

## **Council Meeting – 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023**

### **Future Governance of Corporate Parenting Board**

#### **Forward plan:**

#### **1. Aim**

- 1.1 To implement new governance arrangements for the Corporate Parenting Board de-establishing it as a Council Committee meeting.

#### **2. Summary**

- 2.1 The Corporate Parenting Board plays a key role in supporting the Council in meeting its legal responsibilities to the children in our care and those who have left our care. The Corporate Parenting Board has sustained significant progress and provides strategic direction to ensure children and young people are effectively supported. The new proposals aim to build on the success of the board whilst creating scope for greater participation of children and young people and to enable consideration of sensitive information.

#### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1 To de-establish the Corporate Parenting Board as a Council Committee Meeting.
- 3.2 To note the revised Corporate Parenting Board Terms of Reference (appendix 1).
- 3.3 To note that Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee has existing responsibilities for scrutinising services to children in care and care leavers.

#### **4. Report detail - know**

- 4.1 The purpose of the Corporate Parenting Board is to assist the Council fulfil its legal obligations and responsibilities towards children in care and leaving care by providing strategic direction to ensure they are effectively supported to reach their full potential. The board is currently organised

as a formal Council committee meeting, which means that the functioning and business of the board is in the public domain.

- 4.2 Following a full Ofsted inspection in 2017 Walsall's Corporate Parenting Board became a formal committee meeting. Since this date there has been significant progress and development with the Board with good attendance from members, officer and advisers. There is evidence of the Board successfully overseeing the implementation of the Corporate Parenting strategy and action plan. The Board has effectively advocated on behalf of children and young people in care and those who are care experienced.
- 4.3 Children Services are in a different position to where they were in 2017 with the Inspecting Local Authority Childrens Services (ILAC) inspection in 2021 judgement of 'good'. This inspection recognised the improved governance arrangements in place supporting the work of children's services.
- 4.4 Local Authorities across the Country have different governance arrangements in place for Corporate Parenting Boards where some are held as committee meetings; others are held as Children's Services Meeting with oversight and scrutiny from Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Council when required.
- 4.5 Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee already has existing responsibility for scrutinising services responsible for children in care and care leavers.
- 4.6 The benefit of the Corporate Parenting Board being de-established as a committee is that it recognises the sensitivity of matters to be discussed at Corporate Parenting Board are not always suitable to be in the public domain. Moreover, it will enable the Board to continue to develop children and young people's participation and engagement with the Board.
- 4.7 By de-establishing the Board, the meeting will no longer be bound by access to information rules. As such whilst the format of the Board and terms of reference will remain broadly similar, it will enable greater opportunity to have open dialogue with children and young people in order to ensure that services are aligned to their needs, where possible.
- 4.8 Under the new proposed arrangements the Corporate Parenting Board will continue to have a continued focus on outcomes being achieved by children in care. Officers and partners will continue to be held to account in respect of outcomes being achieved. Key reports including the Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan, Corporate Parenting Annual Report and Corporate Parenting Dataset will continue to be considered at Corporate Parenting Board and reference to the Corporate Parenting Annual Report will continue to be delivered to Council as part of the Portfolio Holders annual briefing.

- 4.9 Please read the proposed revised Terms of Reference for Corporate Parenting Board as set out in the appendices.

## **5.0 Consultation**

- 5.1 The proposal to de-establish the Corporate Parenting Board as a committee meeting was considered at Corporate Parenting Board on the 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2023 and this proposal was supported by all members. Members of the Board and the partner advisers present were in agreement with the proposal. It was noted that Children Service's Overview and Scrutiny Committee is able to scrutinise services delivered to Children in our Care and Care Leavers within its existing remit.
- 5.2 A short life working group was established comprising of members and officers to review the revised Terms of Reference. The attached Terms of Reference have been developed drawing on national best practice, in consultation with Councillor Elson, Portfolio holder for Children's Services, Councillor Jukes, Shadow Portfolio holder for Children's Services and Councillor Worrall.
- 5.3 Alongside this there has been consultation completed with Walsall's Children in Care Council who have worked with us to develop the proposed connectivity between the children in care forums and the Corporate Parenting Board.

## ***Council Plan priorities***

- 6.1. The Corporate Parenting Board contributes to several of the Council Corporate Plan priorities:

a) People

As Corporate Parents we work with children in our care and young people leaving care to ensure they have increased independence, improved health, and can positively contribute to their communities.

b) Children

Corporate Parenting Board will have oversight of the Council to ensure that the right support is in place so that children can have the best start and are safe from harm, are happy, healthy and learning well

## ***Financial implications***

- 6.2 No financial considerations

### ***Legal implications***

- 6.3 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 sets out corporate parenting principles which underpin the Corporate Parenting Board. There are no new legal implications from this proposal.

### ***Procurement Implications/Social Value***

- 6.4 No procurement implications

### ***Property implications***

- 6.5 There are no property implications

### ***Health and wellbeing implications***

- 6.6 The Corporate Parenting Board will need to have due consideration of ensuring the Local Authority act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people in care and those that have left care.

### ***Reducing Inequalities***

- 6.7 Corporate Parenting Board seeks to secure improvements in the equality of services, which, when achieved will have a positive impact on our most vulnerable children, young people and their families

### ***Staffing implications***

- 6.8 As the Board will no longer be a committee the business support of the Board will move to Children Services. This will be undertaken by existing members of staff and will not require additional staffing resource.

### ***Climate Impact***

- 6.9 There are no climate impact implications to consider

## **7. Decide**

The Annual General Meeting to consider if they support the proposals to de-establish Corporate Parenting Board as a Council Committee Meeting or whether they would advocate for Corporate Parenting Board remaining as a Committee Meeting.

## **8. Respond**

For the Annual Council Meeting to consider and if appropriate agree the proposal.

## **9. Review**

If the new proposals are accepted then oversight, scrutiny and review of the Corporate Parenting Board would sit with Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. At the first meeting of the Committee the revised Terms of Reference will be considered.

## **Background papers**

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Signed



Sally Rowe  
Executive Director Childrens & Customer  
11<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Signed



Cllr Elson  
Portfolio holder  
19<sup>th</sup> May 2023

### **Terms of reference for the Corporate Parenting Board**

#### **Purpose of the Corporate Parenting Board:**

Corporate Parenting” is the collective responsibility of the council to prioritise the needs of children in care and to seek for them the same outcomes any good parent would want for their own children.

The Corporate Parenting Board provides the necessary overview and leadership that drives an ambitious and multi-agency approach to improving outcomes for children in care and care experienced young people.

The Corporate Parenting Board assists the Council in continuing to fulfil its legal obligations and responsibilities towards looked after children and children leaving care, under the Children Act 1989 Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

The Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) acts strategically to ensure that children in care and care experienced young people are effectively supported to reach their potential through the provision of excellent parenting, high quality education, opportunities to develop their talents and skills, and provide effective support for their transition to adulthood.

In order to undertake these functions well the board must work in a way that ensures the voice of children and young people influences its decision making.

The Board has a responsibility to monitor and review the quality and effectiveness of services for looked after children delivered by Corporate Parents; the council, partner agencies and commissioned services; to ensure that every child and young person looked after is supported to be safe, happy, healthy and to achieve their full potential.

#### **Corporate Parenting Principles:**

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduces seven Corporate Parenting Principles, that local authorities in England must have regard to whenever they exercise a function in relation to Children in Care or Care Experienced Young People.

The Corporate Parenting Principles should shape the mindset and culture of every part of a local authority in how it carries out all its functions in relation to Children in Care and Care Experience Young People. They describe the behaviours and attitudes expected of the Council when they are acting as any good parent would do by supporting, encouraging and guiding their children to lead healthy, rounded and fulfilled lives.

The principles intend to ensure that all councils have high ambitions for the children in their care. This will assist in securing that such children and young people are not placed at significant disadvantage when compared with the support a non-looked after child may receive from their family.

The 7 Principles are:

- I. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those Children in Our Care and Care Leavers.
- II. To encourage those Children in Our Care and Care Leavers to express their views, wishes and feelings.
- III. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those Children In Our Care and Care Leavers.
- IV. To help those Children in Our Care and Care Leavers gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
- V. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those Children in Our Care and Care Leavers.
- VI. For those Children in Our Care and Care Leavers to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- VII. To prepare those Children in Our Care and Care Leavers for adulthood and independent living.

**To meet this purpose, the Corporate Parenting Board has the following aims and objectives:**

1. To make sure that the whole council and relevant partner agencies commit to excellent standards of corporate parenting.
2. To have high expectations and stable relationships for all Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People.
3. Create opportunities to ensure that the voice of the child and young person in care and leaving care influences both policy and the services that they receive, and that young people are engaged with any action intended to develop and improve services or to recruit key staff members.
4. To set high aspirations and seek improved long-term outcomes for Children in Care, Care Experience Young People and their families – for their happiness; well-being; educational success; pathway into adulthood and future prospects.
5. Lead on the development, review and promotion of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and associated action plan across the Council and involve partners in order to improve services and achieve good outcomes for children in care and care leavers.
6. To receive reports on relevant plans, strategies, qualitative and quantitative information about services and ensure that they make explicit the contribution that they make to targets agreed for improvement, including the review the progress of the Corporate

Parenting Strategy with regards to Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People.

7. To consider the outcomes of regulatory visits and inspection reports on provision for Children in Care and Care Experience Young People and to receive regular reports on:
  - a) Walsall Council's residential, adoption and fostering services.
  - b) Education of children in care
  - c) Independent Reviewing Report
  - d) Provision for children and young people leaving care, housing and education, employment and training for Care Experience Young People.
8. To celebrate the achievements of children in care, their carers and Care Experience Young People.
9. Champion the provision of Council based work placements and apprenticeships for Children in Care and Care Experience Young People.
10. To develop an informed view of Walsall Council's provision and services through a programme of well-planned visits and feedback from Board members, including visits to children's homes.
11. To raise awareness across the Council and the wider community by promoting the role of all Members as Corporate Parents and the Council as a large corporate family with key responsibilities.

### **Governance and Accountability**

- The Board does not have formal decision-making powers and is not a formal Committee of the Council, however, can make recommendations that actions are undertaken.
- The Board will be accountable to Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee as required.
- The Board will meet at least 6 times a year at the Council House or as otherwise agreed. The frequency of meetings can be changed by resolution of the Board or by the Chair in consultation with the Lead Officer.

### **Quorum**

The quorum for a Board meeting shall be at least one quarter of the membership of the Board, including substitutes. The quorum must include at least three elected members of the Board are present.

### **How will Young People Contribute to the Board**

Each meeting of the Board will have a standing agenda item to enable children and young people to provide feedback and suggested actions in relation to reports being considered by the Board. This will also provide an opportunity to



update the Board on the work completed by the CiCC and Care Experienced Young People's Forum and any issues or themes they wish to bring to the attention of the Board.

In addition, child-led sessions shall be scheduled in between formal meetings (no less than 3 times a year) to provide further opportunities for challenge, discussion, creativity and innovation. These additional sessions should contribute to the strategic direction for services and help fulfil the functions of the Board.

## **Membership**

**The Board shall consist of 7 members as follows: -**

- The Board will be chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Children's Social Care.
- Portfolio Holder Children's Services.
- The Chair of Children's Scrutiny Board
- The Chair of Children's Education Scrutiny Board (invited as an observer)
- Proportional representation from Parties
- Children and young people in care and care leavers.
- All the above members of the Board will be entitled to vote and the Chair will have a casting vote.
- The Board may co-opt representatives, without voting rights, from relevant services involved in corporate parenting:

The Board will receive advice and reports from the following as and when required:

- Executive Director of Children's Service
- Director of Children's Social Care.
- Director of Customer Journey – Housing
- Social Housing Providers - themed attendance Walsall Housing Group?
- Walsall's Children in Care Council / Children and Young People's Champions
- Children's Advocacy and Independent Visitor Services
- Health
  - Designated Nurse for Children in Care – Integrated Care Board
  - Named Nurse for Children in Care – Walsall Health Trust
  - Black Country Mental Health Trust
- The Head of Virtual School for Children in Care
- Leisure Services – item specific
- West Midlands Police – item specific

All nominated representatives will be expected to attend each meeting of the Board or make appropriate arrangements for a substitute to attend.

## **Review of Terms of Reference**

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually in May.

## **Reporting**

The Corporate Parenting Board will produce an Annual Report in March each year on their work and findings over that year. This will be presented to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, the Executive Director for Children's Services and Customer Journey and the Chief Executive of the County Council, and reported through the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and our Children in Care Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services will make reference to the Annual Report in his/her report to Council.

## **Administrative Support**

Administrative and governance support to the Corporate Parenting Board will be provided by Children's Services.

The appointed officer shall be responsible for organising meetings, agenda papers, attending meetings and minutes of each meeting.

Agendas and reports for the Board will be sent out by the appointed officer at least 5 working days prior to each meeting (based on a forward planning process of agenda items).

Technical support in preparing reports for the Board and giving advice to the Board in relation to Children in Our Care and Care Leavers will be provided by the Children's Services Directorate.

All stakeholders are responsible for proposing agenda items and ensuring relevant papers are considered by the Corporate Parenting Board. Where possible, agenda items and papers should be sent through to the appointed officer, no less than ten days prior to the meeting.

## **Golden rules for Corporate Parenting Board: Reports and presentations**

When presenting or writing reports to the Corporate Parenting Board please apply these rules:

- Use young person friendly language.
- No abbreviations.
- Full explanation of any tables or charts used.
- Interactive.
- Length (Reports: 2-sides of A4, Presentations: 20 minutes long, max. 10 slides).
- Relevance to children in care and care experienced young people should be clear.

- Impact on children in care and care experienced young people should be clear.
- Time for questions within allocated time.

Young people ask that you make all presentations 'interesting', 'colourful', 'understandable' and 'loud, clear and inspirational'!