

## Corporate Parenting Board – Appointment of Council Representatives

### Joint Report by Don Ledingham, Director, Education and Children's Services and John Blair, Director, Corporate Resources

#### 1 Purpose of Report

This report invites the Council to endorse the arrangements for a new Corporate Parenting Board and to appoint two elected members to serve on this.

#### 2 Background

2.1 At its meeting on 25 March 2013, the Corporate Management Team (CMT) approved the proposals contained in the attached report (**Appendix**) by the Director, Education and Children's Services, to establish a Corporate Parenting Panel (subsequently renamed as the Corporate Parenting Board) to provide robust scrutiny and challenge of the services and actions to support looked after children. Subsequent discussion by chief officers decided to include a young people's representative and a further Head of Service to ensure the views of all stakeholders are taken into account. Taking this and the new executive leadership structure of the Council into account the proposed membership of the Board is therefore as follows:-

- Chief Executive (Chair)
- Elected Members x 2
- Director, Education, Communities and Economy
- Director, Health and Social Care
- Director, Corporate Resources
- Head of Housing & Community Safety
- Head of Children & Families
- Head of Education
- Young people's representative

2.2 It will be noted from the CMT report that the existing Children's Champion Scheme (**available in the Members' library**) has been underutilised. This is in the sense that there has been a limited number of looked after children requiring this type of support. The proposed new Board will however deal with a wider range of looked after children and young people and will scrutinise, challenge, identify barriers and take action at the earliest stage regarding their needs and risks or where there are concerns about their behaviour and wellbeing, in particular concerning:-

- Exclusions from School,
- Exclusion from community,

- Exclusion from training opportunities,
- Youth offending,
- Transitions,
- Homelessness.

- 2.3** The chief officers' discussion resulted in an additional action for the 13/14 Action Plan (Appendix 1.1): review and revise internal strategies and processes, with the Board as Lead.
- 2.4** In addition, the Children's Services Bill, which is expected to be enacted in 2014, proposes that looked after children will receive services up to the age of 21, and where there are compelling reasons, up to the age of 25.

### **3 Report Implications**

#### **3.1 Resource**

There are no resource implications arising from this report in relation to the appointment of two councillors to serve on the Board. However, the work of the Board will be expected over time to result in savings in the Children and Families budget and improved long term outcomes for young people.

#### **3.2 Risk**

The risk of not taking pro-active action to deal with issues and barriers facing children and young people will continue to sustain reactive high cost spend and poorer long term outcomes. The work of the new Corporate Parenting Board will assist the move to earlier intervention.

#### **3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation**

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☒ Community safety
- ☒ Adult health, care and housing
- ☒ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☒ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☐ Sustainable growth
- ☒ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

#### **3.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes**

The work of the Corporate Parenting Board will contribute to a number of Priorities, Actions and Indicators across the Single Midlothian Plan and will directly influence one of the three key priorities to improve positive destinations for school leavers and (in the longer term as the children and young people become adults) also influence the key priority to support economic growth. Younger children that are looked after will be involved in our Early Years work – the third key priority.

#### **3.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach**

Although the Board will be dealing with children and young people who have already reached specialist services, the work of the Board includes identifying and disseminating good practice; therefore the longer term impact should

include preventing other children and young people from requiring specialist services. Achieving the aim of promoting positive destination and improved outcomes will prevent the children and young people moving on to adult services.

### **3.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders**

The services delivered to looked after children (LAC) already encompass a number of partners, such as the LAC Nurse from the NHS, and the Board will promote effective multi agency interventions and practice.

The Board will also look to identify ways of involving and supporting the community planning partnerships where appropriate, e.g. traineeships – ‘family firm’, education, etc.

### **3.7 Ensuring Equalities**

An EqIA has been carried out and the Board is not expected to be either directly or indirectly discriminatory on the basis of age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or gender reassignment. Instead it is intended that the Board will have benefits to children and young people who may share these protected characteristics. The Corporate Parenting Board – EQIA Form is in the Members’ library.

### **3.8 Supporting Sustainable Development**

A Sustainability Impact Check has been carried out and no significant negative effects were identified. The Corporate Parenting Board – SIA Form is in the Members’ library.

The Board will have no or minimal effect in relation to the environment such that strategic environmental assessment (‘SEA’) will not be required, and this is being reported to the SEA ‘consultation authorities’.

### **3.9 IT Issues**

None.

## **4 Recommendation**

The Council is asked to:-

- (a) endorse the arrangements for the new Corporate Parenting Board including the revised membership; and
- (b) appoint two elected members to serve on the Board.

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Establishment of a Corporate Parenting Panel

Report by Don Ledingham, Director, Education and Children's Services

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## 1 Proposal

- 1.1 The following should be read in conjunction with the existing Children's Champion Scheme and Corporate Parenting policies and procedures **(the Children's Champion Scheme Procedure, Corporate Parenting Strategy and Looked After and Accommodated Children and Young People Procedures are available in the Members' library).**

## 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The meeting is asked to give consideration to the following,
- i Agree the children's champion scheme is underutilised and,
  - ii Replace with a Corporate Parenting Panel,
  - iii Agree the remit as stated on page 2 of this report,
  - iv In addition, that the Panel scrutinise, challenge and unblock barriers which hinder this group of vulnerable children and young people,
  - v That membership reflect the importance of the corporate parenting agenda,
  - vi That the Panel meet 4 times a year.

## 3 Corporate Parent Policy Context

- 3.1 Elected Members and senior Midlothian Council officers are responsible for ensuring that looked after and accommodated children and young people in their care are healthy, safe, enjoy and achieve. Furthermore that these children are supported to make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being, both while they are in care and when they leave care.
- 3.2 Specifically the Corporate Parenting Panel need to:
- Be well informed about the children and young people for whom they are responsible (*see Appendix 1.2*)
  - Think about how children and young people are affected by council decisions
  - Listen to what children and young people say
  - Champion our Looked After/Looked after and Accommodated children and young people
- 3.3 Corporate Parenting includes children who are 'Looked After' and are subject to a supervision requirement imposed by a Children's Hearing. Children and young people who are 'Looked After and Accommodated' (LAAC) are those who cannot remain living with their natural parents and have been taken into

the care of the Council. They may be placed with relatives, with foster carers, or in a residential setting.

- 3.4 The role of the Corporate Parent is to ensure that the services provided by Midlothian Council contribute towards achieving positive outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people.
- 3.5 The notion of corporate parenting applies equally to the frontline workforce, senior managers and elected members, and the aim is to engage all key professionals and decision makers in improving outcomes for this group of vulnerable children and young people. Clear strategic and political leadership is highlighted as crucial in ensuring that Looked After Children and the Corporate Parenting agenda is given the appropriate profile and priority.

## **4 Remit**

- 4.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel will focus on the multi and single agency processes and practice in relation to our 'looked after' and 'looked after and accommodated' children. The Corporate Parenting Panel will scrutinise, challenge and identify barriers and take action with regard to children and young people's needs and risks at the earliest stage or where there are concerns about their behaviour and wellbeing. In particular,
- Exclusions from School,
  - Exclusion from community,
  - Exclusion from training opportunities,
  - Youth offending,
  - Transitions,
  - Homelessness.

## **5 Terms of Reference**

- Focus on 'looked after' and 'looked after and accommodated' children and young people, especially those at risk of long-term accommodation,
- Embed the principles and practice of 'Getting It Right For Every Child' within the process,
- Challenge and scrutinise those working with this group of young people,
- Promote effective multi agency interventions and practice with young people who are at risk of moving from children's to adult processes,
- Identify and disseminate good practice, including supporting local partners to develop knowledge and understanding around this group of vulnerable children and young people,
- Ensure that all our systems are more effective in sharing information to support identification and intervention for young people at risk,
- Promote consistent performance which demonstrates positive destination and improved outcomes for young people, within the GIRFEC approach,
- Ensure this work is in the context of financial efficacy,

- Identify ways of involving and supporting the community planning partnerships where appropriate, e.g. traineeships – ‘family firm’, education, etc.
- Importantly, celebrate the success of our children and young people through a series of formal and informal occasions.

## **6 Members**

Kenneth Lawrie	Chair
Elected Members(x2)	TBC
Don Ledingham	Director, Educations and Children’s Service
Eibhlin McHugh	Director, Communities & Wellbeing
John Blair	Director, Corporate Resources
Head of Services x 2	TBC

## **7 Reporting Arrangements**

- 7.1 The Panel shall meet four times a year to provide both an advisory and scrutiny role. The Corporate Parent members may wish to have information reported to them on a regular basis and mechanisms can be put in place to access this information easily.
- 7.2 Notes of the meeting and subsequent action planning shall be available to any Panel member on request, excluding any information which, by decision of the Panel, is considered to be confidential.

### **Report Contact:**

**Mary Smith**

Head of Service

Children and Families

Education & children’s Services

## Appendix 1.1

### Proposed 13/14 Action Plan

Priority	Lead	Strategic Links	RAG
Develop a Peer Mentoring system	G. Clark	Midlothian Youth Platform and, Midlothian Council Investors in Children	
Make Children's Hearings & LAC reviews more child friendly	J. Tranent	LAC Reviewing Officers	
Develop the 'Family Firm'	Corporate Parenting Panel	Community Planning Partnership Corporate Resources Human Resources	
More support for children & young people in Foster Care and/or Accommodated at home	J. Foley	Who Cares? Scotland, Life Changes Trust, Explore the 'Whole Systems approach' within partnership	
Facilitate and improve opportunities from children and young people to become more involved in care planning process	C. Schaffer	LAC Reviewing Officers Joint review of council systems and processes	
More LAC awareness raising within agencies, services and practitioners	Corporate Parenting Panel	Community Planning Partnership	
Individual & Strategic championing by senior officers & elected members with individual Looked After children & key care entities such as residential units	Corporate Parenting Panel	Embed Corporate parenting throughout Midlothian's children's resources	
Directly involve young people in the Corporate Parenting Board process			
Access to Health Review for all LAC			
Celebrate success	Corporate Parenting Panel	Annual function, awards, etc	

## Appendix 1.2

Do we know the answers to the following during this reporting period?

QUESTION		ANSWER
1.	How many children and young people do we have corporate parenting responsibility for?	
2.	Are they safe, and how do we know.	
3.	How many experience multiple placement disruption (individual and aggregate) including foster care and residential schools?	
4.	That a clear set of outcomes has been agreed for Looked After Children?	
5.	What are their health needs and how are these being met?	
6.	What are their housing needs?	
7.	What support is being provided to young people moving on to independence?	
8.	What action is being taken to reduce offending behaviour?	
9.	How many Looked After Children there are in each of our schools?	
10.	What arrangements are in place to track their attendance and attainment levels?	
11.	What arrangements are in place to ensure that appropriate supports are in place to meet these needs?	
12.	How many Looked After Children are excluded from our schools?	
13.	Which Looked After Children in our schools are preparing for Standard	
14.	How many go on to further or higher education?	
15.	How many go on to full time employment?	
16.	How much is being spent on services for looked after children?	