

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

1.	Meeting:	Corporate Parenting Panel
2.	Date:	20th July, 2015
3.	Title:	Draft Terms Of Reference - Corporate Parenting Panel
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People's Services

5. Summary

- 5.1 This report provides proposed revised Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- 5.2 The Corporate Parenting Panel plays an essential role in raising the quality of life of for the children Looked After, or in the care of the Council.
- 5.3 To aid its effectiveness, the proposed Terms of Reference provide clarity on the function of the Panel, the roles of individual members and reporting mechanisms.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 **That the proposed Terms of Reference for the Panel be considered and approved.**
- 6.2 **Subject to agreement of the attached Terms of Reference that Panel appoint Members to key roles as identified.**

7. Proposals and Details

- 7.1 There is a statutory duty on all parts of a Local Authority to co-operate in promoting the welfare of children and young people who are Looked After by them and a duty on other agencies to co-operate with Councils to fulfil that duty.

The term, Corporate Parent, reflects the collective responsibility, including that of Elected Councillors, to provide the best care and safeguarding for children who are Looked After by the Council.

- 7.2 In recognising the importance of the Corporate Parenting role and the need to 'champion' issues relating to Looked After children, most Local Authorities have established a Corporate Parenting Panel to take overall responsibility.

- 7.3 Recent Ofsted inspections of service effectiveness relating to Looked After children identified as good practice those Authorities which:-

- Demonstrated a strong cross party commitment to Looked After children by 'championing' their rights, having high aspirations for their achievements, monitoring their progress and challenging outcomes.
- Had a clear understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Local Authority towards Looked After children.
- Actively engaged with their people through Looked After Children or Children in Care Council.

- 7.4 A strong and effective Corporate Parenting Panel will assist in ensuring that Corporate Parenting is given both vigorous challenge alongside effective, co-ordinated leadership across the Council. It will also formalise reporting and governance arrangements for the Virtual School.

- 7.5 The proposed Terms of Reference aim to provide clarity on the purpose and function of the Panel and the role of individual members.

8. Finance

- 8.1 A significant proportion of the Council's budget is dedicated to services for Looked After children and Care Leavers, including social work and support services, placement costs and subsidies to young people who are care leaders. It is not envisaged that the formation of a Corporate Parenting Panel will lead to additional costs. The Panel will have an overview of services to Looked After children and Care Leavers across the Council and will assist in ensuring services are provided efficiently and effectively.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

- 9.1 Resources have been strengthened to ensure the development of improved services for children and young people who are Looked After in Rotherham.
- 9.2 A Quality Assurance Framework has been developed to ensure that the quality of services for children and young people is regularly audited and assured.
- 9.3 Lack of robust corporate parenting arrangements will negatively impact on outcomes for Looked After Children.
- 9.4 The effectiveness of corporate parenting arrangements are a key line of enquiry within Ofsted inspections of children's services.

10. Policy & Performance Agenda Implications

- 10.1 Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the responsibility of the Local Authority towards 'Looked After' children and young people. This is a legal responsibility given to Local Authorities by the Children Act, 1989, and the Children Act, 2004.

The improving outcomes for our most vulnerable children are a key corporate priority with an emerging vision to become a child-centred borough where young people are supported by the families and their community, and are protected from harm.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- 11.1 Draft Terms of Reference - Version July 2015

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