

15 November 2021

**Corporate Parenting Panel Annual
Report 2020-21**

**Report of Councillor Mamie Simmons, 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 2020-21(attached as Appendix 2) for information.
- 2 The Annual Report 2020-21 was agreed by the Corporate Parenting Panel at its meeting on 2 July 2021, and endorsed by Council at its meeting on 20 October 2021.

Executive summary

- 3 To strengthen political and management oversight of the Corporate Parenting Panel and increase the voice of children and young people in our work, a number of changes were implemented. As a result, the September 2019 Children's Services Ofsted inspection report stated that 'The Corporate Parenting Panel is effective and is maintaining good political and strategic governance of children in care and care leavers'.
- 4 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.
- 5 This is the fourth Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Panel, following the changes to political oversight.

Recommendations

- 6 Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:
 - (a) note the content of the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report, which provides oversight of the work undertaken during 2020-21, and outlines the priorities for the year ahead.

Background

- 7 The terms of reference of the Corporate Parenting Panel are taken from Durham County Council's Constitution with the responsibilities of the Corporate Parenting Panel in relation to each of the functions clearly set out.
- 8 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.
- 9 In September 2019, Durham County Council's Children's Services were inspected by OFSTED. The inspection report states that since previous inspections (JTAI in July 2018, and focused CIN visit in January 2019) 'the local authority has taken swift and decisive action to strengthen services. Pace has increased since the focused visit, and solid improvements can be seen in many service areas, including at the front door and for children in care. Firm foundations are in place to sustain and build on the improvements made'.
- 10 The inspection report also states that 'The Corporate Parenting Panel is effective and is maintaining good political and strategic governance of children in care and care leavers'.

Development of the Annual Report

- 11 To ensure the voice of the child is reflected in the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel, young people from the Children in Care Council, supported by officers from the Partnerships Team, help to develop the Corporate Parenting Panel's Annual Report.
- 12 The young people work on the design, content and language of the Annual Report to ensure it is easy to read and understand.
- 13 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 Annual Report to ensure it follows a more corporate format, whilst ensuring it uses language and design which is also appealing to young people.
- 14 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.

- 15 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 during 2020/21;
 - (f) Priorities for 2021/22.

Conclusion

- 16 Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:
- (a) Note the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report for information, which provides oversight of the work undertaken during 2020-21, and the priorities for the year ahead.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Corporate Parenting Panel's Terms of Reference form part of Durham County Council's Constitution.

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. The consultation has been done in the main through virtual meetings coordinated by Investing in Children, due to the Coronavirus pandemic and lockdown restrictions.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Climate Change

There are no climate change implications.

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 2020-21

Attached as a separate document.