

## **7D : PERSONAL CARE SELECT COMMITTEE**

### **1 THE CORPORATE PARENT ROLE OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL**

#### **Context**

- 1 The Personal Care Select Committee has investigated the Corporate Parent role of the County Council. The term ‘corporate parenting’ was first introduced as one part of the government’s Quality Protects programme to transform children’s services. Corporate parenting includes any person who has a responsibility for the care and protection of children looked after by local authorities and those leaving care. However, elected Members have a statutory role to play. The Children's Act 1989 and associated guidance sets out the County Council’s legal responsibility for these children. Put simply, when thinking of standards for the children in the authority’s care, Members need to be asking: What if this was my child? Would it be good enough for them? Would it be good enough for me?

The full report, which has been circulated separately to Members, examines how well Members in Buckinghamshire meet their responsibility as a Corporate Parent.

#### **Conclusions**

- 2 In the main Members are unaware of the requirements placed on them with regard to Corporate Parenting. Members also lack knowledge of the provision and impact of services for Looked After Children in Buckinghamshire. This situation needs to be rectified. As a result of their investigations the Committee has identified the following issues to be addressed:
  - Reporting channels to Members on their Corporate Parent Role require definition and publicity
  - Recruitment and retention of staff is having a significant and potentially dangerous impact on service delivery

- There is lack of communication between Children’s Services in relation to the exclusion of Looked After Children
- Our performance compared with other Local Authorities requires further investigation

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1 **An explicit set of expectations as a Corporate Parent are set for all Members in the new County Council:**
  - a **This is to be achieved by defining the Corporate Parent role as a key task for all Members of the County Council as part of a job profile;**
  - b **Early in the life of the new Council all Members receive a ‘Corporate Parent’ Pack;**
- 2 **Members have a forum for discussing issues and receiving information concerning Looked After Children;**
- 3 **A fully costed long-term strategy for recruitment and retention of staff is implemented;**
- 4 **Services work together with carers to ensure that notifications of exclusion are made and alternative educational packages are implemented;**
- 5 **Further work be undertaken in comparison with other authorities;**
- 6 **A review of the outcomes of the recommendations of the report is undertaken in six months time.**

**CHAIRMAN**

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Personal Care Select Committee Agendas from:

22 January 2001

19 February 2001

21 March 2001

4 April 2001