

CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 9
3 JULY 2017	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Lou Williams; Service Director for Children & Safeguarding	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Sam Smith, Cabinet Member for Children's Services.	
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CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE 6 MONTHLY REPORT

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM: Service Director for Children & Safeguarding	Deadline date: N/A
It is recommended that the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee :	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notes that the report is an accurate reflection of the work of the Corporate Parenting Committee over the last 6 months. 2. Agrees that Corporate Parenting Committee reports are to be presented to Scrutiny on an annual basis going forward as with the other Committees. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee present a bi-annual update report to the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee in accordance with its Terms of Reference Part 3, Delegations Section 2 – Regulatory Committee Functions 2.4.4.2 PERFORMANCE MONITORING, paragraph 2.4.4.4 The Corporate Parenting Committee will report to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and to the Scrutiny Committee on a six monthly basis or more frequently if required.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 This report is to advise the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee of activity carried out by the Corporate Parenting Committee since its first meeting in August 2016.

2.2 This report is for the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by Council :

- Children's Services including
- a) Social Care of Children;
 - b) Safeguarding; and
 - c) Children's Health.

2.3 This report relates to the corporate priority to support vulnerable people.

2.4 The report addresses all areas of the Children in Care Pledge and the Care Leavers' Charter. It specifically demonstrates 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
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4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

4.1 **BACKGROUND**

4.1.1 The Ofsted Inspection in April 2015 identified two areas where the Council needed to develop its performance:

- Ensure that there is a more robust approach to Corporate Parenting and that elected Members and senior managers listen to, and act on, the experiences of children and young people in order to improve their lives.
- Further develop the role of the Children in Care Council [CiCC] to help make this happen

4.1.2 As a response to this, the Council had enhanced its Engagement and Participation Service, created a Children In Care Board to bring together change for children across all departmental areas within the Council, and embarked on wider improvement activity with Children in Care and Care Leavers services generally. However, it was also felt by Corporate Parents that they would like to raise the profile of the Corporate Parenting Panel higher to support these changes, and so full Council was asked to endorse its conversion to a full Committee. This took place on 13 July 2016 and this report details activity since that point.

4.2 **KEY ISSUES**

4.2.1 **Changes to the meetings**

It was agreed that there would be 6 meetings a year, but due to the special circumstances of young people attending the meetings, the Committee decided to arrange 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.

This is still a developing model, but is seen as a significant improvement on previous activity. Young people have reported back that they have found the genuine interest and commitment from Members as very supportive, and the Committee now have unfiltered access to young people's views. This needs to be broadened out to a wider range of our CIC population, and will be an ambition for the next year of work.

4.2.2 **Changes to Work Programme and Reporting Mechanisms**

As part of trying to make the new meeting format effective, but also support Members to assess and analyse issues more readily, a piece of work was carried out to review all the reports being presented to the various Committees across the Council in consultation with Democratic Services. Where duplication was identified, the most appropriate Committee was chosen to receive a report, and where this was the Corporate Parenting Committee, a further determination was made about whether these should be reports presented to the full Committee or could be addressed as briefing reports.

The aim has been to create thematic meetings 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. This is still a work in progress as a 6 month development plan had been agreed

by the Committee, but is starting to show fruition. The formal Committee meeting on 22 March 2017 will focus exclusively on the education of Children in Care, and will receive reports from the Virtual School, 0-25 Service and SEND Inspection Report in order to assess outcomes across the board for Peterborough's children.

There has also been work undertaken on the format of reports to the Corporate Parenting Committee. We are working towards creating more of a balanced scorecard approach, with shorter reports involving different representations of information and analysis, focussing the attention on outcomes as far as possible. The suite of pro formas is planned to be ready for the new municipal year.

4.2.3 Corporate Parenting Champions

This area was also refreshed following the change to a formal Committee. 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.

The Corporate Parenting Champions 2016–2017 have been:

Area of Focus	Champion	Officer Lead
Housing	TBC	Sean Evans
Employment And Training Opportunities Within The Council Departments And Partner Agencies	Councillor Holdich OBE	Pat Carrington
Health	Councillor Ayres	Deborah Spencer
Education Attainment and Access To Higher Education	Councillor Holdich OBE	Dee Glover
Recreation and Leisure Activities	Councillor Smith	Sian Stevens
Finance and Benefits	Councillor Bull	Susan Holden

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
- d) Contributing to a brief report back to the Committee

4.2.4 The reports are being worked on as part of the suite of pro formas referred to above, but there has already been a very helpful example developed by the Virtual School that explained the detail of the Personal Education Plans process for members. The Champions report back at the informal meetings so that there is an opportunity for the young people to challenge them, and to receive immediate feedback on their proposals. Significant issues are then fed into the next linked formal Committee.

Local Government Association Development Programme

The Corporate Parenting Committee has also had the benefit of support from the Local Government Association (LGA), which commenced in October 2016. The LGA has observed a Committee meeting, met with senior officers and the Chair of the Committee, and given advice about the development of performance information and reports. The Chair has a mentor from a similar Local Authority, and is able to gain support in developing his role as he feels appropriate. An arrangement was made for the Committee to visit Westminster Council, which has an Ofsted rating of Outstanding. They were very generous with their time, and enabled the Committee to see another Corporate Parenting environment in action, including a presentation from their young people in care. It has helped the Committee reflect on its own activity and how it may want to develop things in the future. Finally, a workshop was held on 9 March 2017 led by the LGA, drawing together all the elements the Committee has been working on over the last 6 months. It looked specifically at defining some robust assurance criteria in conjunction with Members, and measures that will enable the Committee to hold officers to account about the most important issues and outcomes over the next period of time. Further development will now be led by the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Committee.

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 changes to the Committee have been very positive ones.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 There will be some implications for Performance officers in the medium term in relation to the new reports required but this will not be a significant piece of work.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 Improved service reporting.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 N/A

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

9.1 None

Legal Implications

9.2 None

Equalities Implications

9.3 N/A

Rural Implications

9.4 N/A

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