



**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

5 NOVEMBER 2019

CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES**

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of the report is to present the draft Corporate Parenting Strategy and to seek the views of the Committee as part of the consultation process.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Corporate Parenting Strategy is the framework for the role of local authorities and their relevant partners (as defined in section 10 of the Children Act 2004) in the application of the corporate parenting principles as set out in section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. It should be read and applied alongside the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review and The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3: planning transition to adulthood for care leavers.
3. Local authorities in England need to have regard to the 2013 Statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services. This guidance describes how those roles set the tone for the local authority to be an effective corporate parent.

Background

4. Leicestershire County Council is currently the corporate parent to 610 children and young people. As a corporate parent, the County Council has a collective responsibility to be a good parent to children and young people in its care and is expected to do what any responsible parent would do for their children.
5. Leicestershire has a strong corporate parenting ethos which recognises that the care provided for children is not just about keeping them safe. It recognises the importance of stability for children and the ambition to secure emotional

attachment, physical stability and long-term commitment to children. It also aims that all children in care are able to receive access to appropriate, stable education placements and positive educational experiences.

6. When a child comes into care, the local authority becomes the Corporate Parent. Put simply, the term 'Corporate Parent' means the collective responsibility of the local authority, elected members, employees, and partner agencies for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by Leicestershire County Council.
7. There are seven corporate parenting principles introduced by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, which comprise of seven needs that local authorities in England must have regard to whenever they exercise a function in relation to looked-after children or care leavers. The seven corporate principles are:
 - To act in the best interest, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people.
 - To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
 - To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
 - To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
 - To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people.
 - For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships, and education or work.
 - To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.
8. The corporate parenting principles are intended to secure a better approach to fulfilling existing functions in relation to looked after children and care leavers and for the local authority to facilitate, as far as possible, secure, nurturing, and positive experiences for looked after children and young people and enable positive outcomes for them. The seven principles are embedded in Our Promise to children in care and care leavers, which has been signed up to by the Leicestershire County Council, Elected Members and a range of partner agencies.
9. The draft Corporate Parenting Strategy (attached as Appendix A to this report) is Leicestershire's commitment to inspire, support and enable children in care and care leavers to be ambitious and successful, and outlines the responsibilities of Leicestershire County Council as a corporate parent to its children in care and care leavers. The Strategy provides the foundation for how Leicestershire will deliver high quality services to children in care and care leavers. It highlights the current position, future ambitions and how Leicestershire intends to develop further to achieve aspirations as a corporate parent. The Strategy outlines the key principles and expectations that provide

the framework for a cohesive and effective corporate parenting response. In addition to being a driver for Leicestershire's commitment to inspire, support and enable ambitious goals and success for children, it also provides a structure for accountability and opportunity for challenge.

10. A Scrutiny Review Panel, comprising five elected members, undertook a review of corporate parenting at the beginning of 2019. This time limited task and finish group considered, amongst other things, extending the role of elected members as corporate parents. The Panel had supported the refresh of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and asked that it included a clear role description for elected members to fulfil their responsibilities as a corporate parent for children and young people in the care of the local authority and care leavers up to the age of 25. The Panel also agreed that a member champion model would be trialled in three areas – education, training and work, housing and accommodation, and health.

Consultation

11. Children in Care and care leavers took part in consultation sessions on 16 and 30 October. All children's safeguarding partners have been requested to provide their feedback and overview of the current draft proposed strategy by 17 October. Their views, along with any comments made by the Committee, will be considered for inclusion in the final document.

Resource Implications

12. None.

Timetable for Decisions

13. The outcome of the consultation and the final draft strategy will be presented to the Cabinet on 17th December 2019.

Conclusions

14. The Committee is asked to comment on the draft Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Background Papers

The Children and Social Work Act 2017

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/contents/enacted>

Statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/271429/directors_of_child_services_-_stat_guidance.pdf

Children Act 1989: care planning placement and case review

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/441643/Children_Act_Guidance_2015.pdf

Children Act 1989: planning transition to adulthood for care leavers

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/397649/CA1989_Transitions_guidance.pdf

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

15. None.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

16. These are addressed throughout the strategy as the aim is to improve standards and outcomes for all care experienced children and young people, including disabled children, young children and those from minority and harder to reach groups.

Other Relevant Impact Assessments

17. None.

Appendices

Appendix A: Draft Corporate Parenting Strategy

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