

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 7
21 MARCH 2018	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Corporate Parenting Committee Chairman		
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Sam Smith, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services.		
Contact Officer(s):	Nicola Curley Assistant Director Children’s Services	Tel. 864065	

REPORT ON WORK OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE FOR THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM: Corporate Parenting Committee Chairman	Deadline date: Date to be confirmed
<p>It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agrees that the annual report is an accurate reflection of the work of the Committee over the last 12 months; and 2. Agrees to submit the annual report to the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee for noting as per the Corporate Parenting Committee’s Terms of Reference. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is submitted to Corporate Parenting Committee following Children and Education Scrutiny Committee requiring an annual report on the role of the Corporate Parenting Committee.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee of activity carried out the Corporate Parenting Committee in the municipal year 2017-18.
- 2.2 This report is for Corporate Parenting Committee to consider under all its Terms of Reference.
- 2.3 The report addresses all areas of the Children in Care pledge and the Care Leavers’ Charter. It specifically demonstrates to Scrutiny how the Committee has been addressing Children in Care and Care Leavers’ participation rights, and developing the Committee’s knowledge and ability to effectively scrutinise how well positive outcomes are being achieved for children and young people.

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
---	-----------	----------------------------------	-----

4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 Following the changes engendered by the Ofsted Inspection of 2015, the Corporate Parenting Committee has continued to build on a successful inaugural year and worked to support the needs and ambitions of the Council's Children in Care and Care Leavers.

4.1.1 It recognises that there are continuing development needs in relation to supporting the Children in Care Council to really flourish going forwards, but feels that the new format is a positive one and enables Members to be fully involved in this critical area of the Council's responsibilities.

4.2 Meeting Changes

4.2.1 As agreed in the previous year, the Committee has continued to hold 6 meetings a year, but has arranged its business over 3 formal and 3 informal meetings. The formal meetings are public fora, where the bulk of formal reports are received and officers held to account for service delivery and outcomes. The informal meetings take place at a slightly earlier time, and are co-chaired by Cllr Bisby and a member of the CIC Council. Corporate Champions feed into this meeting, and officers report back on promised activity, but there is little other formal reporting as this is seen as an opportunity for Corporate Parents to listen to young people to talk freely about their experiences in care and as care leavers, and discuss ways to improve services going forward.

4.2.2 The Committee plans to review the meeting structure at the end of the year to ensure that it remains relevant and is meeting the needs of all involved.

4.3 Changes to Work Programme and Reporting Mechanisms

4.3.1 The thematic meetings have continued, where a single topic is considered in depth to enable councillors to fully understand the complexity of the issue in the round, have a proper opportunity to scrutinise the information before them and challenge officers in a timely and thorough manner. The Committee now focuses on 3 key areas for children and young people: education; placement; and health. These are linked across the formal and informal meetings, and have been effective in developing ideas and themes for Members to scrutinise.

4.3.2 The area that has not been finalised to date is that of a new reporting mechanism. The Local Authority has introduced a new performance management system called QlikSense, and this has been connected to the case management system used for recording child activity, LiquidLogic. It has, however, been a complicated process to develop that started at the beginning of the child's journey, and so some areas around children in care have yet to be finalised. Managers are able to use reports to monitor activity and day to day performance, but the service have not reached a point where they are able to create the reliable short cut summary reports that were envisaged for the Committee. This remains a high priority and will be addressed in the summer of 2018.

4.4 Corporate Parenting Champions

4.4.1 This has continued to be an effective use of Member influence. Champions are Members who sit on the Committee, but have also volunteered to take a particular lead for an area that impacts on Children in Care and Care Leavers.

4.4.2 The Corporate Parenting Champions 2017–2018 have been:

Area of Focus	Champion	Officer Lead
Housing	Councillor Saltmarsh	Sean Evans
Employment And Training Opportunities Within The Council Departments And Partner Agencies	Councillor Ayres	Pat Carrington
Health	Councillor Bull	Deborah Spencer
Education Attainment and Access To Higher	Councillor Ayres	Dee Glover

Education		
Recreation and Leisure Activities	Councillor Smith	Sian Stevens
Finance and Benefits	Councillor Bond	Susan Holden

4.4.3 In between each informal Committee the Corporate Parenting Champion has been responsible for the following:

- a) Meeting with the Lead Officer;
- b) Undertaking a site visit;
- c) Meeting with a child in care / young person / service user / other officers and discuss their experience of the service for Children in Care; and
- d) Contributing to a brief report back to the Committee.

4.4.4 This has been a developing role, and some very useful reports have been provided, especially in relation to Health issues for children and young people and pupil transport for foster children. The Chair reviews all the Champions reports and will take a report forward at the beginning of the new municipal year to address any outstanding action points.

4.5 **Specific Focus of Work**

4.5.1 The Committee has maintained close oversight of the new commissioned arrangements with TACT. The Permanency Service is now almost a year old, and has been reporting into the Committee regularly. There has been significant improvement in the support and services offered to foster carers under the new arrangements, and there have also been recent improvements and positive feedback in relation to Family Group Conferences, which prevent children coming into care or help support their return home. There is a need to develop PCC's placement mix further to offer more choice to children, but clear plans are in place to take this forward over the next year. Adoption services delivered by TACT remain of the same high quality of the last few years, and this is an area of strength for the partnership, recently endorsed by Ofsted.

4.5.2 There has also been close scrutiny of health provision for children in care. Whilst there had been significant strides made in the delivery of services by CAMHS over the last 2 years and the development of a whole new Emotional Health and Well Being Pathway for lower level concerns, Corporate Parents were of the view that there remained a gap in provision for children in care with attachment or significant behavioural difficulties. This had been raised previously, but had not received the response required. The Committee wrote to the Corporate Director on the matter in and there is now a commissioning process underway through the Child Health Commissioning Unit to establish an appropriate service for these children. The Committee is kept up to date with regular briefing notes, receiving the latest in March 2018.

4.5.3 The Committee has also been highly supportive of the development of apprenticeship proposals for Care Leavers. This has been working well across the City, and the Department exceeded its first set of targets in the area. Cllr Bisby and Ayres have met directly with some of the apprentices and the Committee will be supporting the expansion of the scheme in the coming year.

4.5.4 Another issue of significant concern for the Committee was the availability of reliable transport for foster children getting to and from school and contact. This had originally been raised by the Foster Carers' Committee, and led to a detailed review of the provision by Pupil Transport and TACT. A regular satisfaction survey is now carried out by TACT in this area, and Pupil Transport were able to make some simple communication improvements which have largely resolved the main issues. This will be monitored as a standing item by the Foster Carer Committee, and any concerns reported back to the Corporate Parenting Committee as needed.

4.4.5 Finally, the work of the Corporate Parenting Committee continues to be recognised, both on a national and local level. The Chair has met with Corporate Parenting colleagues in Cambridgeshire to share ideas and ways of working, but also has been asked by the Local Government Association to participate in a possible national conference in the next two years

as an example of best practice. This has yet to be finalised, but is a continuing indication of the profile and innovation of the Corporate Parenting Committee.

4.6 Links to the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers' Drop In

- 4.6.1 The Children in Care Council meets on a monthly basis. The group is well attended during school holiday periods when activities are offered in addition to the normal meeting. This has encouraged new attendees and at least 15 young people attended each of these sessions. The monthly after school meeting was less well attended, however, with approximately 6-8 regular attendees. A new youth group for children aged between 8 and 12 has also been established, self-titled 'Children in Charge' which meets fortnightly. One of the aims of this group is to prepare members to step up to joining the full care council when they are ready.
- 4.6.2 The Children in Care Council has launched a new 'go2 Guide' for children in care. This was produced following discussion between young people and councillors. Young people were involved in every stage of the design process, supported by the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Committee.
- 4.6.3 There is a regular care leavers' drop in and care leavers have produced a video to support other care leavers and are taking a lead role in a number of other developments which were discussed and agreed with Members at the informal corporate parenting committee meeting in February 2018.
- 4.6.4 Young people have worked with staff, assisted by the council's communities' team, to develop a standardised process for setting up home grants. They are now working with staff and the workforce development team to run a workshop within the AYSE program on the skills and priorities young people value in the delivery of social care services.
- 4.6.5 A full activity programme was offered to children and young people in the summer encompassing a variety of activities and events curated by Children in Care Council members for young people to increase reach and engagement with this group. Engagement for summer 2017 was 425 attendances by 125 young people over 27 sessions, with an additional 25 young people participating in the National Citizenship Service. In addition to the usual activities, Summer 2017 saw the Local Authority delivering a 3 day preparing for adulthood course for young people and a 3 day residential for our Children in Charge youth group members teaching them the skills they need to represent other young people.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Children in Care Council has been fully aware and consulted upon the changes referred to in this paper. The feedback from them to date is that the ongoing changes to the Committee have been very positive ones.
- 5.2 The report has been shared with Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Children Services in line with the Corporate Parenting Committee Terms of Reference.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 6.1 If the Corporate Parenting Committee agrees the recommendations in this report, it will be presented to the next Children and Education Scrutiny Committee in the new municipal year 2018 - 2019.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 For presentation at Children and Education Scrutiny Committee.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 N/A

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

9.1 None

Legal Implications

9.2 None

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 N/A

11. APPENDICES

11.1 None

This page is intentionally left blank