

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Corporate Parenting Board

<p>PROTOCOL FOR INVOLVING MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL'S FOSTER CARERS IN THE WORK OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD</p>

Executive Member for Children Families & Learning: Mike Carr

Executive Director of Children, Families and Learning: Gill Rollings

Date: 10 November 2011

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Corporate Parenting Board with
 - (a) a proposed means by which to ensure that Foster Carers, approved by Middlesbrough Council, can be involved with and make a contribution to the work of the Corporate Parenting Board;
 - (b) a fair and transparent process by which the Council will enable Foster Carers to nominate a representative to attend meetings and to share their expertise and knowledge with elected Members.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board advise the Executive to:
 - (a) Note the information relating to the Protocol for Foster Care involvement.
 - (b) Formally approve the Protocol.
 - (c) Agree that the next annual review of the Protocol should take place in April 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.

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

BACKGROUND AND EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

5. Middlesbrough's approved Foster Carers have played an active role in the Corporate Parenting Board for several years and their contribution is considered to be valuable and informative. The current representative is now standing down and an alternative person is to be identified. To this end, Foster Carers have been asked to express their interest in the role, with a view to the Fostering Service applying the attached protocol (Appendix 1) as a means of ensuring that the nominee is appointed in a way which is fair and equitable.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6. All social care services are delivered within a framework of anti-discriminatory practice and there are no specific issues arising from the information presented within this report.

OPTION APPRAISAL/RISK ASSESSMENT

7. Not applicable to this piece of work.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS

8. There are no immediate financial or legal implications in this report. There are no specific ward implications as the Fostering Service covers the whole of Middlesbrough.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board advise the Executive to:
 - a) Note the information relating to the Protocol.
 - b) Formally approve the process outlined within the protocol, for the involvement of Foster Carers in Middlesbrough Council's Corporate Parenting Board

REASONS

10. This recommendation is supported by the following reasons:
 - (a) The Corporate Parenting Strategy aims to "achieve best possible outcomes for children and young people looked after by the Local Authority" by fulfilling the Pledge promises through strong partnership work. Application of this protocol will enable the Corporate Parenting Board to exercise its duties by adhering closely to this tenet.
 - (b) Though formal approval of these documents is not a statutory requirement, corporate parents are appropriately consulted regarding processes which will influence their work.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

11. The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Middlesbrough Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy.

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Protocol in respect of Foster Carer involvement in Middlesbrough Council's Corporate Parenting Board

1. Purpose of the Protocol

The purpose of this protocol is to establish procedures for ensuring the involvement of Foster Carers in the work of Middlesbrough Council's Corporate Parenting Board.

2. Legal & Policy Framework

Middlesbrough Council's Corporate Parenting Board was established in 2000 and it was agreed that a Foster Carer would be invited to attend meetings (approved by Middlesbrough Council's Cabinet, 8/2/2000). In the absence of a local Foster Care Forum at that time, individual volunteers have undertaken this role.

The establishment of a local Foster Care Forum now enables this valued contribution to be put on a more formal footing, with transparent procedures to govern the process.

3. Protocol

- a. The local Foster Care Forum will be invited, on an annual basis, to identify a Foster Carer to attend meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board. The process for doing so is a matter for the Foster Care Forum to determine. However, the Council would expect any such process to be fair and transparent.
- b. The Foster Carer will serve as a non-voting member of the Corporate Parenting Board for a two-year term of office, renewable for a further two-year period. If any Foster Carer serves two consecutive terms of office they will no longer be eligible to serve on the Corporate Parenting Board. Prior to this, the Foster Care Forum will be invited to nominate a different Foster Carer to attend meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board.
- c. The Foster Carer will not be expected to represent all Foster Carers who look after Middlesbrough's children. However, the Foster Carer would be invited to share their valuable knowledge and expertise in relation to caring for children within Middlesbrough.
- d. The Foster Carer will be expected to observe a high level of confidentiality and will be invited to sign up to Middlesbrough Council's Members' Code of Conduct.

4. Review of Arrangements

This protocol will be subject to annual review.