

Meeting:	Executive
Meeting date:	20 February 2024
Report of:	Corporate Director of Children and Education
Portfolio of:	Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education

Decision Report: Corporate Parenting Strategy

Subject of Report

1. A Corporate Parenting Strategy sets out how we commit to fulfil our responsibilities as corporate parents to children and young people who are in care and care leavers. It outlines the commitments and actions required to ensure that children receive the necessary support, opportunities, and care that a good parent would provide for their own children. Its purpose is to promote the best interests and positive outcomes for children in care, enhancing their life chances and overall development.
2. We have worked with children and young people to develop York's new Corporate Parenting Strategy (2024-2027). This strategy is presented within this report for consideration and agreement.

Benefits and Challenges

3. There is arguably no greater responsibility the council holds than as corporate parent to children and young people in care. The benefit of putting in place a Corporate Parenting Strategy is that it makes clear our priorities as corporate parents. This allows the council to work together with partners to deliver the best possible outcomes for care experienced children and young people.
4. As corporate parents we have committed to ensuring our decisions are shaped by the views and experiences of care experienced children and young people. The Corporate Parenting Strategy is a visible commitment to take action in response to feedback from children and young people.

5. The Corporate Parenting Strategy is a key tool that enables the Corporate Parenting Board to provide the support, challenge and oversight needed to ensure we are meeting our responsibilities as corporate parents.

Policy Basis for Decision

6. The Corporate Parenting Strategy is listed in the council's constitution as one of the partnership and community plans requiring agreement at Executive.
7. One City, for all, the City of York Council's Council Plan (2023-2027), sets a strong ambition to increase opportunities for everyone living in York to live healthy and fulfilling lives. Specific areas relating to this paper are:
 - a) 4. Start good health and wellbeing young:
 - b) 4.3. Continue our improvement journey to deliver good and outstanding children's services with the voice of the child heard throughout all council operations.
 - c) 4.4. Embed corporate parenting so children in care and care leavers can thrive.
8. The development and delivery of a Corporate Parenting Strategy supports the delivery of key statutory obligations in the Children Act 1989 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017 Specifically in relation to promoting children's welfare, consulting and taking into account the views of care experienced children and young people, transition to adulthood and educational achievement.

Financial Strategy Implications

9. There are no direct financial implications over adopting the Corporate Parenting Strategy. There are however significant social and financial implications linked to the care system.
10. The Corporate Parenting Strategy recognises that the best outcomes for children and young people are achieved when they can live safely within their own families. This fundamental principle underpins our mission to implement the "Building Better Futures" practice model, which incorporates Signs of Safety and Family Seeing. By adopting a Family Seeing approach, we aim to change the way we support vulnerable children and young people.

11. Nationally local authorities are facing significant financial pressures due to rising numbers of children and young people in care, a lack of placements to support increasingly complex needs and a rising number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC).
12. The ADCS safeguarding pressures (phase 8) report identified a 3% increase in the number of children in care in England over the last two years. In York we have worked hard to support children to remain living with their families or successfully leave care. From April 2022 to November 2023 we have seen York's care population fall from 278 to 244. This is a fall of over 12%. In the same time period we have also seen the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children increase from 10 to 19, a 90% increase.
13. We can see that the successful implementation of the Corporate Parenting Strategy is key to ensuring we meet the needs of children and young people but also in continuing to address the significant financial pressures facing children's services.

Recommendation and Reasons

14. It is recommended that the Executive agree the Corporate Parenting Strategy provided as Annex A.
15. This is to enable the implementation of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and its supporting action plan.

Background

16. In March 2023 the Corporate Parenting Board directed the development a new Corporate Parenting Strategy. An evaluation of the previous Corporate Parenting Strategy was undertaken and is reflected within the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report for 2022/23.
17. A task and finish group came together to draft a new Corporate Parenting Strategy. The development of the strategy has been strongly informed by the views and lived experience of children and young people in care and care leavers. The draft Corporate Parenting Strategy was reviewed and agreed by the Corporate Parenting Board in September 2023.

18. A copy of the Corporate Parenting Strategy (2024-2027) is provided as Annex A.
19. The delivery of the Corporate Parenting Strategy is coordinated through an action plan. This is provided as Annex B. The Corporate Parenting Board will provide the oversight and challenge needed to ensure delivery of the action plan and strategy. Over the lifetime of the strategy the action plan will be maintained to help track actions as they are completed and new actions are required.
20. Each year the Corporate Parenting Board will produce an annual report to understand progress in implementing the strategy and its impact for children and young people.

Consultation Analysis

21. York has made a commitment to involve children and young people in the development and delivery of services. We place great value on engaging children and young people with lived experience of being in care. The involvement and participation of children and young people is seen as a real strength. There are a number of different ways that children and young people are involved:
 - a) We have Corporate Parenting Advisors to support direct influence and attendance at the Corporate Parenting Board.
 - b) Our Children in Care Council (Show Me That I Matter) and Care Leavers Forum (I Still Matter).
 - c) The bi-annual U Matter Survey.
22. The development of the Corporate Parenting Strategy has been heavily informed by the views of children and young people and care leavers. We have worked alongside care experienced young people to review the views of young people being given through the participation opportunities listed above.
23. The foreword to the Corporate Parenting Strategy was drafted by care experienced representatives from Show Me That I Matter and I Still Matter and demonstrates the importance they place on the new strategy. The ongoing oversight of the strategy through the

Corporate Parenting Board includes direct representation and feedback from children and young people.

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

24. **Agree the new Corporate Parenting Strategy**

This is the recommended option and would allow the implementation of the supporting action plan. This will support us in delivering our responsibilities as a corporate parent.

Organisational Impact and Implications

- **Financial**, There are no direct financial implication from the recommendations in this report, any indirect implications may be addressed in other reports or through the council's annual budget process.
- **Human Resources (HR)**, There are no associated staffing and / or HR implications relating to this.
- **Legal**, The corporate parenting strategy is one of the policies to be reviewed and monitored by full council in the scheme of delegation. The corporate parenting responsibilities are extensive and reference is made to the statutory principles under the Children Act 1989 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017. It is apparent that there has been collaboration in particular with the children themselves in generating this strategy.

The strategy sets out the manner in which the local authority will aim to discharge its statutory functions and enshrines the principles it aims to implement and is aspirational in its intentions.

- **Procurement**, There are no procurement implications in relation to this.
- **Health and Wellbeing**, There is a strong association between being a child or young person in care and poorer outcomes in a number of areas, such as educational attainment and mental and physical health (Rahilly and Hendry, 2014). The impact of these health and social inequalities can be long lasting and remain into adulthood.

Care leavers can also be vulnerable as they transition into adulthood and out of care, experiencing higher rates and

homelessness and unemployment, when compared to peers who were not in care.

There are statutory duties to promote the health of all children in care, including ensuring: up to date immunisations, regular dental reviews and a regular schedule of health assessments. Statutory services must aspire to ensuring all children in care receive their health assessments and immunisations in a timely manner.

As children in care are more at risk of poorer health outcomes, there is a requirement for a targeted, proactive and preventive approach to health provision which goes beyond the statutory minimum, for example mental health support and sexual health services.

The proposals in this strategy aim to contribute to reducing health inequalities in the city and giving children the best start in life, which are both aspirations of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2032.

- **Environment and Climate action**, There are no associated environment and climate implications relating to this.
- **Affordability**, The bespoke offer for each care leaver will ensure that they are have the support and are prepared for the world of skills and work, and have a means of securing accommodation to give them the best start to achieve economic independence and success.
- **Equalities and Human Rights** – A copy of the Equalities Impact Assessment has been provided as Annex C.
- **Data Protection and Privacy**, As there is no new personal data, special categories of personal data or criminal offence data being processed for this report , there is no requirement to complete a DPIA. This is evidenced by completion of DPIA screening questions - reference AD-02921.
- **Economy**, The transition from childhood to higher and further education and becoming economically active is a crucial point in peoples lives, and one where the role of parents is particularly important. The Corporate Parenting strategy recognises this responsibility and Economic Strategy and Skills Plan highlight the need to help all people make the most of their aptitudes to be part of the York economy.

Risks and Mitigations

25. There are no identified risks in adopting the Corporate Parenting Strategy itself. The delivery of the Corporate Parenting Strategy is a means by which to improve outcomes and mitigate a number of risks facing children and young people as well as to the local authority. The management of risks and mitigations is achieved through the Corporate Parenting Strategy Action Plan under the oversight of the Corporate Parenting Board.

Wards Impacted

26. All wards will be impacted.

Contact details

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Report approved:	Yes
Date:	06/02/2024

Annexes

- Background paper: Annex A – Corporate Parenting Strategy
- Background paper: Annex B – Corporate Parenting Strategy Action Plan
- Background paper: Annex C – Corporate Parenting Strategy Equality Impact Assessment