings, G Watson and J Wilson.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** B Simpson.

**\*\*APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors P Rogers and B Thompson.

**\*\*DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Declarations of Interest were made at this point of the meeting.

**\*\* MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on 3 August 2010 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

**INTER-AGENCY WORKING TOGETHER AND CO-OPERATION**

The Executive Director of Children Families and Learning outlined the purpose of the meeting, which was to consider how the work of the Corporate Parenting Board related to the work of the Children's Trust Board and the Middlesbrough Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB). The Executive Director of Children Families and Learning was currently the Chair of the Middlesbrough Safeguarding Children Board.

A Children and Young People's Trust had been operating in Middlesbrough for some time and since April 2010 it had been a statutory body. This gave the Trust a slightly different status and new guidance had led to a different relationship with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The Children and Young People's Trust commissioned children's services in Middlesbrough, with the Local Safeguarding Children Board holding the Trust to account on safeguarding. The Children and Young People's Trust was made up of a wide range of organisations and agencies such as Health, the Police, Probation and others.

Until recently, the Local Safeguarding Children Board operated on a South Tees basis. The Middlesbrough Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) had been established as a separate body and would have an Independent Chair from its next meeting. This would give the MSCB the independence it needed as per Government guidance to hold all the agencies within the Trust to account. Two events had been held, supported by Government North East (GONE), to bring representatives of the Trust and MSCB together to explore new ways of working.

The new Government had since announced that Children's Trusts would no longer be statutory bodies and revised legislation would be forthcoming. However, there would still be a duty to co-operate with other agencies when commissioning children's services. The Corporate Parenting Board needed to consider its own role in these developments and demonstrate that there were clear links with the Trust and MSCB.

Members viewed a presentation, which detailed the results of questions put to representatives from the Children and Young People's Trust and MSCB around their perceptions of the current situation and how the new arrangements might develop. It was highlighted that the discussions had been very fruitful in terms of understanding each other and sharing views. Agreement had been reached about how to progress.

There had been some debate about the scope of MSCB in terms of a focus on child protection processes or addressing wider issues such as road safety. It had been agreed that the MSCB would initially focus on child protection issues and that the Children's Trust Stay Safe Group would look at wider issues. It was likely that this would be revisited as the Trust would no longer be required to follow the five Every Child Matters outcomes closely and was considering reshaping around priorities for Middlesbrough.

A national review of safeguarding was also underway which could lead to further changes in procedures. Initial feedback from a recent unannounced Ofsted Inspection of safeguarding services in Middlesbrough indicated that the inspectors felt that the existing policies and procedures were robust.

Statutory guidance required the Chief Executive and the Mayor to fulfil specific roles in respect of safeguarding children and corporate parenting, including the preparation of an annual report. It had been agreed that the MSCB Annual Report would fulfil this purpose.

Reference was made to two documents that would be circulated to Members of the Corporate Parenting Board: the Updated Children and Young People's Plan for 2008-2011 and the draft Strategic Needs Assessment that would be used to inform the new Children and Young People's Plan for 2011-2014, due to be published next year. The Children and Young People's Plan identified the priorities, specific actions related to them, and how effectively they were being met. The Strategic Needs Assessment provided a wealth of information about the current position in Middlesbrough and the needs of Middlesbrough children. This included information from the Local Authority, Police, Health Authority and from previous consultations with parents, and children and young people themselves. Members were invited to comment on the draft Strategic Needs Assessment, which was recently discussed by the Children's Trust Board and had been sent to agencies for consultation to identify any possible gaps.

The forthcoming Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014 would have five main chapters that reflected cross-cutting themes agreed by the Trust and these were: child poverty, health and well-being, safeguarding, risk and resilience and achievement. Each chapter would comment on the messages to be taken from the information and suggestions for improvement in the Strategic Needs Assessment. The Children and Young People's Plan was intended to be an accessible document and would be available on the Council website.

It was highlighted that the Children's Trust Board would welcome an input from the Corporate Parenting Board on behalf of Looked After Children and it was suggested that Members consider how such a dialogue could take place on a regular basis. It was also suggested that the report of the Chair of Corporate Parenting Board, which was currently submitted to the Executive for decision, could also be sent to the Children's Trust Board and the Middlesbrough Safeguarding Children Board for information. In addition, comments from the Corporate Parenting Board could be passed to Thematic Groups within the Trust.

Members discussed inviting representatives of other agencies to meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board to focus on their interactions with Looked After Children and young people. For example, how the Police worked with children looked after who were missing from placement, or how different agencies worked together to prevent children becoming looked after. The Chair emphasised the need to maintain a clear focus on children looked after.

**RECOMMENDED** that:

1. the information provided be noted.
2. a copy of the draft Strategic Needs Assessment and the updated Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2011 would be circulated to the Corporate Parenting Board.
3. a flow-chart showing the links between the Children's Trust, MSCB and Corporate Parenting Board would be produced and circulated.
4. future recommendations from the Corporate Parenting Board would be forwarded to the Children's Trust Board and the Middlesbrough Safeguarding Children Board, as appropriate.