

Meeting	Corporate Parenting Board
Date	8 December 2015
Present	Councillors Brooks, Cannon, Cuthbertson, D'Agorne, Douglas, Funnell, Gunnell and Runciman

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#### **24. Election of Chair**

Members were given the opportunity to nominate a Chair to the Board.

Resolved: That Cllr Brooks be elected as the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board.

#### **25. Declarations of Interest**

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in relation to the business on the agenda or other general interests they might have had within the remit of the Board. None were declared.

#### **26. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on 2 February 2015 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

#### **27. Public Participation**

It was reported that there were no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

## 28. Corporate Parenting - A New Vision and Approach to the Care of Our Looked After Children in York

The Board considered three presentations that highlighted the work of the Multi Agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP) group and the findings from the 2015 U Matter Survey.

The presentations described how City of York Council and its partners proposed to improve further outcomes for all Looked After Children (LAC) and asked Members to consider the most effective processes, practices and ways of working to achieve a strategic and cohesive approach in delivering and maintaining their corporate parenting responsibilities.

The Strategy Author of the draft revised Looked After Children's Strategy was in attendance to highlight the key findings from his consultations with Looked After Children, their parents, carers and with the wider community of children's services providers across and beyond the City.

The Strategy Author highlighted his areas of work and confirmed:

- York had made good progress over the last 3 years which included a significant reduction in the overall numbers of LAC, better health and educational outcomes, excellent work with those leaving care and the establishment of a virtual school.
- That although the new strategy was good and the performance from Children's Services was very effective, everyone who had been involved with the development of the new strategy believed, *'good enough is **not** good enough'* and wanted to continue to raise ambitions through the strategy to ensure that children who were looked after achieved the very best possible outcomes.
- The vision and strategic goals had not changed but the way to approach them would be different and included six new strategic themes; ambition, personalisation, normality, trust, accountability and efficiency. These themes would support a child through to adult life and were also intended to challenge and inspire everyone who worked with Looked After Children.
- A new vision, roles and responsibilities for foster care in York had been considered and would include new protocols and support arrangements to give delegated decision making to more experienced foster carers.

- The remodelling of the support arrangements would ensure improved support was available.
- Every arrangement where a child or young person was placed outside of the city was under review and (as part of the Make York Home initiative) where it was in their best interest such children/young people would have the opportunity to return to York for their care.
- All children would have a health passport which would support both their and their carers understanding of their ongoing health needs.

The Assistant Director of Childrens Specialist Services stated that York had a good record of placing and keeping children within the city. He discussed the innovative work that would significantly strengthen the Councils fostering offer and allow more children and young people to stay in York for their care.

Members noted that the following would need to be attained to achieve these outcomes:

- Changes to the way foster carers were involved in the wider planning arrangements for the children they looked after.
- A review of the various professional roles involved in the care of looked after children.
- Changes to the recruitment, professional development and support for foster carers

The Children Rights Officers were in attendance to highlight the results of the 2015 survey of York's Looked After Children. They confirmed that the 2015 U Matter Survey was rolled out between February and April 2015 and it collected views of children and young people in Care. The survey was available in paper format and online and was promoted in various ways including on the Show Me that I Matter Facebook page.

A total of 55 young people in care completed the survey and some of the results showed:

- 87% of young people either agreed or strongly agreed that City of York provided good quality placements for children and young people in care.
- 90% felt they could make their bedroom feel like their own.
- 65% said their social worker was reliable, which was a 16% drop from the previous year.
- 85% knew how to contact their social worker.

- 85% said their social worker treats them with respect although 32% of young people asked for a change of social worker.
- 78% knew who their Independent Reviewing Officer was compared to only 48% last year.
- 94% of young people knew who their designated teacher was.
- 89% felt they had the right amount of support in school.
- 76% knew about their Personal Education Plan compared to 54% the previous year.
- 85% were aware of the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service.
- 90% felt their carers take care of their health very well or well.
- 89% said they received enough help when getting ready to leave care.
- 63% rated their overall experience as being very good or good compared to 76% the previous year. Some young people indicated this was due to feelings about being taken into care rather than the quality of care they received.
- 33% of the surveys received were completed by a male and 67% were female.

Members discussed the new strategy and noted the ambitions, challenges and opportunities the new strategic approach would present and in answer to Members questions it was confirmed:

- Timescales for achieving each goal and milestone would be highlighted within the strategy.
- Targets and milestones would be measured against each individual and not as a group allowing the introduction of personalised care to ensure each child could celebrate their own achievements.
- All Looked After Children had received a card which highlighted relevant contact details.

Members discussed ways to raise awareness of the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities and develop expertise and knowledge among all elected Members. They also discussed the most effective future for the Corporate Parenting Board and thanked officers for all the information received.

Resolved:

- (i) That Group Leaders be asked to consider the draft revised Looked After Children's Strategy.
- (ii) That when completed the new and refocused strategy be fully endorsed by Council.
- (iii) That a refreshed focus, role, operation model and composition for the Corporate Parenting Board, to reflect the wider corporate parenting agenda across the Council, be considered and established at the next meeting.
- (iv) That clear lines of accountability for the Board and the Terms of Reference be considered.
- (v) That the appointment of an Independent Advisor to the Board be considered once the strategy for Looked After Children was in operation.
- (vi) That the Corporate Parenting Board workplan be updated to establish any key standards expected of Members in being effective political 'corporate parents' and in championing the needs of and outcomes for children in care.
- (vii) That any training required by Members to enable them to undertake their corporate parenting role adequately and appropriately be considered and raised at the next meeting.
- (viii) That all Corporate Parenting Board meetings take place formally with a rolling confidential agenda item.
- (ix) That bi annual performance and finance updates be brought to the Board.

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

Cllr Brooks, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.55 pm].

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