

# Corporate Parenting Board

A meeting of Corporate Parenting Board was held on Friday, 9th December, 2022.

**Present:** Cllr Carol Clark (Chair), Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Hilary Vickers,

**Officers:** Michael Henderson, Adele Moore, Jo Lee, David Willingham, Debra Farrow

**Also in attendance:** Cllr Lisa Evans

**Apologies:** Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Mick Moore, Cllr Sally Ann Watson

## **CPB 21/22**      **Declarations of Interest**

For transparency purposes Cllr Pauline Beall indicated that she was a member of the Fostering Panel.

## **CPB 22/22**      **Minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

## **CPB 23/22**      **Virtual School Update**

Members considered a report that provided a summary of work undertaken by the Virtual School and the achievements of the Children in our Care, whose education the Council supported and oversaw, for the academic year September 2021 to August 2022.

Members were provided with case studies describing interventions that had taken place to support children.

The report also provided information relating to specific issues, including:

- further details of Post COVID Support.
- The Virtual School Structure
- Virtual school pupil numbers and cohorts
- Key indicators relating to the Quality of Education for Children in Our Care
- Educational Outcomes
- Personal Education Plans
- Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed work
- Training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
- Challenge and support
- Child Engagement / Celebration

Discussion and key points:

- It was clear that COVID had had a significant impact on all children's education, particularly in early years and reception in terms of the impact on language and communication development. There were high attendance rates of Children in Our Care, however, there was a significant number of anxious school refusers. There has been training under the ATTEND Framework, which looked at ways of dealing with the barriers impacting on a young person's attendance.

- Members found the case studies particularly helpful and requested further updates, at future meetings.

-The training programme described in the report was very comprehensive and was available to governors. The training offer could be provided to Chairs of Boards of Governors, for onward circulation. The training available would assist governors with their challenge role.

RESOLVED that the report and discussion be noted and actioned as appropriate.

**CPB  
24/22**      **Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2021/22**

Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2021/22

Members considered a draft Annual report. The report provided an overview of the work undertaken by the Board for the year 2021/2022. It outlined progress against key Corporate Parenting priorities, as set out in the Council's Children and Care Leavers' action plan.

Discussion and key points:

- Members were pleased to note that interactions with the judiciary had been strengthened during the period of the report, with very positive comments from the courts and senior Judges on the robustness of care plans.

- It was suggested that terminology relating to carers e.g. connective carers, kinship carers etc could be standardised to avoid confusion.

- The improved support offer around Special Guardianship Orders was welcomed.

- Members noted that there was a small number of unaccompanied child asylum seeker placements had been made out of Borough. Some of these had been particularly positive including one placement with a sibling. It was noted that the Council had recently appointed a specialist social worker to support unaccompanied asylum seeker children.

- 'You spoke, we listened' was considered to be extremely important as positive stories and areas of concern could be better understood when heard directly from the children and young people.

- Work to strengthen the Council's commitment to Corporate Parenting would continue, together with the development of the 'No Limits' scheme to enable Council Members and Officers to give their time and/or make a financial contribution to support Children in our Care and Care Leavers.

-The Board strongly supported the delivery of the Council's Residential Homes Programme to ensure that it met the needs of children, addressed the sufficiency analysis and provided value for money. An update on the residential review was provided to the Board.

- Further embedding of the Mockingbird Model and the development of an action plan to prevent and reduce homelessness for 16/17-year-olds was considered particularly important, going forward.
- The gift of giving scheme response had been disappointing and numbers of donations were significantly less than the target. Work was being undertaken to encourage more donations.
- The promotion of Corporate Parenting and the 'No limits' scheme, with elected members and staff, was important. Work, in this regard, including development of a presentation, was underway.

RESOLVED that the Annual report be endorsed, and the discussion noted and actioned, as appropriate.

**CPB  
25/22**      **Children in Our Care Strategic Group - Presentation**

Members received a presentation on the Corporate Parenting Strategy, including details of progress against current priorities and the development of the new strategy 2023 – 2026, particularly in terms of consultation, aspirations, promotion of, and commitment to, Corporate Parenting.

Discussion and key points: -

- In order to develop the strategy, it would be important to consult with Corporate Parents to understand what they thought was important and what they wanted to achieve for their children. It was proposed that an email be sent to elected members ahead of a planned workshop, in January.
- It was suggested that a members' seminar on Corporate Parenting/Corporate Strategy would be beneficial.
- Talking with young people was vital to the development of the strategy.
- The Board agreed that the term Corporate Parent wasn't always understood, and consideration of another description may be helpful.
- Members were advised of a Stockton care leaver who wanted to speak to the Board about early interventions, avoiding children coming into care, and Corporate Parenting in general. The Board indicated its support for this.

RESOLVED that the presentation and discussion be noted and actioned as appropriate.

**CPB  
26/22**      **Forward Plan**

Members noted the Board's Forward Plan.