

Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 12 January 2021

Report Title: Corporate Parenting Committee Annual Report 2019-20

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Kathryn Flavell – Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

Senior Officer: Mark Palethorpe – Executive Director (People)

1. Report Summary

- 1.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee Annual Report details the progress and achievements over 2019-20 against the five pledges the Council has made to cared for children and care leavers in the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2018-20. It also sets out the priorities and terms of reference for the Committee for 2020-21.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to
 - Endorse the Corporate Parenting Committee Annual Report 2019-20 as set out at Appendix 1; and
 - Endorse the Committee's revised terms of reference at Appendix 1 within the Annual Report.

3. Reason for Recommendations

- 3.1. The Constitution sets out a requirement for the Corporate Parenting Committee to report to the Council's Cabinet on at least an annual basis.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 It could be decided that the Corporate Parenting Committee no longer needs to produce an annual report or presents this to another Committee, but this would require a change in the Constitution. The Annual Report provides an opportunity for Cabinet to review the effectiveness of this advisory committee.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee, established in May 2016, is a cross-party advisory committee appointed by the Cabinet. It is currently comprised of 11 members who are appointed on a politically proportionate basis and nominated by the political groups. There is currently one vacancy.
- 5.2 The purpose of the Corporate Parenting Committee as an advisory committee to the Cabinet is to ensure that the Council effectively discharges its role as Corporate Parent for all children and young people in care and care leavers from 0-25 years of age and holds partners to account for the discharge of their responsibilities.
- 5.3 The Corporate Parenting Committee Annual Report 2019-20 at Appendix 1 sets out the work of the Committee and progress against the Corporate Parenting Strategy over the past year.
- 5.4 The report references the progress in year in commissioning arrangements to open four residential childrens homes in Cheshire East. The first home opened in January followed shortly by the second and the subsequent two homes in mid 2020. Success has been achieved in providing excellent quality care to children and being able to support them to live in their communities and there have also been some challenges in sustaining adequate staffing levels.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1 Legal Implications

- 6.1.1 There is a range of legislation and statutory guidance that sets out the role of the local authority in respect of cared for children and care leavers. There are statutory obligations and guidance in relation to the Local Authority's role as Corporate Parent in the Children Acts 1989 and 2004; the Children and Young People Act 2008; the Children and Families Act 2014; and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- 6.1.2 In particular, the Children and Social Work Act 2017 defines, for the first time in law, the role of corporate parents, in addition to expanding and extending support for care leavers.

6.2 Finance Implications

6.2.1 Bringing children into the care of the local authority represents a significant cost for the Council and growth in the base budget has been approved in recent years based on the increasing levels of demand and complexity of need as well as the priority of achieving appropriate outcomes.

6.3 Policy Implications

6.3.1 As a corporate parent, all Council policies should consider the impact on cared for children and care leavers.

6.4 Equality Implications

6.4.1 All children and young people have a right to be treated equally and have their disability, gender, ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic needs met. As corporate parents for children and young people in care and care leavers, it is essential that the Council is able to demonstrate that it considers equality implications in all decisions made in relation to cared for children and care leavers. Cared for children and care leavers can be a vulnerable group because of their experiences so we need to ensure they are supported to achieve the same outcomes as their peers as they can experience disadvantages and are at risk of poorer outcomes.

6.5 Human Resources Implications

6.5.1 The number of children in care and care leavers has implications for staffing, both within Children's Social Care and enabling services.

6.6 Risk Management Implications

6.6.1 Cared for children and care leavers are a vulnerable group for whom there are a number of risks, including poor outcomes in education and training, health, safeguarding and transition into adulthood. The Corporate Parenting Strategy outlines plans to mitigate these risks.

6.7 Rural Communities Implications

6.7.1 There are no direct implications for rural communities.

6.8 Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

6.8.1 The Corporate Parenting Annual Report, aligned to the Corporate Parenting Strategy, sets out implications for cared for children and young people and priorities for 2019-20.

6.9 Public Health Implications

6.9.1 Cared for children and care leavers are more at risk of poor health outcomes. Health services need to be targeted to ensure that they meet the needs of this group of children and young people.

6.10 Climate Change Implications

6.10.1 There are no climate change implications.

7 Ward Members Affected

7.1 Although the number of Cheshire East cared for children and young people is relatively small, they are a vulnerable cohort, who live across Cheshire East and in other local authority areas.

8 Consultation & Engagement

8.1 Key stakeholders, including cared for children and young people and care leavers, are regularly consulted on the work of the Corporate Parenting Committee and Council and partner services. The five pledges within the Corporate Parenting Strategy are based on what young people told us matters most to them.

9 Access to Information

9.1 The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2018-20 and pledges can be found on the following link:

<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/care-and-support-for-children/services-from-childrens-social-care/cared-for-children/cared-for-children.aspx>

10 Contact Information

10.1 Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

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