



**Report of Corporate Management Team
Councillor Olwyn Gunn, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and
Young People's Services
Councillor Peter Brookes, Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to present the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report April 2018 – March 2019, for endorsement.
- 2 The Annual Report was agreed by the Corporate Parenting Panel at its meeting on 19 July 2019.
- 3 The Annual Report is attached as Appendix 2 of this report.

Executive summary

- 4 Following an inspection of Durham County Council's Children's Services by Ofsted in February/March 2016 the service was judged as requiring improvement. Since this judgement the service has carried out work to address Ofsted's recommendations and with the Council's Transformation Agenda has made significant improvements in relation to political oversight of Children's Services including the revised terms of reference of the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- 5 The Corporate Parenting Panel's Terms of Reference form part of Durham County Council's constitution and make specific reference that the Corporate Parenting Panel will prepare and provide an annual report that will be shared with Council, Cabinet and Scrutiny.
- 6 This is the second Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Panel, following the changes to political oversight.

Recommendations

7 Cabinet are requested to:

- Note the content of the Annual Report
- Endorse the Annual report

Background

- 8 In March 2016, Durham County Council's Children's Services were inspected by OFSTED who found that services required improvement. Their report made fourteen recommendations including: "Review existing arrangements to ensure that political and senior leaders have access to improved quantitative and qualitative performance information that enables them to have an accurate picture of the current practice delivered to children, so that they can develop strategies to maintain and improve the quality of front-line practice."
- 9 Following the publication of the Ofsted Inspection report an Ofsted Improvement Plan was developed and was grouped into four themes, including The Strengthening Political and Management Oversight theme. Benchmarking was undertaken, and as a result changes were made to political oversight arrangements, including the functions, membership, governance and administration of the Corporate Parenting Panel. Work has also been undertaken to raise the profile of the Corporate Parenting Panel's work.
- 10 Further work has been done following the approval of changes to the constitution, and terms of reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel were agreed, which incorporates all aspects of the constitutional changes. The terms of reference include the functions described in the Constitution with the responsibilities of the Corporate Parenting Panel in relation to each of the functions clearly set out.
- 11 The terms of reference make specific reference that the Corporate Parenting Panel will prepare and provide an annual report that will be shared with Council, Cabinet and Scrutiny.

Development of the Annual Report

- 12 To ensure the voice of the child is reflected in the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel, it was agreed that young people from the Children in Care Council, supported by officers from Transformation and Partnerships, would develop the Corporate Parenting Panel's Annual Report for 2017-18.
- 13 The young people worked on the design, content and language of the Annual Report to ensure it was easy to read and understand.
- 14 The Annual Report was well received, and a decision was made to follow a similar process for the development of the Annual Report for 2018-19.

- 15 To ensure we continue to raise the profile of the Corporate Parenting Panel, the Durham County Council Communications and Marketing Team have been involved in the development of the 2018-19 Annual Report to ensure it follows a more corporate format, whilst ensuring it uses language and design which is also appealing to young people.
- 16 The Annual Report will hold a more prominent position on the Durham County Council website, and will again be hosted on the Investing in Children Website, and the Children in Care Council website.
- 17 The Annual Report includes information on:
 - (a) What a Corporate Parent is
 - (b) The role of the Corporate Parenting Panel
 - (c) The Corporate Parenting Panel's Terms of Reference
 - (d) Key performance data
 - (e) Achievements
 - (f) Evidencing the changes made as a result of consultation with young people 'You Said – We Did'
 - (g) The Corporate Parenting Panel's priorities for 2019/20

Terms of Reference

- 18 The five functions of the Corporate Parenting Panel's Terms of Reference, which were agreed by the Panel at the meeting on 14 December 2018 are as follows:
 - Ensure that the Council acts as a good corporate parent to children and young people in care and care leavers including:
 - Children and Young People in residential care
 - Children and Young People in foster care
 - Children and Young People placed for adoption
 - Children and Young People placed at home under Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations
 - Young People who are living in supported lodgings
 - Young People in Secure services
 - Young People in custody.
 - To engage and listen to the views of children, young people and their carers for whom the Council is the parent.
 - To work in partnership with other statutory agencies to drive forward improvements in care.

- To act as the governing body for the Virtual School for looked after children and young people.
- To act as the governing body for Aycliffe Secure Services, monitoring and ensuring the quality of secure accommodation.

Next Steps

Cabinet are requested to note the following key dates for the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report:

- (a) Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 14 October 2019, for information
- (b) Council: 23 October 2019, for information

Conclusion

19 The Annual Report provides oversight of the work undertaken during 2018-19, and the priorities for the year ahead.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Corporate Parenting Panel's role is to lead on ensuring the corporate parenting responsibilities of the Council are being met in line with the duties under the Children Act 1989.

Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 sets out the general duty of the local authority in relation to children looked after by them, to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of these children, ensuring effective, individualised support and access to services.

Finance

There are cost implications for design and print services, however the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report will primarily be shared by email, and will be hosted on the Children in Care Council, Investing in Children and Durham County Council websites to minimise printing and distribution costs.

Consultation

Young people from the Children in Care Council have been involved in the development of the Annual Report.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Looked After Services are available to all children and young people in line with legal duties.

Human Rights

Children and young people have been central to the development of the Annual Report to ensure that their voices are heard.

Crime and Disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications.

Staffing

There are no staffing implications.

Accommodation

There are no accommodation implications.

Risk

There are no risk implications.

Procurement

There are no procurement implications.

Appendix 2: Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2018-19

Attached as a separate document