

Report of the Assistant Director of Children's Specialist Services [CSS]

Corporate Parenting – A New Vision and Approach to the Care of Our Looked After Children in York

Summary

1. Further to a briefing paper presented to Group Leaders on 1 October [Annex A], the Board is invited to receive a short presentation which describes the work of the Multi Agency Looked After Partnership [MALAP] group to develop a new vision and approach to caring for the City's Looked After Children.
2. This presentation will describe how City of York and its partners propose to improve further the outcomes for all Looked After Children. A draft strategy presented at Annex B is provided for discussion and colleagues, commissioned from the innovation unit to support our change programme, will be present to describe a plan to further develop local foster care [Annex C].
3. Finally, a brief summary of the findings from the 2015 U Matter Survey of Looked After Children is presented by colleagues from the Children's Rights Service. A copy of their report is included at Annex D.
4. At the conclusion of these discussions, the Board is invited to consider how it can best provide support and challenge to ensure that any new arrangements are delivering and achieving the best outcomes for all Looked After Children.

Overview of Presentations

Corporate Parenting in York – Eoin Rush [Assistant Director – CSES, Chair of MALAP]

5. This presentation revisits the paper presented to Group Leaders in October and draws out some key issues and challenges to support a

debate at the end of the meeting about the most effective future Corporate Parenting Board arrangements for York.

Good Enough is Not Good Enough - Paul Murphy [Strategy Author]

6. This presentation will speak to the draft revised Looked After Children's strategy. Mr Murphy will set out the key messages from his consultations with Looked After Children, their carers and with the wider community of children's services providers across and beyond the City. Against this backdrop Mr Murphy and the Assistant Director will explain the rationale behind the new strategy and set out some of the ambitions, challenges and opportunities this new strategic approach will present.

Bring them All Home – Martha Hampson [Innovation Unit]

7. This presentation will set out some innovation work to significantly strengthen the Council's fostering offer so that even fewer children and young people have to go outside of York for their care. An integral part of the overall strategy, this work developed in partnership with the York Area Foster Carer Association [YAFCA], will test the strength of commitment and partnership working across the Council and its partners as it places new expectations on every agency to go the extra mile.

A View from our Young People – Tess Ellis and Michelle Howlett [Children's Rights Officer]

8. This presentation will share with the Board the outcomes of the 2015 survey of York's Looked After Children. Members will be invited to reflect on these key messages and consider the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed new strategy in responding to the wishes and views of our Looked After Children

Plenary and Debate

9. Informed by the brief presentations described above the Board is invited to question and challenge officers and colleagues present.
10. The Board may also find it helpful to learn what practices other local authorities adopt in relation to engaging its Members with their corporate parent roles, including whether or not others have appointed Boards in a manner similar to the one currently established in York. Officers will provide comparative information either at or in advance of the meeting, for consideration.

11. The Board is then invited to consider the following issues and recommendations in order to help put in place effective processes, practices and ways of working to achieve a strategic and cohesive approach in delivering and maintaining our corporate parenting responsibilities.

Issues for the Board to Consider

12. The Council is working towards achieving a cohesive and effective strategic approach to caring for and improving the outcomes for York's Looked After Children. The Board's views on the following aspects will be instrumental to how we achieve this and how we engage the Board itself and Members more generally in undertaking their corporate parenting responsibilities:

- (i) Do the presentations received at this meeting, and the wider proposals, provide an effective framework for that cohesive approach? What additional information would the Board find helpful?
- (ii) Does the Board feel sufficiently well informed and equipped to champion and challenge the work of the MALAP as it progresses this strategy and its subsequent delivery?
- (iii) How can the Board ensure that the widest group of elected members across the City understand and effectively discharge their corporate parenting responsibilities?
- (iv) Does the Board consider that its current membership and terms of reference are best suited to supporting the work described? To help focus this discussion, the Board's current terms of reference are annexed to this report [Annex E].
- (v) By operating as a public meeting of the Council the Board is required to publish its papers and to conduct its business in public. The Board is invited to consider if it feels that this is potentially limiting to discussion and activity with Members given the nature of the issues.

Corporate Priorities

13. Ensuring safe and effective care arrangements for Looked After Children is both a Corporate Priority and a Statutory Duty

Implications:

Financial

14. There are no direct financial implications arising from this paper. However, if the proposal for an independent specialist advisor to a newly configured Corporate Parenting Board [CPB] is agreed there may be a small cost associated with the provision of such advice.

Human Resources (HR)

15. There are no implications

Equalities

16. There are no implications. However, the provision of specialist independent advice to a newly configured CPB could enhance the Board's ability to understand and challenge the looked after offer to children from protected groups.

Legal

17. There are no implications

Crime and Disorder

18. There are no implications

Information Technology (IT)

19. There are no implications

Property

20. There are no implications

Recommendations

21. In order to strengthen its corporate parenting arrangements in the City, the Board is asked to consider and endorse proposals to:
 - (i) seek full Council endorsement for the new and refocused strategy for Looked After Children, which will set out the Council's collective ambition and actions and articulate the outcomes it wishes to see for this group of children and young people.

- (ii) a refreshed focus, role, operating model and composition for the Corporate Parenting Board, to reflect the wider corporate parenting agenda across the Council.
- (iii) clear lines of accountability for the Board in future, reporting to:
 - a. The Executive Member for Education, Children and Young People periodically, holding the Board to account for its effectiveness.
 - b. The Executive periodically, as the need arises.
- (iv) raise significant or important issues relating to Children Looked After at Council meetings themselves where this would be beneficial and would enhance the role of Members, in their role as 'corporate parents'.
- (v) appoint an independent advisor to the Corporate Parenting Board to support Members in their 'challenge' role.
- (vi) consider establishing some key standards expected of Members in being effective political 'corporate parents' and in championing the needs of and outcomes for children in our care.
- (vii) identify what, if any, further training a refreshed Board and Members generally, might require to enable them to undertake their 'corporate parenting' role adequately and appropriately.

Reason: In order to strengthen corporate parenting arrangements in the city.

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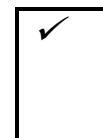
Jon Stonehouse
Director, Children's Services, Education
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Report
Approved



Date 20/11/15

All



Wards Affected:

For further information please contact the authors of the report

Annexes

- A Corporate Parenting in York – Briefing Note 1 October 2015
- B Draft Strategy for Looked After Children 2016 – 2020
- C Bring them all home – Project Implementation Plan
- D 2015 U Matter Survey
- E Current Board Terms of Reference

Abbreviations

MALAP	Multi Agency Looked After Partnership
CAMHS	Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services
CPB	Corporate Parenting Board
CSES	Children's Services, Education & Skills
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
NEET	Not in Education Employment or Training
YAFCA	York Area Foster Carer Association