



Report to Leader (Children's Services Portfolio)

Decision Date:	25 November 2020
Reference number:	CS02.20
Title:	Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020 - 2023
Relevant councillor(s):	All
Author and/or contact officer:	Tolis Vouyioukas, Corporate Director Children's Services
Ward(s) affected:	All
Recommendations:	For the Cabinet Member Children's Services to consider and approve the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020-2023 for children and young people in or leaving care and endorses its use across the Council and its partners in order to prioritise the needs of this vulnerable group of children and young people.

Reason for decision:

Approving the Corporate Parenting Strategy ensures compliance with the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and endorses the Council's commitment to its children and young people in or leaving care. The strategy's purpose is to ensure the council is confident in delivering its corporate parenting responsibilities.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The responsibility of local authorities to improve outcomes and actively promote the life chances of their children in care and care leavers is referred to as 'Corporate Parenting'. This is because it must be shared by the whole authority in partnership with relevant agencies. The role of the 'Corporate Parent' is to act as the best possible parent for each child to ensure they grow up to achieve the best possible outcomes.

1.2 This strategy sets out Buckinghamshire Council's commitment, explaining how we will be an effective and trustworthy corporate parent for any child or young person who is in our care.

2. Content of report

2.1 Every good parent knows that children need a safe and secure environment in which to grow and thrive. Parents protect and support their children against the dangers and risks of life. Parents are ambitious for them and want them to reach their full potential. Parents celebrate and share their children's achievements. A good parent is also a good listener responding positively to what their children say. A child who is cared for by the council has the right to expect everything from a corporate parent that would be expected from a good parent.

2.2 The concept of Corporate Parenting was introduced by the Government in 1998 as part of a drive to improve the lives of children who are looked after by the local authority. The Corporate Parenting responsibility was reiterated and reinforced in 2007 with the release of the White Paper Care Matters-Time for Change and the underpinning legislation, Children and Young People Act 2008.

2.3 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 compels local authorities to evidence how they meet the seven Corporate Parenting Principles as they are statutory in relation to looked after children and care leavers. These seven Corporate Parenting Principles include:

- To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people.
- To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
- To take into account of the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
- To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
- To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people.
- For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.
- To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

2.4 It is envisaged that this new strategy will give a clear and concise framework to inform children and young people, in or leaving care, of what level of Corporate

Parenting they can receive from Buckinghamshire Council and its partners. In addition, it gives Buckinghamshire's Corporate Parents clear and constructive guidance to ensure services and support is good enough for children and young people in or leaving care.

3. Other options considered

- 3.1 It is good practice to state our ambition across the Council in relation to children in our care. Buckinghamshire Council has the option of not producing a Corporate Parenting Strategy; however, this option has been discounted on the basis that it does not meet good practice standards. In addition, the local authority would not be able to articulate our strategy in relation to children in our care, to regulators such as Ofsted, when necessary.

4. Legal and financial implications

- 4.1 The Corporate Parenting Strategy ensures the Council complies with its statutory duties as defined in the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- 4.2 There are no financial implications attached to the Corporate Parenting Strategy, as the provision is covered within existing budgets.

5. Corporate implications

- 5.1 Children can be in care in a range of different settings, with the authority acting as corporate parent to all of them. This includes foster care, children's homes, secure children's homes, young offender institutions, secure training centres and kinship care. Every councillor and officer within a council has a responsibility to act for those children and young people as a parent would for their own child.

6. Consultation with local councillors & community boards

- 6.1 Not required.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 7.1 In order to inform the priorities of this strategy, a comprehensive survey was circulated to all partners, children and young people. It posed questions about safety and stability, health and well-being, local services, 'having your say', preparation for adulthood and impact of services. Further details of the response can be found in the Strategy itself.

8. Next steps and review

8.1 The strategy will be monitored through the Corporate Parent Panel.

9. Background papers

9.1 No background papers

10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by telephone [01296 382343] or email [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk]

