

Children and Families Committee

Date of Meeting:	6 October 2021
Report Title:	Corporate Parenting Committee Annual Report 2020-21
Report of:	Ged Rowney, Director of Children's Services
Report Reference No:	CF/14/21-22
Ward(s) Affected:	All

1. Executive Summary

1.1. The Corporate Parenting Committee Annual Report details the progress and achievements over 2020-21 against the five pledges the Council has made to cared for children and care leavers in the Corporate Parenting Strategy. It also sets out the Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Committee and the priorities for 2021-22.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Children and Families Committee is recommended to:
- Endorse the Corporate Parenting Committee Annual Report 2020-21 as set out at Appendix 1.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. As an advisory committee to the Children and Families Committee, one of the roles of the Corporate Parenting Committee is to act as advocate for cared for children and care leavers, ensuring that their needs are addressed through key plans, policies and strategies throughout the Council and its commissioned services.
- 3.2. The Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Committee included within the Constitution set out a requirement for the Corporate Parenting Committee to report to the Children and Families Committee 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, but the Annual Report provides an opportunity for the Children and Families Committee to review the effectiveness of this advisory Committee and the impact on outcomes for cared for children and care leavers.

5. Background

- 5.1. The Corporate Parenting Committee, established in May 2016, is a cross-party advisory committee. During 2020-21 there were 11 members with 1 vacancy. Members were appointed on a politically proportionate basis and nominated by the political groups.
- 5.2. The purpose of the Corporate Parenting Committee as an advisory committee to the Children and Families Committee 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 to hold partners to account for the discharge of their responsibilities.
- 5.3. The Corporate Parenting Committee Annual Report 2020-21 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 also references the impact of Covid-19 on service delivery, the challenges faced and how these have been overcome to ensure our cared for children and young people and care leavers have continued to be supported throughout the pandemic.

6. Consultation and Engagement

- 6.1. 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.

7. Implications

7.1. Legal

- 7.1.1. 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.

- 7.1.2. 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.

7.2. Finance

- 7.2.1. 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.

7.3. Policy

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

7.4. Equality

- 7.4.1. 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.

7.5. Human Resources

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

7.6. Risk Management

- 7.6.1. 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.

7.7. Rural Communities

- 7.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

7.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

7.8.1. The Corporate Parenting Annual Report, aligned to the Corporate Parenting Strategy, sets out implications for cared for children and young people and priorities for 2020-21.

7.9. Public Health

7.9.1. 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.

7.10. Climate Change

7.10.1. There are no climate change implications.

Access to Information	
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Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Corporate Parenting Committee Annual Report 2020-21
Background Papers:	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