

Title of report: Corporate Parenting Strategy

Meeting: Council

Meeting date: 7 March 2025

Report by: Cabinet member children and young people

Classification

Open

Decision type

Council endorsement

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To endorse the corporate parenting strategy 2025-2027.

Recommendation(s)

That Council

- a) **Endorse the corporate parenting strategy 2025-2027 as approved by the Corporate Parenting Board (appendix 1)**

Alternative options

1. The strategy sets out the ambition, actions and outcomes we, as a local authority, need to achieve for our children and young people as a Corporate Parent. We need to evidence the Council's commitment to corporate parenting, to define what difference it will achieve and to evaluate how outcomes are improved for looked after children and care leavers. The most appropriate way to do this is through a Corporate Parenting Strategy. Not to have such a strategy limits our ability to communicate the commitment and priority we are giving to our Looked After Children, Care Leavers and their carers.

Key considerations

2. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced a duty on councils to have regard to the following corporate parenting principles when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people;
 - I. to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
 - II. to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
 - III. to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
 - IV. 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
 - V. to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
 - VI. for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
 - VII. to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.
3. To be able to evidence the council's commitment and action in relation to these responsibilities it is necessary to have a strategy. As corporate parents it is the council's responsibility to ensure that every effort is made to enable children and young people in care to succeed. Corporate parenting is a responsibility of all elected members and officers within the council as well as statutory partners. The strategy attached at appendix A, enables the council and its partners to be clear about priorities, what needs to be done and by whom if change is to be achieved.
4. The key priorities of the strategy are: Our children and young people
 - I. Have safe, stable and caring places to live and call home.
 - II. Are emotionally, physically and mentally healthy.
 - III. Have inclusive and enriching environments to learn, develop, have fun, and achieve
 - IV. Are able to build trusted relationships with the people in their lives, are able to be themselves and are free from stigma
 - V. Can make their voice heard and shape how services are designed and delivered.
 - VI. Are safe and protected from harm, abuse and exploitation.
 - VII. Young people leave care and become independent and thriving adults
5. In order to track the progress of the strategy, the Corporate Parenting Board will receive regular progress updates.

Community impact

6. The Council Plan 2024–2028 includes the ambition to support to children and young people to thrive, be safe, and for families to be supported. We believe that children and young people are best supported in their family networks and within highly effective schools and flourishing communities. Our children are the future.
7. The delivery plan 2024/25 includes the ambition to develop and launch an updated corporate parenting strategy, together with an implementation plan.

Environmental Impact

8. There is no direct environmental impact as a result of this strategy.

Equality duty

9. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that it is paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
10. Due to the broad scope of this strategy and its potential impact on certain protected characteristics, an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is provided at Appendix 2 for the impact on the children and young people. No negative impacts have been identified.
11. The Equality impact Assessment provided will be kept under review, and developed during the course of the strategy and will be further reviewed as part of the development of the next strategy.

Resource implications

12. There are no resource implications as a result of this strategy as it will be delivered through existing resources.

Legal implications

13. As set out within the report above, The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduced a duty on councils to have regard to a set of corporate parenting principles when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people. This is found within s(1) of the Children and Social Work Act 2017:-

“s1 Corporate parenting principles

(1) A local authority in England must, in carrying out functions in relation to the children and young people mentioned in subsection (2), have regard to the need—

(a) to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;

(b) to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;

(c) to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;

(d) 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;

(e) to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;

(f) for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work;

(g) to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

14. As identified within this report it is necessary and appropriate to have a Corporate Parenting Strategy which sets out how the Council will meet its statutory duties to adhere s1 of The Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the Corporate Parenting Principles contained therein. The Strategy correctly sets out how the Council will meet its statutory duties in this regard.

Risk management

15. There are no risks identified to adopting a clear strategy for Corporate Parenting
16. There are risks associated with having no clear strategy in place. There are expectations upon the Council and its partners to act as responsible and ambitious corporate parents for looked after children and care leavers.

Consultees

17. A consultation has been carried out with our Care Leavers through the participation groups. They provided the open letter to the council which is recorded in the opening pages. Their views continue to be gained to ensure that the process remains connected to the people at the heart of the strategy. All partners have been consulted for them to provide evidence of actions for previous strategy and ambitions moving forward.
18. A Political Group Consultation was also held on 26 November 2024 to discuss the corporate parenting strategy. The session was attended by ten councillors, representing four different political parties

Appendices

Appendix 1 Corporate Parenting Strategy
Appendix 2 Equality Impact Assessment

Background papers

None

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Governance	John Coleman	Date 21/11/2024
Finance	Judith Tramner	Date 18/11/2024
Legal	Tess Burgess	Date 26/11/2024
Communications	Luenne Featherstone	Date 14/11/2024
Equality Duty	Harriett Yellin	Date 29/11/2024
Procurement	Claire Powell	Date 15/11/2024
Risk	Chris Tindall-Jones	Date 22/11/2024
Approved by	Tina Russell	Date 10/12/2024