

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

16TH JUNE 2011

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

COUNCIL DECISION

Children & Young People – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Mrs McCoy

CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY

1. Summary

The Corporate Parenting Strategy sets out the ambitions of the Council, in conjunction with its partners, to improve outcomes for children and young people in care and leaving care. The strategy reflects the statutory responsibility of the local authority to act as the corporate parent for these children and young people.

The strategy was last updated in 2007. It has been subject to review during the past year and a revised strategy, for 2011-2013, is now submitted for approval.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended to Council that:

1. the Corporate Parenting Strategy be approved;
2. all members of the Council sign up to the pledge included within the strategy;
3. partner organisations represented on the Children's Trust Board be requested to adopt the strategy and sign up to the pledge.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

The strategy is key to delivery of the corporate parenting responsibility of all members of the Council.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.

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SUMMARY

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The strategy was last updated in 2007. It has been subject to review during the past year and a revised strategy, for 2011-2013, is now submitted for approval (see appendix).

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended to Council that:

1. the Corporate Parenting Strategy be approved;
2. all members of the Council sign up to the pledge included within the strategy;
3. partner organisations represented on the Children's Trust Board be requested to adopt the strategy and sign up to the pledge.

DETAIL

1. The current Corporate Parenting Strategy was developed in 2007. MALAP (the Multi-Agency Looked After Children Partnership which oversees the strategy) identified the need for the strategy to be reviewed in order to reflect the current needs of children and young people in care and leaving care.
2. A revised strategy has been drafted, building on work undertaken during 2010 by the Children in Care Council to develop a new Pledge for looked after children (LAC). The strategy has been developed subsequently to take account of a number of other influences:
 - outcomes of the Year 1 EIT (Efficiency Improvement and Transformation) Review of Child Placements;
 - the findings of the Safeguarding / Looked After Children Inspection undertaken by Ofsted in September 2010;
 - the increasing number of looked after children and the overall profile of the LAC population;
 - evaluation of performance and outcomes for LAC by MALAP over the past two years.
3. The strategy has been subject to regular discussion and consultation over the past year, through MALAP, the Children in Care Council, the Children's Trust Management Team, and the Children's Trust Board.

4. Once adopted by the Council, all other partners to the Children's Trust Board (who are expected to share the corporate parenting responsibility) will be asked to endorse the strategy and to sign up to the Pledge.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5. Approval of the strategy does not have any direct financial implications. Resources required to deliver the strategy will need to be considered by the Council and other partners as part of their cycle of service improvement and budget planning. The strategy aims to ensure that the needs of looked after children are given due priority by all relevant agencies and that resources are targeted to address gaps in outcomes for looked after children as compared to their peers overall.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6. The local authority has a statutory role as the corporate parent for children and young people in care and leaving care. Implementation of the strategy, therefore, will help the Council to comply with this statutory requirement.

RISK ASSESSMENT

7. The lack of a current strategy presents risks in terms of:
 - potential failure to focus on improving outcomes for a vulnerable section of our community;
 - impact on external assessment of our performance;
 - ensuring partnership commitment to the needs of LAC.
8. Approval and delivery of the strategy is considered to be low risk.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

9. Approval and delivery of the strategy makes a significant contribution to the Children & Young People theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy, as well as impacting on the themes regarding Economic Regeneration, and Healthier Communities.

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

10. The Corporate Parenting Strategy will have a positive impact on equalities, by seeking to improve outcomes for children and young people who are vulnerable to poor outcomes. The key priorities identified in the strategy aim to reduce the gaps in outcomes frequently experienced by children and young people in care and care leavers, as compared to their peer groups generally.

CORPORATE PARENTING

11. This Corporate Parenting Strategy is central to the Council fulfilling its obligations as corporate parent.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

12. The strategy has been developed in conjunction with partners represented on MALAP, including elected members. Young people in care have been key consultees, via the Children in Care Council. Drafts of the strategy, as it developed, have been shared also with the Children's Trust Board and Management Team.

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Education related? Yes.

Background Papers

Appendix: Corporate Parenting Strategy 2011-2013 Final Draft for Cabinet.

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

The strategy impacts across all Councillors, and will be in the public domain once approved by Council.

Property

The report does not have implications in relation to the Council's property.