

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL

20 January 2020

AMENDMENT TO MOTION

Proposed: Councillor Huw Thomas

Seconded: Councillor Adrian Robson

(Amendments show in bold Italics)

Cardiff Councillors, **along with council officers and partner agencies**, are Corporate Parents to Children who are looked after **for whom the Council has parental responsibilities** in the care of the Council. ~~In recent times a number of Councillors from different political parties have raised concerns regarding the Children's Services Department. These concerns include, but are not limited to; accountability, scrutiny, transparency and liability.~~

Members also represent their constituents who have personal involvement with safeguarding processes and who may specific concerns about those processes. It is crucial that Members are supported to fulfil those roles effectively through appropriate training, protocols professional advice and performance reporting regarding the quality of outcomes for Children who are looked after. These should support a clear understanding of the different roles and responsibilities of the multi-agency partners, the family court system and CAFCASS, involved in the safeguarding and protection of children.

We acknowledge and wish to put on record the significant work and commitment undertaken by the many staff and officers in Children's Services, **other council departments and partner services to develop services for our Children who are looked after** and all they do to safeguard and protect children in our City. The purpose of this motion is to confirm and ensure that the processes and procedures we have in place are appropriate, lawful, robust and reviewed regularly **and support Members to play their role in this system.**

In common with all other Local Authorities in the UK, Cardiff is facing increasing pressures in respect of its Social Services functions. We note that, in line with national trends, the numbers of Children who are looked after have risen considerably over the last 5 years. This underlines the need for a Team Cardiff approach with strong support from all parts of the Council and effective collaboration with public service, independent, and third sector partners to meet the needs of Children who are looked after.

This Council notes the various steps that have been taken to implement new strategies and practices. We acknowledge and welcome the development of a clear 3 year strategic plan for Cardiff Children's Services. This plan sets clear priorities for the improvement of workforce planning and development, practice and commissioning. We also welcome the significant realignment of resources to enable the Council to positively meet the needs of our most vulnerable children and young people through investment in prevention and protection services.

The Council further notes the legal and regulatory framework within which social services operates. The annual reports of the Director of Social Services contain in-depth analysis of the quality and performance of social service arrangements in Cardiff. In July 2019, the annual report to Council was presented alongside the annual performance letter in respect of Cardiff Social Services issued by Care Inspectorate Wales, the independent inspection and regulatory body for social services in Wales.

We understand the personal responsibilities of Members and the importance of attendance at corporate parenting and safeguarding training, and acknowledge the contribution and critical roles of Members through the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and Children and Young People (CYP) Scrutiny Committee.

The Council therefore welcomes the recent appointment of an independent expert by the Director of Social Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children & Families and the Chief Executive, to undertake a review of the Member Safeguarding Protocol and proposes the extension of the independent advisor's remit to include the following:

~~Therefore, it is proposed in the first instance an independent review of Children's Services takes place and considers the following.~~

- 1. Review the **Development of a protocol on the corporate parenting role of Councillors, which aligns with the Member Safeguarding Protocol. This will include a review of the** existing terms of reference and operation of the Council's corporate *parenting* advisory committee and make recommendations on how the role of the committee can be strengthened.***
- 2. In reviewing the Member Safeguarding Protocol, consider the existing arrangements for how and where Councillors report concerns regarding Children who are looked after and whether these arrangements are sufficiently robust and suitable and if not how they can be improved.***
- 3. In reviewing the Member Safeguarding Protocol, consider the existing arrangements on how councillors are updated on concerns and queries *they have raised* regarding Children who are looked after and Children's Services, ~~they have raised and to make recommendations on how these arrangements can be improved to ensure Councillors can discharge their Corporate Parent duties~~ **the most effective set of arrangements which emphasise at all*****

times the primacy of the safety and protection of children, to ensure Councillors can discharge their Corporate Parent duties

4. Review the existing training in place for Councillors and make recommendations on how the existing arrangements can be enhanced, ***including seeking cross-party agreement on those aspects which should be considered as mandatory training for Councillors, as well as professional boundaries and behaviour standards for Councillors and how any concerns should be raised through appropriate channels.***
5. ~~Review the current policies and procedures in place and make recommendations if it is considered these policies and/or procedures should be amended and reviewed.~~ ***Make recommendations as necessary on any changes to protocols, policies and procedures in place.***
6. Meet with Councillors to consider any concerns or recommendations they may have regarding existing *corporate parenting* policies and procedures in ~~Children's Services~~ and consider their concerns and/or recommendations.
7. Consider the existing scrutiny arrangements for ~~Children's Services~~ ***corporate parenting*** and make any recommendations if it is considered these should improve.

~~The individual(s) undertaking the Independent Review into Children's Services should report to the Chief Executive in his capacity as Head of Paid Service. All Councillors should be sent an un-redacted copy of the review and the Chief Executive will report to Full Council with an update on implementing the recommendations of the Independent Review.~~

Any recommendations proposed by the independent expert should be fed back to the statutory Director of Social Services. Any recommendations would also be considered by the CYP Scrutiny Committee and Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee, before consideration by first Cabinet and subsequently Full Council.

The Council also proposes to establish a Leaders Forum, chaired by the Leader of the Council, that would meet at least biannually, or as needed, with statutory officers to discuss confidentially matters relating specifically to Children who are looked after.

The Motion would read as follows:

Cardiff Council is a Member-led authority and therefore from time to time it is appropriate for Members of the Council to discuss issues of significance in a public setting, namely a Full Council meeting.

Cardiff Councillors, along with council officers and partner agencies, are Corporate Parents to Children who are looked after for whom the Council has parental responsibilities.

Members also represent their constituents who have personal involvement with safeguarding processes and who may have specific concerns about those processes. It is crucial that Members are supported to fulfil those roles effectively through appropriate training, protocols, professional advice and performance reporting regarding the quality of outcomes for Children who are looked after. These should support a clear understanding of the different roles and responsibilities of the multi-agency partners, the family court system and CAFCASS, involved in the safeguarding and protection of children.

We acknowledge and wish to put on record the significant work and commitment undertaken by the many staff and officers in Children's Services, other council departments and partner services to develop services for our Children who are looked after and all they do to safeguard and protect children in our City. The purpose of this motion is to confirm and ensure that the processes and procedures we have in place are appropriate, lawful, robust and reviewed regularly and support Members to play their role in this system.

In common with all other Local Authorities in the UK, Cardiff is facing increasing pressures in respect of its Social Services functions. We note that, in line with national trends, the numbers of Children who are looked after have risen considerably over the last 5 years. This underlines the need for a Team Cardiff approach with strong support from all parts of the Council and effective collaboration with public service, independent, and third sector partners to meet the needs of Children who are looked after.

This Council notes the various steps that have been taken to implement new strategies and practices. We acknowledge and welcome the development of a clear 3 year strategic plan for Cardiff Children's Services. This plan sets clear priorities for the improvement of workforce planning and development, practice and commissioning. We also welcome the significant realignment of resources to enable the Council to positively meet the needs of our most vulnerable children and young people through investment in prevention and protection services.

The Council further notes the legal and regulatory framework within which social services operates. The annual reports of the Director of Social Services contain in-depth analysis of the quality and performance of social service arrangements in Cardiff. In July 2019, the annual report to Council was presented alongside the annual performance letter in respect of Cardiff Social Services issued by Care Inspectorate Wales, the independent inspection and regulatory body for social services in Wales.

We understand the personal responsibilities of Members and the importance of attendance at corporate parenting and safeguarding training, and acknowledge the contribution and critical roles of Members through the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and Children and Young People (CYP) Scrutiny Committee.

The Council therefore welcomes the recent appointment of an independent expert by the Director of Social Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children & Families and the Chief Executive, to undertake a review of the Member

Safeguarding Protocol and proposes the extension of the independent advisor's remit to include the following:

1. Development of a protocol on the corporate parenting role of Councillors, which aligns with the Member Safeguarding Protocol. This will include a review of the existing terms of reference and operation of the Council's corporate parenting advisory committee and make recommendations on how the role of the committee can be strengthened.
2. In reviewing the Member Safeguarding Protocol, consider the existing arrangements for how and where Councillors report concerns regarding Children who are looked after and whether these arrangements are sufficiently robust and suitable and if not how they can be improved.
3. In reviewing the Member Safeguarding Protocol, consider the existing arrangements on how councillors are updated on concerns and queries they have raised regarding Children who are looked after and Children's Services, the most effective set of arrangements which emphasise at all times the primacy of the safety and protection of children, to ensure Councillors can discharge their Corporate Parent duties
4. Review the existing training in place for Councillors and make recommendations on how the existing arrangements can be enhanced, including seeking cross-party agreement on those aspects which should be considered as mandatory training for Councillors, as well as professional boundaries and behaviour standards for Councillors and how any concerns should be raised through appropriate channels.
5. Make recommendations as necessary on any changes to protocols, policies and procedures in place.
6. Meet with Councillors to consider any concerns or recommendations they may have regarding existing corporate parenting policies and procedures and consider their concerns and/or recommendations.
7. Consider the existing scrutiny arrangements for corporate parenting and make any recommendations if it is considered these should improve.

Any recommendations proposed by the independent expert should be fed back to the statutory Director of Social Services. Any recommendations would also be considered by the CYP Scrutiny Committee and Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee, before consideration by first Cabinet and subsequently Full Council.

The Council also proposes to establish a Leaders Forum, chaired by the Leader of the Council, that would meet at least biannually, or as needed, with statutory officers to discuss confidentially matters relating specifically to Children who are looked after.