

## **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**25<sup>th</sup> June 2009**

<p><b>CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD REMIT &amp; FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME</b></p>
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**MIKE CARR - EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES &  
LEARNING**

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### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to present to Members an updated remit for the Corporate Parenting Board and to highlight issues that Members may wish to include in the Board's forward work programme.

### **BACKGROUND AND EXTERNAL CONSULTATION**

2. The Corporate Parenting Board was established eight years ago. The remit for the Board was approved by the Social Services Cabinet in February 2001 and adopted when the Corporate Parenting Board became an advisory body to the Executive in 2002. At the request of the Executive Office, the remit has been updated (see Appendix 1) to include the Every Child Matters outcome framework, reporting arrangements and membership requirements. The main focus of the remit remains as "enabling the Council to fulfil its corporate parenting responsibilities for children and young people who are looked after or accommodated by the local authority, and care leavers".
3. In relation to the forward work programme, the Corporate Parenting Board maintains a focus on achieving the best possible outcomes for children looked after by considering new legislation and guidance, monitoring performance and identifying issues of concern. The role and function of the Corporate Parenting Board has consistently been recognised as 'good practice' in external inspections and performance assessment processes.

4. Government guidance for Councillors – “*If this were my child...*” – was issued in 2003 by the Department for Education and Skills and the Local Government Information Unit. This identifies the following key questions for Councillors to consider:
  - How many children in need, children whose names are on the child protection register, looked after children and care-leavers are there in your area? How old are they and what sort of help do they need?
  - In particular how many are from ethnic minorities and how many are disabled?
  - Are your looked after children safe?
  - How well does the authority look after them?
  - Are they all in school or is there alternative educational provision? How well are they doing at school, college or university and what needs to be done to improve educational outcomes?
  - What are their health needs?
  - What are their housing needs?
  - What specific support is there when they leave your care?
  - What is happening to make sure they don't get into trouble?
  
5. A handbook for Councillor's – “Putting Corporate Parenting into Practice” - was published by the National Children's Bureau in 2008. This handbook also identifies a range of issues that Councillors should address, in addition to those outlined above. They include:
  - What are the reasons the children become looked after?
  - How many of your children are placed outside the boundaries of the authority and how does this affect their outcomes?
  - What more do you need to do to improve looked after children's experiences?
  - How do you know what your looked after children are saying?

## **PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME**

6. The Corporate Parenting Board currently uses the Every Child Matters outcomes framework as a focus for considering the support provided to children looked after. This has proved to be a useful approach that makes Members aware of the actions taken, and services available, to support children and young people for whom they have a corporate parenting responsibility. It is proposed that this approach be maintained for the forthcoming year.
  
7. In addition, there are a number of regular reports that are submitted to the Corporate Parenting Board to enable the authority to comply with Statutory Regulations and recommended good practice. These reports are scheduled throughout the year and address many of the questions set out in paragraphs 4 and 5 above.

8. It is proposed that the key issues to be addressed by the Corporate Parenting Board in the forthcoming year should include the following:
- Ensuring sign up to the Pledge by all Council services and supporting its adoption by partner agencies
  - Monitoring the development of policies and procedures to ensure full implementation of the Pledge
  - Supporting the development of a Children in Care Council, in a form to be identified in partnership with children and young people
  - Any other issues identified by the Corporate Parenting Board

### **OPTION APPRAISAL/RISK ASSESSMENT**

9. The proposals contained within this report are intended to inform Members of their responsibilities as corporate parents and to ensure that they understand current issues relating to children looked after. This will enable them to advise the Executive and other Members of the Council on effective corporate responses to meeting the needs of children looked after.

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

10. There are no immediate financial or legal implications arising from this report. This report is of interest to all Members.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

11. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board advise the Executive to approve:
- a). the proposed changes to the remit of the Corporate Parenting Board.
  - b). the issues identified for inclusion in the Corporate Parenting Board forward work programme.

### **REASONS**

12. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons:
- a). To ensure that the remit of the Corporate Parenting Board reflects current circumstances
  - b). To enable the Corporate Parenting Board to continue to make good progress in ensuring that the authority fulfils its corporate parenting responsibilities

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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

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### Corporate Parenting Board Remit

The Corporate Parenting Board will work in an advisory capacity to the Executive in relation to enabling the Council to fulfil its corporate parenting responsibilities for children and young people who are looked after or accommodated by the local authority, and care leavers.

The Corporate Parenting Board will be responsible for:

- (i) Ensuring that children and young people for whom the Authority has corporate parenting responsibilities are enabled to achieve the outcomes set out in the Every Child Matters outcomes framework:
  - Be Healthy
  - Stay Safe
  - Enjoy & Achieve
  - Make a Positive Contribution
  - Achieve Economic Well-being;
- (ii) Listening to the views and ideas of children and young people for whom the Authority has corporate parenting responsibilities and ensuring that those views and ideas are taken into account in decision-making processes;
- (iii) Developing effective corporate responses to fulfil the Authority's responsibilities as a Corporate Parent;
- (iv) Proposing changes to policy and informing service development in the context of corporate parenting;
- (v) The dissemination of information on corporate parenting to all elected Members and anyone else to whom it may be relevant; and
- (vi) The implementation, maintenance and review of this Council's 'Corporate Parenting Policy and Strategy' document and the Local Authority's 'Pledge' to children and young people for whom the Authority has corporate parenting responsibilities.

#### Reporting and Decision-making

The Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board will present a report to the full Executive as soon as is practical after each meeting. This report will detail the business that has been considered and highlight the Board's recommendations to the Executive in respect of any decisions that may be required. Those decisions will be made by the full Executive to ensure effective corporate decision-making and accountability in respect of the Authority's corporate parenting responsibilities.

#### Membership Requirements

All Members of the Corporate Parenting Board are required to have initiated an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check within one month of their appointment to the Board, if a current enhanced check is not already in place.

The position of Chair of the Board may be held by any elected Member and membership should normally include the Lead Member for children's social care services, the Lead Member for adults' social care services and the Deputy Mayor.