

**CITY OF CARDIFF COUNCIL
CYNGOR DINAS CAERDYDD**

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

26 JANUARY 2016

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY

Reason for this Report

1. To set out the Council's proposed Corporate Parenting Strategy and seek the Committee's approval prior to submission to Cabinet

Background

2. When a child comes into care, the council becomes the Corporate Parent. Put simply, the term 'Corporate Parent' means the collective responsibility of the Council, elected members, employees, and partner agencies, for providing the best possible care and safeguards for the children who are looked after by the council.
3. The 'Review of the Status and Roles of Corporate Parenting in Cardiff Council (May 2014)' set out a number of key recommendations, one of them being the development of a 'Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee' in order to raise the profile of Corporate Parenting within the local authority. The review further recommended that the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee is chaired by the Deputy Leader of the Council and identified two main advantages. First, it bestows status on the Committee and secondly the Deputy Leader has a clear line of sight over the different Cabinet portfolios and possesses the authority to ensure that all service areas work together in the interests of our young people.
4. One of the key responsibilities for the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee was to commission the development of a cogent and deliverable Corporate Parenting strategy which sets out the commitment the Council has for the children in its care.
5. Children and young people in the care of the Council have been consulted on the development of this strategy. They have said that they want to be supported to achieve their potential, they want their parents to have received more support and they want to be listened to. Taking these views in to account, this strategy sets out the combined

commitment from the University Health Board, Social Services, Housing and Communities and Education and Lifelong Learning Directorates to:

- 'Narrowing the gap' so that looked after children achieve their full potential
 - Improving services so that fewer children need to enter the looked after system
 - Listening to looked after children and improving their experiences of care wherever.
6. At the end of 2014, Cardiff had 1576 Children in Need, 297 children subject to a child protection plan and 651 looked after children. At the end October 2015, Cardiff had 1276 children in Need, 330 children subject to a child protection plan and 630 looked after children. Historically, Cardiff's Looked After Children rate has remained relatively consistent over time. The trend suggests that in the future the rate of Looked After Children will continue to be relatively static.
7. The City of Cardiff Council has the same goals for the children it looks after as those of any good parent, and takes seriously the moral as well as legal responsibility for enabling the children in its care to experience happy and fulfilling lives. This Corporate Parenting Strategy outlines our aspirations for looked after children and young people and supports that delivery of the Corporate Plan Priority 2: *Supporting Vulnerable People* and will contribute to achieving the following Corporate Plan Outcome: *People in Cardiff are safe and those at risk are safeguarded.*

Reason for Recommendations

8. Under primary legislation the Council has responsibilities and a positive role to play as the Corporate Parent for Looked After Children in the care of the Council. The proposed Corporate Parenting Strategy will act as the key policy platform outlining how the Council will discharge its responsibilities and prioritise delivery of services for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

Financial Implications

9. The report seeks approval for a Council corporate parenting strategy. Whilst, much of the strategy can be implemented without any direct financial impact, certain of the proposals will require an initial additional resource; albeit the costs should ultimately be offset via a reduction in the number of looked after children. Notably, early intervention proposals relating to an adolescent resource centre and other family support have been identified as cost pressure bids that form part of the initial budget proposals for 2016/17. These are also reflected in related savings submissions linked to a reduction in the looked after children population. These proposals will therefore form part of the 2016/17 budget report and will be subject to the approval of Council. Any further initiatives linked to this strategy will also need to be fully costed and will require budget approval.

Legal Implications (including Equality Impact Assessment where appropriate)

10. The Children Act 1989 placed the statutory responsibility on the council to provide accommodation and services for looked after children. The Care Standards Act 2002 and associated regulations define the operation of local authority fostering and adoption services.
11. As mentioned previously in this report, the Council has a statutory duty in respect of delivering its Corporate Parenting Responsibilities and in ensuring sufficient and suitable placements for looked after children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to endorse the strategy for submission to Cabinet.

Tony Young
Date 10.12.2015

The following appendices are attached:

Appendix A: Corporate Parenting Strategy 2016-2019