

**PROPOSAL FOR THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD TO BECOME A
SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE**

To: **Constitution and Ethics Committee**

Meeting Date: **26 September 2017**

From: **Lou Williams, Service Director, Children's Services,
People and Communities Directorate**

Purpose: **The Committee is asked to consider a proposal that the
Corporate Parenting Board become a sub-committee of
the Children and Young People Committee**

Recommendation: **The Constitution and Ethics Committee is asked to
recommend to Council the proposal that the Corporate
Parenting Board become a sub-committee of the Children
and Young People Committee, and suggested Terms of
Reference, in order to strengthen the status and
accountability of Corporate Parenting in the Council.**

<i>Officer contact:</i>	
Name:	Fiona Mackirdy
Post:	Head of Countywide and Looked After Children's Services
Email:	Fiona.Mackirdy@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel:	01223 715576

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A raft of legislation including the Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004 have successively strengthened public bodies' responsibilities to looked after children. Statutory Guidance issued by the Department for Education in 2012 also specifically laid out the statutory roles of Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services to cover both the social care and education services of the local authority. These individuals should provide strong leadership and ensure that there is a clear line of accountability for children's well-being. They have particular responsibility for vulnerable groups of children, including those for whom they are corporate parents. The Lead Member should provide *political* leadership whilst the Director of Children's Services should provide *professional* leadership.
- 1.2 Although not a statutory requirement, most local authorities have established a group of elected members to oversee the corporate parenting function of the local authority. All councillors and council officers share corporate parenting responsibility and cannot abdicate this responsibility in favour of those they see as being more central, but this does not mean that everyone has the same role
- 1.3 Cambridgeshire County Council established a Corporate Parenting Board comprising elected members nominated by the Children and Young People's Committee, invited officers and representatives from the Voices Matter looked after children's group.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 In Cambridgeshire the role of the Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) has been to ensure that the whole Council and partner agencies have a joint commitment to Corporate Parenting in order to achieve continuing improvements in the lives and outcomes for looked after children, young people and care leavers. The role of the Board has been to
 - ensure that the Council fulfils its responsibilities to Looked After Children and Care Leavers in accordance with the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2015-2018 and the Council's Pledge to Looked After Children
 - to oversee the effective consultation and engagement of children and young people and carers in the planning and delivery of services
 - To receive regular reports on the provision of services for Looked After children and care leavers - as required in legislation and fulfilling the purpose of monitoring and offering advice
 - To offer advice and monitor a range of outcomes for looked after children and care leavers

The current Terms of Reference are attached at **Appendix 1**.

- 2.2 Functioning in the current way, the Board does experience variable engagement and participation. This presents a risk to the evaluation and scrutiny that the Council delivers in how it is performing to looked after children and care leavers. The Board does not have clear decision making powers in the same way a Committee of the council would. Currently the Board would struggle to evidence to children, care leavers and Ofsted how its activity has made a tangible difference to outcomes for children, or how services are delivered.

2.3 Corporate parenting activity needs to be strengthened by

- An increased effectiveness of the corporate parenting function through challenge, scrutiny and clear decision making supported by good performance data and outcomes reporting.
- Consistent and clear engagement in the corporate parenting agenda by officers across the council (including other Directorates), Elected Members and partners.
- Greater join-up by all parts of the Council and in all committees of the Council in thinking about how decisions affect those children in the council's care.
- Greater consideration as to how the voices of children and care leavers are heard and considered as part of Corporate Parenting processes, including engagement by Elected Members and Officers with the Children in Care Council (Voices Matter).

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Corporate Parenting Board becomes a sub-committee of the Children and Young People (CYP) Committee. This would clarify and strengthen arrangements for oversight and decision making in respect of corporate parenting by having clear accountability to the CYP Committee, a scheme of delegated authority and framework for decision making in respect of Corporate Parenting.
- 3.2 It is proposed that the membership of the sub-committee would consist of Five Elected Members with Two co-opted non-voting young people's representatives.
- 3.3 The proposed terms of reference are attached at **Appendix 2**

Source Documents	Location
Constitution	https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/council-structure/council-constitution/