

CABINET
9 JULY 2019

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL – REVISED ARRANGEMENTS

**Responsible Cabinet Member –
Councillor Paul Crudass, Children and Young People Portfolio**

Responsible Director – Suzanne Joyner, Director of Children and Adults Services

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider revised arrangements for the Corporate Parenting Panel and to update the Panel's Terms of Reference accordingly.

Summary

2. At the request of the young people, Corporate Parenting Panel Members held a workshop at their meeting held on 2 October 2018 with the aim of reviewing how the Corporate Parenting Panel worked and to examine how to re-shape the Panel in line with young people's views.
3. Following the workshop members considered the feedback shared at each group during the workshop and agreed the following changes to be made to how the existing Panel operates.

Recommendation

4. Cabinet is requested to approve the proposed arrangements for formal and informal meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel and the subsequent amendments to each of the Terms of References appended to the submitted report (see **Appendices 1 and 2**)

Reasons

5. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons:
 - (a) The role of the Corporate Parent is a statutory responsibility of all Members of Darlington Borough Council regardless of political alignment
 - (b) There is a need to ensure that corporate parenting responsibilities are fulfilled in an open and transparent manner
 - (c) Members need to be assured that a high standard of provision and service to children looked after is maintained

- (d) Members are aware of the work the Corporate Parenting Panel undertakes on the wider Council's behalf.

Suzanne Joyner
Director of Children and Adults Services

Background Papers

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel meeting held on 29 January 2019.

Allison Hill : Extension 5997

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder.
Health and Well Being	This report has implications for the Health and Well Being for the residents of Darlington.
Carbon Impact	There are no carbon impact implications in this report.
Diversity	There are no issues relating to Diversity which this report needs to address.
Wards Affected	This report does not impact on a particular Ward.
Groups Affected	This report impacts on Children and Young People within Darlington
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's Budget or Policy Framework.
Key Decision	This is not a Key Decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an Urgent Decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The report contributes to the Sustainable Community Strategy in a number of ways through the involvement of Members in contributing to the delivery of the five themes.
Efficiency	This report does not identify specific efficiency savings.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	The revised arrangements for Corporate Parenting Panel will positively impact on LAC and Care Leavers, and is being revised in line with their wishes and views. It is anticipated that the voice of LAC and Care Leavers will be heard more than previously, which will aid Members and Officer to fulfil their role as Corporate Parents more effectively.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

6. At a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 2 October 2018 a workshop was held and members of the Panel, including the young people of the Children in Care Council, known as the 'Darlo Care Crew', discussed how to re-shape the Panel.
7. The venue, frequency and length of each Corporate Parenting Panel, how the agenda should be set and who should lead the agenda, who should Chair the Panel, and who the members of the Panel should include were discussed.
8. During the workshop the young people also suggested ways that would allow each member of the Panel to begin developing relationships with other members of the Panel away from the formality of the current meeting arrangements.
9. At the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 29 January 2019 members considered a report detailing the feedback shared at each group during the workshop.
10. The current constitution of the Corporate Parenting Panel, approved by Cabinet at its meeting held on 6 November 2012, has been amended to reflect the proposal changes to the current arrangements for formal and informal meetings and to also update the legislation relating to Looked After Children. (**Appendix 1 and 2**).

Director of Children of Adults Services' Comments

11. It is positive to see that our Corporate Parenting Panel has been reshaped by our young people, with their thoughts and ideas at the centre of our approach. I fully support the recommendations.

Legal Implications

12. Where a child is looked after by a local authority, Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 requires the authority to safeguard and promote the child's welfare. This includes a particular emphasis on promoting his or her educational achievement. They are also required, as far as is reasonable, to make use of universal services available to all children. This responsibility is placed upon the local authority as a whole, not any individual or department, and has more recently been reinforced by the Children and Young Persons Act 2008.
13. Under section 27 Children Act 1989, a local authority may ask certain other public bodies, including Health, to assist it in fulfilling these duties. That other body is required to assist, unless this would unduly prejudice the exercise of their own functions.
14. These duties apply in relation to all looked after children including for example those who are accommodated by the local authority with the agreement of their parents (section 20 Children Act 1989) and children who have been returned to the care of their parents while remaining subject to a care order.

15. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced Corporate Parenting principles. These principles were introduced to ensure all staff and departments consider the impact of their work on children and young people for whom the Local Authority is the corporate parent, as well as on those under 25 who were previously in the care of the Local Authority.

APPENDIX 1

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL – FORMAL MEETINGS

Purpose

The role of the Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) is to ensure that the Council is fulfilling its duties towards Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers corporately and in partnerships with other statutory agencies.

Responsibilities

- (a) Take an overview of the Councils and partner agencies responsibilities towards children and young people in care and Care Leavers
- (b) Monitor performance of services for children for whom we are corporate parents, including care leavers and receive information on regulation 44 visit and inspections of children's homes within the borough
- (c) To engage and listen to the views of children, Care Leavers and their carers for whom the Council is the parent
- (d) Maintain a strategic overview of all developments, plans, policies and strategies for children whom the Council is a corporate parent and make appropriate recommendations for action
- (e) To act as the governing body for the Virtual School for Looked After children and Care Leavers.

Membership Protocols

Membership shall include the Cabinet Member with the Portfolio for Children and Young People; one Member of the Conservative Group; one Liberal Democrat Member; one Independent Group Member; the Managing Director; the Virtual Head; and the Director of Children and Adults Services.

(NOTE - Members of the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers be invited to attend formal meetings and attendance at their discretion).

Chair (and Co-chairing)

The Chair shall be the Director of Children and Adults Services. The young people to alternate the Co-chairing of the Corporate Parenting Panel meetings and mentors for each young person be identified to support them in their role and that training be identified for the young people to assist them with chairing skills.

Meeting Frequency, Time and Venue

Formal meetings of the Panel be held every six months, to commence at 5.00 pm at the Town Hall for a maximum of 2 hours. Formal Meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be formally agreed as part of the Municipal Calendar.

Nominees

Elected Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel have a named substitute to be approved by Council.

Other Relevant Information

- (a) The quorum for this Panel shall be three, including one Elected Member.
- (b) Formal meetings to be themed and a forward plan be developed.
- (c) All reports to be discussed at informal meetings will also be presented as a power point to assist the young people.
- (d) The Children in Care Council examine ways to include the views of all Looked After Children and Care Leavers at formal meetings.
- (e) Minutes of the formal meetings be taken and the Participation Officers to further develop these Minutes for the young people.
- (f) Celebratory and social events be agreed in principle and the Participation Officers examine how this can be carried out.
- (g) The Participation Officers to meet with the young people prior to each meeting and provide a summary of each of the reports being presented in a user friendly format for them.
- (h) The Leader shall be kept informed of the work of the Panel and undertake an arbitration role if/when required.
- (i) Any items of concern to be referred to the relevant Director, Scrutiny or Cabinet Member, as required.
- (j) All Elected Members of the Council to receive mandatory training on the Corporate responsibilities for all Councillors.

APPENDIX 2

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL – INFORMAL MEETINGS

Purpose

To engage and listen to the views of children, young people and their carers for whom the Council is the corporate parent.

Responsibilities

- (a) To provide a forum for children and young people in care and care leavers to participate and influence policy and have an opportunity to talk about their experiences of the services they have received in an informal environment
- (b) To ensure that positive experiences are maintained and lessons learnt and changes made in areas that require improvement
- (c) To meet with children for whom the Council is a corporate parent on a regular basis and celebrate their achievements
- (d) To ensure that leisure, cultural, further education and employment opportunities are offered and taken up by our Looked After Children and Care Leavers
- (e) To strengthen the links between the Multi-Agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP) and the Corporate Parenting Panel, and to invite outside organisations and other relevant agencies ie Health to meetings when the theme is appropriate.

Membership Protocols

Membership shall include the Cabinet Member with the Portfolio for Children and Young People; one Member of the Conservative Party; one Liberal Democrat Member; one Independent Group Member; the Managing Director; the Virtual Head; and the Director of Children and Adults Services.

(NOTE - Members of the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers be invited to attend informal meetings).

Chair (and Co-chairing)

The Chair shall be the Director of Children and Adults Services. The young people to alternate the Co-chairing of the Corporate Parenting Panel meetings and mentors for each young person be identified to support them in their role and that training be identified for the young people to assist them with chairing skills.

Meeting Frequency, Time and Venue

Informal meetings of the Panel to be held every two months prior to the formal meetings prior to the formal meetings, to commence at 5.00 pm and held at alternative venues which are 'young person friendly'.

Nominees

Elected Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel have a named substitute to be approved by Council.

Other Relevant Information

- (a) There be no quorum for informal meetings
- (b) Informal meetings to be themed and a forward plan be developed.
- (c) Informal meetings to be used to inform the formal meetings and the Children in Care Council given the opportunity to influence the agenda of the informal meetings.
- (d) Informal meetings to take the form of a casual meeting with a themed power point presentation to stimulate conversation.
- (e) All reports to be discussed at formal meetings will also be presented as a power point to assist the young people.
- (f) The Children in Care Council examine ways to include the views of all Looked After Children and Care Leavers at the informal meetings.
- (k) Action points be recorded at informal meetings and the Participation Officers to further develop these action points for the young people.
- (g) The Participation Officers to meet with the young people prior to each meeting and provide a summary of each of the reports being presented in a user friendly format for them.
- (h) Celebratory and social events be agreed in principle and the Participation Officers examine how this can be carried out.
- (i) The Leader shall be kept informed of the work of the Panel and undertake an arbitration role if/when required.
- (j) Any items of concern to be referred to the relevant Director, Scrutiny or Cabinet Member, as required.