

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Children, Young People & Skills Committee

## Agenda Item 40

**Subject:** Update on the work of the Corporate Parenting Board

**Date of meeting:** 9<sup>th</sup> January

**Report of:** Executive Director Families, Children & Learning

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**Ward(s) affected:** All

### For general release

#### 1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 To provide Committee with an overview of the work of the Corporate Parenting Board.
- 1.2 For Committee to review and approve the new Terms of Reference for Corporate Parenting Board.

#### 2. Recommendations for CYPS

- 2.1 That Committee notes the work of the Corporate Parenting Board and the responsibilities of the council as Corporate Parents.
- 2.2 That Committee approves the new Terms of Reference (Appendix 5)

#### Recommendations for P&R

- 2.3 CYPS Committee has agree the new ToR (appendix 5) for Corporate Parenting Board in principle, and is recommending to P&R that it formally approve them, in line with the requirements in the Council's Constitution.

#### 3. Context and background information

- 3.1 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 sets out that when a child or young person comes into the care of the council or is under 25 and was previously in care for at least 14 weeks after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday, the council becomes their corporate parent.
- 3.2 This means that the council should:

- act in their best interest and promote their physical and mental health and wellbeing.
  - encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings and take these into account, while promoting high aspirations and trying to secure the best outcomes for them
  - make sure they have access to services
  - make sure they are safe, with stable home lives, relationships and education or work
  - prepare them for adulthood and independent living.
- 3.3 Every councillor and officer with the council has a responsibility to act for children in care and those previously in care as a parent would for their own child.
- 3.4 The Corporate Parenting Board is the forum that provides strategic oversight and leadership in championing the needs of children in care and those previously in care. It does this through working with elected members, council officers, partner agencies and children and young people.
- 3.5 The Corporate Parenting Board provides governance and oversight to the work undertaken across the council, ensuring a corporate parenting approach is undertaken by all council departments and agencies, and that all services support children that are or have been in our care. This enables children in care and previously in care to benefit from the widest possible resources to support them in their lives.
- 3.6 The Corporate Parenting Board meets 4 times a year and is co-chaired by the Deputy Chair of the CYPS Committee and a member of the Care Leavers Forum. It has a responsibility to ensure that the council's Corporate Parenting Strategy is delivered. (Appendix 1 - Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020-23).
- 3.7 Children and young people we care for have written 10 promises they want the council, as their corporate parent, to deliver on (see Appendix 2). These are regularly reviewed to ensure children and young people can tell us what is important to them. This work is coordinated through our Children in Care Council.
- 3.8 Our Local Offer (Appendix 3) sets out the support and services our care experienced young people aged 16 can access. The Local Offer sets out the council's commitment to care leavers, supporting them to
- develop healthy and safe relationships
  - maintain physical and emotional health and well-being
  - have access to education, training, and employment opportunities
  - have financial support and security
  - have access to high quality supported accommodation
  - prepare for independent living and support into their own tenancy.

- 3.9 The Corporate Parenting Board, together with all council committees, has a responsibility to consider how the council is delivering on the 10 promises and Local Offer, and how the work of the council impacts upon children in care and care experienced young people
- 3.10 Over the past 12 months, there has been considerable work with the Care Leavers Forum to develop the functioning of the Corporate Parenting Board to ensure the voice of children and young people is at the centre of how it operates. As stated above, a care experienced young person now co-chairs the Board with the deputy chair of the CYPS Committee.
- 3.11 The agenda for the Board is co-created with our Care Leavers Forum, with young people presenting on the theme selected for each Board meeting. They are supported in this by a participation worker. Officers then respond to the issues raised by the young people and to councillor questions and challenges. This enables scrutiny by both our care experienced young people and elected members.
- 3.12 Themes discussed at the Corporate Parenting Board in the past 12 months have included the housing needs of care leavers; physical and mental health needs: the Local Offer to care experienced young people.
- 3.13 Young people have raised several requests following these discussions at Board and this has led to:
- a restructuring of Corporate Parenting Board meetings to enable more input from care experienced young people, including co-chairing arrangements
  - council tax exemption for care experienced young people up to the age of 25
  - Baby Box Project established with all care experienced parents receiving essential equipment for their baby and additional financial support.
  - Commitment for free Big Lemon bus travel available
  - DIY volunteer scheme for council employees to help care leavers when moving into their own accommodation
  - a new housing protocol for care experienced young people being developed between Housing and FCL
  - financial remuneration for being part of the Care leavers Forum and Corporate Parenting Board.
- 3.14 The Corporate Parenting Board is presented with regular data and metrics regarding children in care and those previously in care. The 2021/22 Corporate Parenting Dashboard (Appendix 4) outlines the key areas of performance.
- 3.15 It is important to celebrate the success of our children in care and care experienced young people. Our “Flying High” Children in Care Awards 2022 were held on 14 October 2022 to celebrate the successes and achievements of our children and young people in care and care leavers. The awards were held at the i360 and included performances by J1\_Active

and Dred – both of whom are young people with experience of the care system.

- 3.16 It is encouraging that the council's Chief Executive and several Councillors attended the event.
- 3.17 A review of the Corporate Parenting Board took place on 28 November 2022. It was agreed that there would be particular focus on:
- Development of a training programme around corporate parenting for councillors and to support increased attendance of elected members at the Board
  - Expanding the Board membership to include CVS representation and Health partners as standing members
  - Cross council directorate attendance at the Board
  - 3 Corporate Parenting Board meetings a year to be themed with the 4<sup>th</sup> to be an annual review and forward planning meeting
  - An action log to be created to track actions from meetings
  - Supporting councillors to develop a councillor profile that can be shared with children in care and care leavers.
  - Terms of Reference to be updated to incorporate the above and the youth co-chair.
- 3.18 The Terms of Reference (Appendix 5) have been updated to incorporate the new model with a young person co-chair and the outcomes from the development day work.

#### **4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options**

- 4.1 This report sets out the purpose and responsibilities of a corporate parent, details the changes that have been made to the Corporate Parenting Board over the past 12 months and ensure the new terms of reference have the voice of children and young people at the center of what we do.

#### **5. Community engagement and consultation**

- 5.1 The Participation Team supports the Children in Care Council/ Care Leavers Forum to meet regularly with decision makers and Corporate Parenting Board members. It also supports young people to attend and present at meetings and take part in discussions with senior council officers and partner agencies. Both Forums supported to participate in local, regional and national developments.

#### **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 Corporate parenting is the responsibility of every councillor and council officer. The purpose of the Corporate Parenting Board is to assure itself that the council is meeting its duties towards children in care for and care experienced young people.

- 6.2 Over the last year considerable work has taken place to develop the voice of children in care and previously in care within the Corporate Parenting Board. The challenge going forward is ensuring this voice is heard across all council committees and across all services areas within the council.
- 6.3 Children in care and those previously in care have a right to be fully supported to achieve their potential, recognising that they often start from a position of disadvantage. The underlying principle for a corporate parent is to question whether the services and support being offered to a child in care or previously in care would be good enough for their own child. Elected members and council officers have a duty to ensure this is always the case.

## **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1 There are no financial implications.

Name of finance officer consulted: David Ellis Date consulted (29.11.22):

## **8. Legal implications**

- 8.1 The council has statutory responsibilities to any child in the care of the council and to care leavers. The delivery of those duties is a key function of any councillor.
- 8.2 Any changes to the existing TOR of the CPB recommended by this Committee will need to be approved by the Policy and Resources Committee before the constitution of the CPB can be updated.

Name of lawyer consulted: Natasha Watson Date consulted: 21.12.22

## **9. Equalities implications**

- 9.1 It is important to dispel the myths and challenge the stigma and discrimination faced by children and young people in care and care leavers. This is achieved by celebrating individuality, championing diversity and inclusion and helping children and young people understand where they come from.
- 9.2 The city council has made a pledge to become an anti-racist organisation. Within social work services there is a recognition that we must do better to support Black and Global Majority children and young people by tackling systemic inequality, championing diversity, and practicing empathy in our individual roles.
- 9.3 Our children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) need special consideration as have difficulties communicating their thoughts and feelings and can feel excluded.

## **10. Sustainability implications**

- 10.1 Within our services and role as Corporate Parents we aim to address sustainability by
- sustainable procurement: to ensure that our suppliers share our commitment to reducing the impact of the products and services they provide
  - sustainable travel and transport - travel is kept to a minimum but where necessary active and sustainable travel is prioritized
  - supporting foster carers to consider their sustainability and supporting them in making their homes more sustainable.

## **11. Other Implications**

### **Social Value and procurement implications**

- 11.1 None identified

### **Crime & disorder implications:**

- 11.2 None identified

### **Public health implications:**

- 11.3 None identified

## **Supporting Documentation**

1. Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020-2023
2. 10 Promises to Children in Care
3. "Reach for the Stars" Local Offer to Care leavers
4. Corporate Parenting Dashboard end of year 2021-22
5. Updated Corporate Parenting Board Terms of Reference