

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee/Panel:	Children and Families Advisory Panel
Date:	17 October 2017
Title:	Establishing a Corporate Parenting Board
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 It is proposed that the Children and Families Advisory Panel (CFAP) form a sub-committee, known as the "Corporate Parenting Board". The purpose of this paper is to outline the proposed function and governance arrangements for a Corporate Parenting Board (CPB); promoting the best outcomes for our children in care and care leavers. The Board will enable detailed Member led engagement and advice to CFAP and to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services on the key area of corporate parenting.
- 1.2 Every County Councillor has a responsibility, as a corporate parent, to act for the children and young people in the council's care as a parent would their own child. Looking after and protecting children and young people is one of the most important jobs that councils do. Corporate parents have the responsibility to ensure that children in care, care leavers and other vulnerable children are supported well in order for them to achieve their full potential.
- 1.3 Those County Councillors on the CPB will have a particular responsibility to review County Council policies effectively and improve corporate parenting within Hampshire. The CPB will act through recommendations to CFAP and the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services, to ensure that all of the services to children in care and care leavers are of a high standard, and to ensure that they are being well supported in all aspects of their life, including:
- support and encouragement to achieve in school;
 - support and encouragement to after their mental health and wellbeing;
 - having opportunities for positive social integration; and
 - enabling the most vulnerable children and young people in society to flourish into the successful adults they can become.
- 1.4 The proposed CPB will comprise three Members of CFAP and three co-opted Care Ambassadors. Other young people who are in care or care leavers and foster carers will be invited to attend as necessary. Regular support and advice

will be offered by Officers as outlined in the terms of reference, attached as Appendix 1.

- 1.5** The Corporate Parenting Board will make recommendations to CFAP and to the Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services regarding:
- the review and monitoring of outcomes for children in care and care leavers;
 - the steps required to ensure that the views of Hampshire’s children in care and care leavers are listened to and acted upon, including ensuring those views are incorporated into key plans, policies and strategies throughout the County Council;
 - ensuring sufficient resources are available for the ‘Care Ambassadors’ to directly engage with all children in care and care leavers, and to commission and deliver agreed projects on behalf of the Hampshire County Council;
 - raising awareness by promoting the role of Elected Members as corporate parents and the County Council as a large corporate family with key responsibilities;
 - raising the profile of the needs of children in care and care leavers through support for a range of actions & events, to recognise their achievement and contribution;
 - ensuring that children and young people are clear about what they can expect from the County Council as corporate parents;
 - ensuring that the views of children and young people on the development of services which affect them are regularly heard through the Care Ambassadors, including those with special educational needs (SEN) and learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD).
 - reviewing the children in care/care leavers Pledge annually;
 - ensuring all staff working with children in care and care leavers have the appropriate support and training needs identified.

2 Background

- 2.1** Hampshire County Council is one of the country’s leading local authorities, with many services rated as high performing. Elected Members have a crucial role to play in ensuring that we provide an excellent service to some of the most vulnerable children and young people in society – specifically those children and young people in care or care leavers. Due to their vulnerabilities, we know that these children and young people are at increased risk of poorer outcomes than their peers, they are more likely to have poorer academic outcomes, increased risk of mental illness, increased risk of offending and increased risk of not being in education, training or employment as they transition into adulthood. As a corporate parent, the responsibility is on the Council to ensure that these children have the same opportunities and aspirations as any other young person in order to achieve good outcomes for children, by championing the welfare of children and young people in care and care leavers, drawing on the principle of “If this were my child, would it be good enough?”
- 2.2** Whilst the role of a corporate parent has been introduced since the Children Act 1989, the Children and Social Work Act 2017 (s1.1) defined for the first

time in law what corporate parenting should be looking at to ensure, as far as possible, secure, nurturing and positive experiences for children looked after and care leavers. This being:

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work;
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

3 Corporate Parenting Board (CPB)

3.1 The proposed Corporate Parenting Board will be a sub-committee of the Children and Families Advisory Panel and will produce an annual report on the progress of its work, specifically to evidence improved outcomes for children and young people in care and care leavers.

3.2 The Local Government Association has produced a resource pack for elected members to assist in understanding the role and function of Corporate Parenting Boards; this is attached as Appendix 2. A guide to some questions that may be asked by board members in carrying out their role is attached as Appendix 3.

4 Membership of the Board

4.1 It is proposed that the CPB is made up of three County Councillors appointed by and drawn from the membership of the CFAP on a politically proportionate basis. In addition to this, it is recommended to the County Council that three Care Ambassadors are co-opted to the Board and that Officers will attend to support and advise the CPB, as detailed in the terms of reference (Appendix 1).

4.2 The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Board will be identified by CFAP from the appointed County Council members.

4.3 The Executive Lead Member for Children's Services will have a standing invitation to attend and observe meetings of the Board.

5 Officer Support and Resources

- 5.1 The Director of Children's Services will be responsible for ensuring that the Board has sufficient Officer support and resources to carry out its functions and may delegate this responsibility as required.
- 5.2 Currently the functions of the CPB are already in existence but come under different strategic pathways. Therefore the CPB will provide a coordinated response to improving the outcomes of children in care and care leavers through the development of effective services

6 Frequency of meetings

- 6.1 It is proposed that meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board are held quarterly, working to an agreed forward programme of business which will be reviewed and amended by the Board as required; led by the views and priorities identified by children in care and care leavers. In reviewing the programme, the Board may request reports on particular matters of their own preference or as advised by the lead officer.

7 Functions of the Board

- 7.1 The agenda and reports for the CPB will be available in accordance with the County Council's Constitution.
- 7.2 The Board will receive regular reports in relation to adoption, fostering, commissioning, children looked after services, care leavers and the virtual school with a view to identify any areas of under performance and recommending any changes.
- 7.3 Through recommendations to the relevant Executive Member or to CFAP, the Board will seek to ensure that the profile of the corporate parenting priorities are incorporated within key plans, policies and strategies of the County Council, including interagency working arrangements. Reports relating to complaints/comments from looked after children or care leavers will be reviewed to enable the Board to assure itself that Officers have dealt with these appropriately and made any necessary changes.
- 7.4 The Board will raise awareness within Hampshire County Council's partner agencies and the wider community by promoting the role of members as corporate parents and the Council as a corporate family with key responsibilities.
- 7.5 The Board will raise the profile of the needs and achievements of children looked after and care leavers through support for a range of celebratory events /activities determined by children looked after and care leavers.
- 7.6 The Board will seek to ensure that leisure, culture, further education and employment opportunities are provided and taken up by our children in care and care leavers.

- 7.7 The Board will seek to ensure that the views of children and young people are regularly heard through the CPB to improve care arrangements, educational, health and social outcomes.
- 7.8 The Board will meet with children and young people in care/care leavers, frontline staff and foster carers to enable it to inform CFAP of the standards of care and improvement outcomes for children in care and care leavers.
- 7.9 The Board will monitor the ongoing commitment to providing support, training and clarity of expectations for foster carers / residential workers to provide excellent and high quality care.
- 7.10 The Board will consider the possible role of Member Champions in respect of a number of areas and make recommendations accordingly in the following key areas:
- Housing
 - Employment and training opportunities within council department and with partner agencies
 - Health and emotional well being
 - Educational Attainment and access to Higher Education
 - Foster Carer Recruitment and retention
 - Response to those who go missing
- 7.11 The CPB may agree the appointment of working groups of Members and Officers to provide advice on specific matters within its remit. Such working groups may be appointed for a fixed period, on the expiry of which they shall cease to exist.

8 Care Ambassadors

- 8.1 The Care Ambassadors represent the views of children in care and care leavers and representatives will be co-opted by the County Council.

9 Performance Monitoring

- 9.1 The Corporate Parenting Board will regularly analyse and monitor outcomes for children in care and care leavers. The Board's work will be underpinned by a core data set considered at each Board meeting. Additional detailed monitoring reports will be presented in accordance with the agreed work programme.

10 Training

- 10.1 Appropriate training will be provided to members of the CPB as required – this could be training provided by the Care Ambassadors or by Officers or other agencies.

11 Impact that the Corporate Parenting Board has on the performance of the County Council

11.1 The impact of a Corporate Parenting Board will highlight and promote the Council's responsibility as a corporate parent to ensure that the very best care is provided to all of our children in care and care leavers. The introduction of a CPB will raise the profile of children in care and care leavers throughout the whole council.

12 Recommendation(s)

12.1 That the Children and Families Advisory Panel agrees to the formation of a sub-committee known as the Corporate Parenting Board on the basis set out in the report and in the attached draft terms of reference.

12.2 That the Children and Families Advisory Panel agrees to the adoption of the proposed Terms of Reference for the Board.

12.3 That the Children and Families Advisory Panel appoints three Members to the Board, on a proportionate basis and identifies one of them as Chairman and another as Vice-Chairman. In addition, that the Children and Families Advisory Panel appoint a substitute member for each political Group.

12.4 That the Children and Families Advisory Panel recommends to County Council the appointment of three co-opted Care Ambassadors as Members of the Board as set out in the Terms of Reference.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Strategic Plan**

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Equalities Impact Assessment:

The establishment of the Corporate Parenting Board will not have any direct impact on equalities, and any future recommendations of the Board to the Executive Member will be subject to Equalities Assessment at that time.

Impact on Crime and Disorder:

Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

No Impact

- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

No impact