



**Minutes of a Meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel
held in the Executive Suite, Abax Stadium on 15 June 2016**

CORE MEMBERS

PRESENT: Councillors Bisby (Chair), Saltmarsh (Vice Chair),
Harper, Johnson, Bull, Coles, and Smith

**REGULAR MEMBERS
IN ATTENDANCE:**

Councillor Rush

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Nicola Curley	Assistant Director for Children's Social Care
Simon Green	Head of Fostering and Adoption Service
Jenny Weeden	Youth Engagement and Participation Officer
Philippa Turvey	Senior Democratic Services Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Philip Gilbert	Foster Care Forum
Sarah Purvis	Foster Care Forum
Susan Pelican	Foster Care Forum

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

A nomination for the role of Chairman was received and seconded for Councillor Bisby. Following the nomination, Councillor Bisby was duly elected as Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel meeting on 15 June 2016.

A nomination for the role of Vice Chairman was received for Councillor Saltmarsh. The Nomination was seconded and following a vote, Councillor Saltmarsh was duly elected as Vice Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel meeting on 15 June 2016.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received for Councillors Holdich, Stokes, Aitken, Ayres and Sylvester.

Apologies were also received for Councillors Okonkowski, Shearman and Walsh.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 MARCH 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2016 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. UPDATE FROM THE CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL

The Youth Engagement and Participation Officer provided an update on the recent meetings and forthcoming events.

The key points included:

- A new role had been created within the team in order to build capacity.
- The summer programme had been formulated and circulated to foster carers.
- Three young people had been involved in the Permanency Arrangement tender process, receiving pitches from potential providers.
- An increase had been seen in the Care Leavers Drop-In sessions, which the NEET team had attended.
- It was noted that Councillors could attend these sessions if they wished, and to liaise with the Youth Engagement and Participation Officer to arrange this.
- The Mind of My Own app had been rolled out, with the first few statements coming through.

The Panel: Noted the update

5. UPDATE FROM FOSTER FORUM

The Foster Care Forum representatives provided an update on the recent activities and meetings of the Foster Carer Forum.

The key points included:

- A restructure of the Forum had taken place, with new Secretary, new Deputy Chair, and new Event Co-ordinator.
- The budget for activities had been discussed, with clarification provided on respite services and the responsibility for social workers.
- The Vivacity card for foster carers had been renewed for another year.
- A number of Foster Care Forum representatives attended the Permanency Service discussions.
- The Foster Care Award celebrations were scheduled to take place in the evening of September 2016.

The Panel: noted the update.

6. MEMBERS ISSUES

There were no Members present that were not part of the Core Membership.

Members from within the Core Membership raised a number of questions regarding proposals to transform the Corporate Parenting Panel into a formal Committee of Council. A summary of the key points discussed included:

- Several Members considered that Corporate Parenting should not be part of the political forum.
- All Councillors were corporate parents, not just those appointed to the Panel.
- It was considered that if both formal and informal meetings of the Committee were held, involvement from young people and carers could still be had in an informal setting.
- It was noted that Committees had the ability to include co-opted members.
- The number of Committee members was discussed, as there was not currently a limit on Members who could attend Panel meetings.
- Councillor Smith would highlight these matters to the Leader.

7. INTRODUCTION TO CORPORATE PARENTING

The Assistant Director for Children's Social presented the Panel with an introduction to Corporate Parenting.

Following the presentation, the key points discussed included:

- In terms of whether the service was properly prepared for the anticipated increase in population, it was advised that the Council had an overarching plan to address this increase. In relation to Children in Care in particular, it was expected that improved offers of early help would assist in diverting users away from statutory services. It was also believed that the Permanency Service would reduce the level of Children in Care in the long term.
- The Council had improved its recruitment levels with a number of campaigns. A new Marketing Strategy was also in development.
- The service had struggled to retain managers in the past. This had improved significantly, however, with now only two agency managers in position, the rest being part of the permanent staff.
- Apprenticeships for Children in Care often presented a problem, as basic qualifications were required to access them. A 'Step Up' programme was currently being delivered in order to bridge this gap, and other educational supports being considered.

The Panel: noted the presentation.

8. UPDATE ON CORPORATE PARENTING CHAMPIONS

The Head of Fostering and Adoption Service provided an update on the Corporate Parenting Champions.

The key points discussed by the Panel included:

- The new municipal year provided an opportunity to review the role of Champions, as a number were no longer in office.
- It was considered that a report from individual Corporate Parenting Champions would be useful.

9. INTRODUCTION TO OFFICER ROLES

The Head of Fostering and Adoption Service introduced himself and other relevant officers, and gave a brief overview of their roles.

10. UPDATE ON OFSTED ACTION PLAN

The Head of Fostering and Adoption Service introduced a report to the Panel that outlined the Council's Action Plan following the OfSTED inspection.

The key points discussed by the Panel included:

- This version of the plan contain only actions that related to Children in Care.
- Updates on the plan would be provided quarterly.
- It was noted that one of the actions included within the plan related directly to the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- It was queried whether such high targets for engagement with young people within the plan were practically achievable, although it was recognised that all

Members of Panel were keen to hear directly from young people wherever possible .

- The service had responsibilities to promote the health and wellbeing of all Children in Care. This includes issues in relation to their mental health as well.
- The matter of Strength and Difficulty Questionnaires was raised, which had previously been discontinued, as it was believed this information was captured elsewhere. Following the OfSTED report, these had been reinstated and were considered at each health review.

11. WORK PROGRAMME

The Assistant Director for Children’s Social Care introduced the Work Programme report to the Panel. The Work Programme had detailed the standing agenda items.

The Chairman advised that it would be prudent to wait for the outcome of the Committee Review and how this would affect the Corporate Parenting Panel, before agreeing to an appropriate Work Programme.

The Committee considered that when formulating the Work Programme it was important to ensure a differentiation between the roles of the Corporate Parenting Panel and the Creation Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to discuss.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman advised that the next meeting was currently scheduled for 5 July 2016.

The Panel considered that this was too soon and did not give enough time for officers to prepare for the meeting. Additionally, in light of the review of Committees to be heard by Full Council on 13 July 2016, which may impact on the Corporate Parenting Panel, it was considered that the next meeting should be held after this date.

A suitable date would be identified by Democratic Services.

CHAIRMAN
6:30pm – 8:09 pm