

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE MEETING	AGENDA ITEM No. 7
20 NOVEMBER 2024	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	John Gregg, Executive Director for Children and Young People	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Katy Cole, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services	
Contact Officer(s):	Sara Graves, Service Director, Targeted Support & Safeguarding	Tel. 07483 351428

LOCAL GOVERNEMENT ASSOCIATION PEER CHALLENGE RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Executive Director for Children and Young People	Deadline date: N/A
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is recommended that Corporate Parenting Committee notes the contents of the report, and the recommendations identified as part of the Local Government Association Peer Challenge. 2. Corporate Parenting Committee to endorse recommendation 12, namely, the move to be held in a non-public meeting, therefore removing it from the Council’s Committee structure and political proportionality, and to enable full discussion and young people engagement and agree the new draft terms of reference to be sent to Constitution and Ethics Committee for recommendation onto Council for approval. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is submitted to Corporate Parenting Committee following the recommendations received as part of the Local Government Association Peer Challenge.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Corporate Parenting Committee with an overview of the findings from the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge of Corporate Parenting which took place on the 17th and 18th July 2024 so far as they relate to Corporate Parenting Committee. The outcome of this review was a number of recommendations to support the effectiveness of Corporate Parenting in Peterborough City Council.

Officers have met with representatives from the LGA and the Peer Challenge team and are seeking support from members to implement recommendation 12, namely, the move of Corporate Parenting governance from a committee to a board. This will allow engagement with a wider range of stakeholders including cross- party members, officers, partners, education colleagues, foster carers and others.

2.2 This report is for Corporate Parenting Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 2.4.4.5 Raise awareness in Peterborough City Council and the wider community by promoting the role of members as corporate parents and the Council as a large corporate family with key responsibilities

2.3 Effective Corporate Parenting arrangements support the delivery of the Children in Care promise and ensures that Peterborough Children and Young People services are able to

deliver on the promise providing good quality services to children and families in Peterborough. This includes working to keep children and young people safe, and ensuring that they feel cared about, valued and respected as an individual, supporting them to achieve their goals and reach their potential.

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 The Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge process is a core part of the LGA's sector support offer for councils and is designed to support continuous improvement by providing insight, guidance and challenge to enable continuous improvement
- 4.2 The Corporate Parenting Peer Challenge is based on the national Corporate Parenting principles and was conducted by a team with a wide range of experience and knowledge of local government.
- 4.3 The LGA Peer Challenge took place in Peterborough on the 17th and 18th of July 2024 and included the following activity
- Review of the self-assessment
 - LGA peer led diagnostic
 - Observation of a Corporate Parenting meeting
 - Interviews with a number of leaders and managers including Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, Lead Member for Children's Services, Chair of the Corporate Parenting Committee, Executive Director of Children and Young People Services and senior leadership team, Head of the Virtual School, Foster Carers and Foster Care Committee Chair, Participation Team, Safeguarding Lead and officers from the Council including managers and social workers.
 - Meeting with groups of children and young people
- 4.4 Overall messages and observations from the peer challenge team identified that there is energy and commitment to improve the lives of Peterborough's children from Members and officers. Whilst significant investment has been made, the team recognised that further work is needed beyond children's services to establish strong corporate parenting across the whole council.
- 4.5 Within Children's Services the peer challenge team highlighted that significant work has been undertaken to lay the foundations for success and shared positive feedback from the staff that they spoke to as part of the review activity.
- 4.6 Key Lines of Enquiry were identified in advance of the visit and established the scope of the peer challenge. These included;
- Observations in the Ofsted report
 - Governance of
 - Foster carers and kinship care
 - Health needs
 - The local offer to care leavers

Feedback on these areas has been shared with the Peterborough City Council leaders and a report outlining the findings in relation to these key lines of enquiry was shared with Children and Education Scrutiny Committee on the 23rd September 2024.

- 4.7 The peer challenge team observed a Corporate Parenting Committee meeting as part of the schedule of activity and identified a number of strengths including the cross-party attendance and the aspiration to engage with and hear the voice of children and young people. The

challenge team also highlighted a recognition by members that children placed outside of Peterborough may have a different experience

4.8 A number of areas for consideration were also highlighted as part of feedback received following the Peer Challenge.

- Format and membership of the board/ committee
- Planning and support to the board/ committee
- Action minutes and outcome tracking
- Performance information needs comparators and commentary
- Training for board members
- Work programme should be agile and include a balance between reports, performance and issues.

4.9 There are twelve recommendations arising from the Corporate Parenting Peer Challenge.

1. Development and embedding of whole council commitment as corporate parents
2. All member training on corporate parenting
3. Further development and training of Corporate Parenting Committee members facilitated by the LGA
4. Mentoring opportunities to be considered
5. Consideration of corporate parenting training for staff in Housing
6. Consideration of wider membership at corporate parenting board
7. Strategic quartet to drive the corporate parenting and wider children's services agenda
8. Effective pre-meet arrangements to ensure robust governance and impact
9. Feedback loops to be consistently closed across the partnership
10. Ensure minutes are action and outcome focused
11. Encourage constructive challenge at Corporate Parenting Committee
12. Corporate Parenting Committee to be held in private enabling full discussion and young people's engagement.

4.10 Following the Peer Challenge, the LGA and Peer Review team have offered support to officers to take these recommendations forward and have shared their experience of where a private setting for the governance of Corporate Parenting, such as a Board, have worked well in other Local Authorities.

4.11 The benefits of a Corporate Parenting Board include the ability to involve a wider range of stakeholders including members from all parties, officers, partners, education colleagues, foster carers and others. This will shift the focus from providing a scrutiny function to working with children in care to understand the challenges facing them and how board members can collectively support them. Additionally, a private setting allows for more in-depth conversation and the involvement of young people.

4.12 With the support of the LGA, officers have proposed the move to a Corporate Parenting Board and the draft Terms of Reference for a Corporate Parenting Board is attached.

In order to proceed to remove the Corporate Parenting Committee from the Council's Committee structure and political proportionality this report and the proposed Terms of Reference will be shared at the following;

- Scrutiny Committee (January 2025)
- Constitution and Ethics Committee (February 2025)
- Full Council (March 2025)

5. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5.1 The feedback from the Local Government Associate Corporate Parenting Peer Challenge links to the Corporate Strategy Priorities. Specifically, it links to protecting vulnerable care leavers supporting children in our care helping care leavers into adulthood.

1. Our Places & Communities
 - Lives and Work
 - Health and Wellbeing
2. Prevention, Independence & Resilience
 - Educations and Skills for All
 - Children
3. Sustainable Future City Council
 - How we Serve
 - How we Enable

This an excerpt of a report shared at Children and Education Scrutiny Committee on the 23rd of September 2024. There is no impact on the carbon emissions of the local authority. The report relates to areas of strength and development in corporate parenting.

Environment & Climate Change

The report seeks permission to move the corporate parenting governance from a committee to a board. Therefore, the same activities would be carried forward but to a non-public domain. The report contains no proposals for changes which would impact carbon emissions of the council or the city.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Consultation has taken place with relevant managers and staff in the development of this report. The findings from the Local Government Association Peer Challenge was shared at the Children’s Improvement Board on 18 September and a report was shared at Children and Education Scrutiny Committee on 23 September 2024. A draft of this report along with the proposed Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Board was also shared at Corporate Leadership Team on the 5th November.

7. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 7.1 For Corporate Parenting Committee to review the contents of the report and support any proposed amendments to the membership or form of the Corporate Parenting Committee which are being considered following the recommendations from the peer challenge, the recommendations identified during the two-day formal visit by National Implementation Advisor for Care Leavers and the feedback from the Ofsted Monitoring Visit of care leavers which took place in July 2024.

8. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 As corporate parents, it is critical that Members continue to support the improvement of services for children in Peterborough to ensure that children and young people can achieve better outcomes.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 There are no alternative options for the Committee to consider as the recommendations identified as part of the Peer Challenge will ensure that Members’ corporate parenting responsibilities are met and support positive outcomes for children in care.

10. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 10.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from the contents of this report

Legal Implications

- 10.2 There are no specific legal implications arising from the contents of this report, which provides an overview of the LGA Peer Challenge. However, while Committee may provide views on recommendation number 12, any endorsement of recommendation 12 will need to follow internal governance processes before any implementation can take place.

Equalities Implications

- 10.3 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not needed because the issues covered are for information purposes only, therefore the Council's full EIA process does not need to be applied

10.4 *Other Implications*

This report is concerned with the LGA review of Corporate Parenting in Peterborough and as such the recommendations arising from that review impact children in care. The views of children in care and care leavers were considered as part of the LGA review. The recommendation to remove the Corporate Parenting Committee from the political proportionality will enable full discussion and involvement of young people in the decisions that affect them.

The endorsement of recommendation 12, namely the change to a Corporate Parenting Board will ensure that a wider range of stakeholders can be involved so and shift the focus from a scrutiny function to working with children in care to understand their challenges and support them. This will positively impact children in care and ensure that they have the opportunity and support to have their voices heard and participate as members of the board.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

- 11.1 Report to Children and Education Scrutiny Committee 23 September 2024. *Local Government Association Peer Challenge*

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix 1 - Corporate Parenting Board draft terms of reference

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