

## **AGENDA ITEM**

### **REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**13<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

### **REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

## **CORPORATE PARENTING PEER REVIEW**

### **SUMMARY**

This report provides an overview of the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Parenting Peer Review which is scheduled to be held during November/December 2023.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Corporate Parenting Board:

1. Considers the format of the peer review and endorses the proposed approach.

### **DETAIL**

#### **Background**

1. In June this year, a report was presented to Corporate Parenting Board which outlined the work taking place to refresh the strategic approach for children in our care and care leavers. It was identified in the March 2023 Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) that improvement was needed to:
  - strengthen the Borough's offer for care leavers
  - ensure that children in our care and care leavers have a voice
  - increase placement sufficiency, especially for foster care
  - ensure SMART actions in pathway plans
  - provide consistent and high quality personal adviser support for young people
  - consistently provide appropriate accommodation for care leavers
  - promote the care leavers offer not being well promoted
  - ensure greater participation

#### **Corporate Parenting Peer Review**

2. Whilst some initial work had commenced on the development of a new Corporate Parenting Strategy, this has been paused to allow a peer review to take place. It is intended that the peer review will provide an in-depth review of our current approach to corporate parenting and our ability to meet the needs of children in our care and care leavers whilst also providing a critical friend view of our strengths and opportunities for improvement. This will then inform the development of a set of strategic priorities and an implementation plan for rapid improvement.

3. The peer review will be undertaken in partnership with the LGA and will comprise of a self-assessment, followed by a bespoke, tailored package of support to address the issues identified.
4. The self-assessment process will be informed by members of the Corporate Parenting Board through a series of facilitated workshops to be held during November 2023. Children and young people's voice and lived experience will also inform the self-assessment, as will the perspectives of members of the Corporate Management Team. The themes of the self-assessment are as follows:
  - a) **Health and Wellbeing of Children in Care and Care Leavers** : to act in the best interests and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
  - b) **The Voice of Children in Care and Care Leavers** : to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings and to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
  - c) **Aspiration and Achievement** : to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority/ partners and to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
  - d) **Quality, Planning, Stability and Permanence** : for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
  - e) **Care Leavers and Transition** : to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living
  - f) **Governance and Board Effectiveness** : Strong corporate parenting means strong leadership, challenge and accountability at every level. How the governance framework facilitates effective corporate parenting is key. How the council fulfils its responsibilities and champions the needs and aspirations of Children in Care and Care Leavers.
5. Following completion of the self-assessment, a bespoke programme of support will be developed which will address the key issues identified and support the development of the Corporate Parenting Strategy priorities and approach.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6. There are no direct financial implications from the Peer Review.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7. There are no specific legal implications from the Peer Review.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

8. There are no additional risks to those included on the existing risk register.

## **COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

9. There are no specific legal implications from the Peer Review.

### **COUNCIL PLAN POLICY PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES**

10. The remit of the Corporate Parenting Board contributes to the key priority of: Making the borough a place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm.

### **CONSULTATION, INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS**

11. As outlined within the report, a self-assessment will be informed by members of the Corporate Parenting Board.

**Name of Contact Officer:** Elaine Redding  
**Post Title:** Interim Director of Children's Services  
**Email address:** [Elaine.Redding@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:Elaine.Redding@stockton.gov.uk)