

## **Arrangements to improve the Attainment of Looked After Children and the role of Elected Members as Corporate Parents**

### **Summary**

1. York's Looked After Children Strategy 2012 -2015 was presented to the Leisure and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2011. Informed by what Looked After Children and Care Leavers describe is important to them, this strategy identifies nine key priority outcomes. Following the presentation of this strategy Members agreed to focus their scrutiny review of Corporate Parenting on the following issues:

- The attainment of Looked After Children
- Councillors' role as Corporate Parents

### **Background**

2. To facilitate this further scrutiny Members requested the following information for today's meeting on 25 January 2012:
  - a. A response to the questions detailed in Section 2 of the "10 questions to ask if you're scrutinising services for looked after children" published by the Local Government Improvement and Development [LGID] agency – see Annex 1.
  - b. Details of the Directorate's plans to improve the academic achievement of Looked After Children.
  - c. Information as to how non-cabinet Members, can better carry out their responsibilities as a Corporate Parent (Members referenced the questions in Section 10 of the document attached above)
3. York's Virtual Head Teacher for Looked After Children has prepared a response to item (a) above - see Annex 2, and will be in attendance at this meeting to answer any further questions and to support any subsequent discussion.

4. The Head of Service with responsibility for Looked After Children has prepared a response to item (b) above – see Annex 3, and will also be in attendance at the meeting to respond to any additional questions Members may have.
5. To set all of this work in context Members will have the opportunity to view a DVD prepared by Looked After Children for Looked After Children which explains the Council's 'Pledge'. This Pledge is the City of York Council's commitment to children and young people in care, written by young people and endorsed by the Council.

### **Consultation**

6. The Looked After Childrens Strategy 2012 – 2015 has been developed through a programme of extensive consultation both with care experienced children and young people and a wide range of professional stakeholders. A diagram including all those consulted is included at page 6 of the Strategy document.

### **Options**

7. Members are invited to consider the current plans and arrangements both for improving the attainment of our looked after children and for increased member involvement in the corporate parenting role.

### **Council Plan**

8. The arrangements described to the Looked after Children Strategy 2012 - 2015 fully align with The Council Plan 2011 – 2015. In particular the Council's priority to 'protect vulnerable people' supports the ambition to achieve the best possible outcomes for those children who become looked after by the City.

### **Implications**

9. **Financial** - There are no financial implications arising from the specific issues addressed in this paper. However, the use of the Pupil Premium allocated to schools to support the attainment of Looked After Children is currently the subject of important debate and discussion between the local authority and Head Teacher colleagues.
10. **Human Resources** - There are no HR implications arising from the specific issues addressed in this paper. However, the wider Looked After

Children Strategy will seek the engagement of HR colleagues to review the work opportunities available within the Council for our Care Leavers.

11. **Crime and Disorder** - It is right to acknowledge that looked after children nationally and locally are over represented in the cohort of young people who are known to the youth offending system. The work described in the strategy seeks to tackle this issue through an holistic programme of improved care and support available to all of our Looked After Children.
12. There are no Equalities, Legal, ITT or Property implications associated with the recommendation in this report.

### **Risk Management**

13. There are no specific risks to report.

### **Recommendations**

14. That the Committee receives the responses of the Virtual Head Teacher and the Head of Service for Looked After Children to inform their further debate and scrutiny of these issues.

Reason: To progress the review.

## Contact Details

### Author:

Eoin Rush  
Assistant Director, Childrens  
Specialist Services  
Adults, Children & Education  
Tel No. 554212

### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Eoin Rush  
Assistant Director, Childrens Specialist  
Services - Adults, Children and Education  
Tel No. 554212

Report Approved



Date

20 Jan 2012

### Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

### Annexes:

**Annex 1** - 10 questions to ask if you're scrutinising services for looked after children-LGID

**Annex 2** - Scrutiny of attainment for children and young people who are Looked After

**Annex 3** - Looked After Children and their Corporate Parents