

CORPORATE PARENTING SUB COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 37

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Corporate Parenting Board Terms of Reference and Work Programme 2013-2014
Date of Meeting:	17th April 2013
Report of:	Interim Director Children's Services
Contact Officer: Name:	Rosalind Turner
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Ward(s) affected:	All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 On 28th March 2013 full Council considered a report setting out proposed changes to the Council's constitution. The terms of reference and ways of working of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee were among the areas reviewed.
- 1.2 This report sets out the revised terms of reference for the Corporate Parenting Board as agreed by full Council and proposes a work plan for the forthcoming meetings in 2013-2014.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That members note the revised terms of reference (Appendix 1) for the Corporate Parenting Board, effective from 24th May 2013;
- 2.2 That members discuss and determine a work programme for the Board in 2013-2014.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 On 17th May 2012 the Council adopted a new constitution based on a committee system of governance. As part of the new arrangements a Corporate Parenting sub-committee was established. When the new constitution was adopted, it was recognised that the new arrangements would need to be kept under review and that it would be good practice to consider any further changes that could be made once the system had been in place for a time.
- 3.2 The Corporate Parenting sub-committee was established to champion the interests of looked after children and engage parts of the Council outside Children's Services at member and officer level. The aim was for the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee to operate as an advisory sub-committee to

Policy & Resources Committee in connection with the discharge of council functions regarding children in care and care leavers. It was intended to highlight the importance of the Council's role as a corporate parent, including ensuring appropriate training for members on the Council's responsibilities.

Terms of Reference

- 3.3 Having reviewed the operation and agendas of the sub-committee since May 2012, it was clear that the sub-committee has not in practice achieved an increased profile. One of the issues that has been encountered is that the formality of the committee procedures mean there is limited flexibility to invite and hear from different groups in a confidential way or to meet at times and places outside of the Council's formal meeting arrangements. It is therefore proposed that it ceases to be a sub-committee and becomes a Corporate Parenting Board. This will increase the flexibility of the Board, enabling fuller engagement and a more open and frank dialogue with looked after children and foster carers in particular.
- 3.4 In addition, a number of practical changes are also proposed, including:-
- Ensuring that the Chair is a lead member from outside Children's Services;
 - Establishing and managing a work programme for the meetings which engages all parts of the organisation at member and officer level;
 - Regular reporting of the work on Corporate Parenting to Policy & Resources Committee. Reporting to Policy & Resources Committee will ensure democratic accountability and transparency in respect of the Council's commitment to its responsibilities as a Corporate Parent.

A copy of the revised Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix 1 for information.

The Work Programme

- 3.5 In order to ensure that the Corporate Parenting Board does engage the wider council and that the Council is considering its obligations as Corporate Parent across its services, a work programme will be developed by members of the Board at this meeting.
- 3.9 The first meeting of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee considered Brighton and Hove City Council's Corporate Parenting Policy and Strategy. Members agreed to monitor progress throughout the year. Reports have been considered on the overall numbers of children in care, performance in assessment, care plans and placements, educational outcomes, and employability.
- 3.10 This meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board will consider reports on overall performance indicators, the work of the specialist health team, recruitment of foster carers and the proposed new Ofsted framework which will set expectations for the care and support of children in care, and care leavers.
- 3.11 Following consideration of these, and hearing the views of children in care, care leavers and foster carers, members may wish to determine priority areas for consideration during the coming year.

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4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The decision to move to a committee system of governance was made by a meeting of full council in December 2011. The design principles and working assumptions were agreed by a Constitution Working Group and the Leaders Group. Following approximately 9 months of the new system being in operation, discussions have taken place with SLT and lead officers to collate the list of issues, including the proposals set out in this report.
- 4.2 The amended terms of reference for the Corporate Parenting Board will be available to the public both at Council offices and on the Council's website.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 There are no financial implications as a direct result of the recommendations of this report. The Looked After Children and Safeguarding budget for 2013/14 is £39m and this is subject to the Children's services Value for Money programme.

Finance Officer Consulted: David Ellis *Date: 05.04.13*

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The Council has a legal duty to act as a 'corporate parent' for each and every child and young person that is looked after, whether this is as a result of a voluntary agreement with their parents, or under a care order agreed by the court. In this respect the council is subject to statutory guidance, the requirements of the Leaving Care Act, and the duties to promote the well being of children under the Children Act 2004 and the Children and Young Persons Act 2008. In ensuring that these duties are met there is no prescribed form that the Council must take (ie Committee or Panel).

Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 18th March 2013

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The overall outcomes for children in care and care leavers are much worse than for their peers, and is a key area to be addressed in terms of equality.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Providing children in care with a safe, secure home life, good education and progression into further education, training or employment will assist community sustainability as they move into adulthood.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 Young People and adults who have been looked after are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system.

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Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The risk of not providing good care and support is the detriment to life opportunities for individual children, and to the detriment of the Council's reputation.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 Children in care and care leavers often have significant health issues which will have an impact on their adult life if not addressed effectively.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 Corporate Parenting is a key role for the local authority.

Background information

1. Brighton and Hove Corporate Parenting Policy and Strategy
Report to Corporate Parenting sub-committee 4 July 2012
2. Government guidance and related documents on the role of Corporate Parent
DfE, LGA