



<u>Committee and Date</u>	<u>Item</u>
Young People's Scrutiny 20 July 2016	<u>Public</u>

Corporate Parenting

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1. Summary

- 1.1 This report reminds Scrutiny Panel of what is meant by Corporate Parenting and introduces the revised Corporate Parenting Strategy 2016 (Appendix 1) which sets out our approach to fulfil our statutory responsibility.
- 1.2 The report includes the recent assurance report to Shropshire's Safeguarding Children Board in March 2016 (Appendix 2) which sets out the arrangements in place by Children Services to ensure that those young people for whom we have Corporate Parenting responsibility for are safeguarded.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The members of the panel are asked to note the contents of this report.
- 2.2 Members are asked to consider how they can collectively contribute to the continued health, safety and development for the children in care for whom we have corporate parenting responsibilities.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

(NB This will include the following: Risk Management, Human Rights, Equalities, Community and other Consultation)

4. Financial Implications

This report does presents information to support decision making. Accountable officers, senior managers and key decision makers may use the information to inform actions or interventions for the prioritisation and use of resources. There are financial implications of not having robust arrangements for children in care and those leaving care and accessing leaving care services

5. Background

- 5.1 Shropshire Council aims to support the majority of its children and young people within their own families and communities. However for a small number this is not possible and they require alternative short term or long term care.

Corporate Parenting is the term used for the collective responsibility of the Council and its partners to ensure safe, meaningful and effective protection of children and young people in care, and care leavers.

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 safeguarding for the children who are looked after by the council.

A child in the care of the council looks to the whole council to be the best parent it can be to that child.

Every member and employee of the council has the statutory responsibility to act on behalf and for that child in the same way that a good parent would act for their child.

Every good parent knows that children require a safe and secure environment in which to grow and thrive. Parents protect and support their children against the dangers and risks of life. Parents are ambitious for them and want them to reach their potential. Parents celebrate and share in their achievements.

5.2 Messages from Central Government

Edward Timpson , Children's Minister – "Children in care need to be a priority across the whole council, not just for children's services ...¹" "The rule of thumb should be to give children in care the same opportunities as you would give your own children... ²" "You have no greater responsibility than when you are acting as corporate parents... ³"

(1,2,3 Putting Corporate Parenting in to Practice, NCB 2013)

These messages have been followed by the drafting of the **Children and Social Work Bill** (Appendix 3 briefing). The Government has reaffirmed its plans to enable a child to be adopted by a new family in a shorter period of time, improve the

standards of social work, set out principles of Corporate Parenting and give greater support for children leaving care through a new 'Care Leavers' Covenant'.

5.3 Taking up the Challenge

Our Corporate Parenting Strategy 2016- 2018 does already reflect the principals set out in the bill but requires a commitment from all elected members and council employees in a council-wide approach. The Strategy was presented to Corporate Parenting Panel on the 8th June 2016 where it was endorsed

Corporate Parenting involves the whole council and its partners acting as a good parent and "corporate family", committing resources and working together to improve the lives of all children and young people in care and care leavers.

Corporate Parenting is about prioritising needs, listening to views and wishes and supporting children and young people to make the most of their lives. When decisions are being taken for design of services, Council leaders need to consider what impact these decisions will have on our Looked After Children and Care Leavers and how this will affect our discharge of Corporate Parenting responsibility.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Councillor David Minnery

Local Member

All Members

Appendices

Appendix 1 Corporate Parenting Strategy 2016-18

Appendix 2 Corporate Parenting Assurance Report to SSCB March 2016

Appendix 3 Officer Briefing to Corporate Parenting Panel on The Children and Social Work Bill 2016