

DECISION REPORT

Corporate Parenting Committee

Date of Meeting: 30 March 2021

Report Title: Proposal on changes to the frequency of the Committee

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

Senior Officer: Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report proposes that from the new financial year at the beginning of April 2021, the Corporate Parenting Committee is held on a quarterly basis.
- 1.2. Currently the Committee is held bi-monthly. It is proposed that a quarterly Committee could retain the same amount of business, therefore this would be a more efficient use of resources. Holding the Committee quarterly would allow the Committee to be aligned to quarterly performance reporting therefore every Committee could be informed by the latest performance information.

2. Recommendation/s

- 2.1. Corporate Parenting Committee is asked to:
 - Note the contents of the report and consider the proposal.
 - Endorse the decision to hold the Committee on a quarterly basis within office hours from the new financial year in April 2021.
 - Review and endorse the changes to the terms of reference.

3. Reasons for Recommendation/s

3.1. It is proposed that a quarterly Committee has two benefits:

- The Committee could retain the same amount of business as it currently carries out on a bi-monthly basis, therefore this would be a more efficient use of resources.
- Holding the Committee quarterly would allow the Committee to be aligned to quarterly performance reporting therefore every Committee could be informed by the latest performance information.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1. The Corporate Parenting Committee could remain bi-monthly for 2021-22. This arrangement is currently effective but does not offer the two additional benefits outlined above. Recently, meetings have not needed the full two hours to cover the items on the agenda which suggests we could reduce the frequency of meetings without impacting on the business of the Committee.

5. Background

5.1. The Corporate Parenting Committee is currently an advisory group to the Cabinet.

5.2. On 19 November 2020, Cheshire East Council decided to adopt a committee system of governance. The committee system will commence from the Council's Annual General Meeting on the 12 May 2021. Under the new system, the Corporate Parenting Committee will be a sub committee of the Children and Families Committee.

5.3. The move to these new arrangements prompted a review of the Corporate Parenting Committee terms of reference and frequency.

6. Proposal to move to quarterly meetings

6.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee is responsible for ensuring 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. It holds services and partners to account for the discharge of their responsibilities.

6.2 A proposed forward plan for quarterly meetings is included in the Appendix. This covers all the areas and reports currently received by the Committee,

therefore under quarterly meetings the Committee would still carry out the same amount of business.

- 6.3 Committee meetings are currently held between 4.00-6.00pm. The timing was originally agreed to allow children and young people to attend the meeting outside of school/ college hours. Young people have since chosen to inform the Committee through meeting as a Shadow Committee, so going forwards meetings can be held within usual office hours in line with other committees.
- 6.4 If Committee meetings were moved to being held quarterly for three hours, this would provide the same amount of time per year as holding bi-monthly meetings for two hours. When meetings return to being held face to face, this will support more effective use of resources as it will reduce travel. Reducing the number of meetings also reduces the amount of administration time outside of the meetings which is needed to support them to run effectively.
- 6.5 Recently, meetings have not taken the full two hours assigned to cover all the areas on the agenda, so it is anticipated that the proposed work plan could be comfortably delivered within quarterly meetings which are planned for three hours.
- 6.6 Holding the Committee quarterly would allow the Committee to be aligned to quarterly performance reporting, therefore every Committee could be informed by the latest performance information. Bi-monthly meetings cannot be aligned in the same way so currently some meetings are unable to be informed by performance information and sometimes performance information can be outdated when it is received by the Committee due when meetings fall.

7. Implications of the Recommendations

7.1. Policy Implications

- 7.1.1. Through aligning meetings with performance information, this proposal aims to effectively support the Corporate Parenting Committee to carry out its responsibilities and to put cared for children, young people and care leavers at the centre of Council policy and decision making.

7.2. Legal Implications

- 7.2.1. The Corporate Parenting Committee, within the Council's new committee system of governance, will be a sub committee of the Children and Families Committee.

7.2.2. The proposals adhere to relevant legislative requirements including that, as required by Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the proposed committee will appoint members on a politically proportionate basis.

7.2.3. There are no other specific legal implications.

7.3. Financial Implications

7.3.1. The proposal to move to quarterly meetings should allow us to use resources more effectively by streamlining administration outside of the meeting and reducing travel.

7.4. Equality Implications

7.4.1. There are no equality implications.

7.5. Human Resources Implications

7.5.1. The proposal to move to quarterly meetings should allow us to use resources more effectively by streamlining administration outside of the meeting and reducing travel.

7.6. Risk Management Implications

7.6.1. As with other Committees, additional meetings would be able to be scheduled if needed so there are no significant risks to consider as a result of this proposal.

7.7. Rural Communities Implications

7.7.1. There are no direct rural communities' implications of this report.

7.8. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

7.8.1. The Committee would remain focused on outcomes for cared for and care experienced children and young people. This focus would be supported by receiving performance information at each meeting.

7.9. Public Health Implications

7.9.1. There are no public health implications.

7.10. Climate Change Implications

7.10.1. When meetings return to being held face to face, a reduction in the number of meetings will reduce the amount of travel required which will contribute to reducing the Council's impact on climate change.

8. Ward Members Affected

8.1. Applicable to all wards.

9. Consultation & Engagement

9.1. My Voice, our cared for children council, continue to meet virtually and will continue to inform the Committee through their Shadow Committee.

10. Access to Information

10.1. None.

11. Contact Information

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

Name: Kerry Birtles
Job Title: Director of Children's Social Care
Email: Kerry.Birtles@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Corporate Parenting Committee – Proposed Forward Plan for Quarterly Meetings

June 2021

Item	Lead Officer
Standing items	
Update from the Shadow Committee	HoS Cared for Children and Care Leavers and Chair of the Committee
Update from members on engagement activity	All members who have carried out engagement activity in the quarter
Update report on progress against all areas – to include the results from the cared for children survey and foster carer fortnight	HoS Cared for Children and Care Leavers
Corporate parenting scorecard Q4	HoS Cared for Children and Care Leavers
Specific items	
Corporate parenting annual report (and review of terms of reference where relevant)	HoS Cared for Children and Care Leavers and Chair of the Committee
Refresh of the Corporate Parenting Strategy	HoS Cared for Children and Care Leavers
Review of the Local Offer	Service Manager and Team Manager for Care Leavers
Care Leavers Update – including the Care Leavers Annual Report and Care Leavers Survey	Service Manager and Team Manager for Care Leavers

September 2021

Item	Lead Officer
Standing items	
Update from the Shadow Committee	HoS Cared for Children and Care Leavers and Chair of the Committee
Update from members on engagement activity	All members who have carried out engagement activity in the quarter
Update report on progress against all areas	HoS Cared for Children and Care Leavers
Corporate parenting scorecard Q1	HoS Cared for Children and Care Leavers
Specific items	
IRO Annual Report	Service Manager Cared for IROs
Children's Rights Annual Report (Advocacy and Independent Visitors)	Manager Children's Society
Adoption Annual Report	Service Manager Adoption
Adoption Panel Report	Service Manager Adoption

December 2021

Item	Lead Officer
Standing items	
Update from the Shadow Committee	HoS Cared for Children and Care Leavers and Chair of the Committee
Update from members on engagement activity	All members who have carried out engagement activity in the quarter
Update report on progress against all areas	HoS Cared for Children and Care Leavers
Corporate parenting scorecard Q2	HoS Cared for Children and Care Leavers
Specific items	
Virtual School Headteachers Annual Report	HoS SEND and Virtual School Headteacher
Health of cared for children annual report 2020-21 and mid year report	Designated Nurse Cared for Children
Fostering service annual report	HoS Children with Disabilities and Fostering
Fostering Panel Report	HoS Children with Disabilities and Fostering

March 2022

Item	Lead Officer
Standing items	
Update from the Shadow Committee	HoS Cared for Children and Care Leavers and Chair of the Committee
Update from members on engagement activity	All members who have carried out engagement activity in the quarter
Update report on progress against all areas	HoS Cared for Children and Care Leavers
Corporate parenting scorecard Q3	HoS Cared for Children and Care Leavers
Specific items	
Cared for survey results	HoS Cared for Children and Care Leavers
Cared for Sufficiency Update	HoS Children's Commissioning and HoS Cared for Children and Care Leavers
Fostering recruitment update and plans for Foster Carer Fortnight	HoS Children with Disabilities and Fostering
Adoption 6 monthly report	Service Manager Adoption