

North Somerset Council

REPORT TO THE CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY & SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE OF MEETING: 5 MARCH 2020

**SUBJECT OF REPORT: CHANGE OF NAME OF CHILDREN'S CHAMPIONS
GROUP**

TOWN OR PARISH: N/A

**OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: EIFION PRICE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR,
CHILDREN'S SUPPORT AND SAFEGUARDING**

KEY DECISION: N/A

REASON:

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel is asked to endorse the decision of the Children's Champions Group to change its name to the Corporate Parenting Panel.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

A change to the name of the Children's Champions Group and amendment of the terms of reference has been proposed. In order to better describe its purpose, it is proposed that the group should be known as the Corporate Parenting Panel.

2. POLICY

Under the Children Act 2004, local authorities have a duty to promote cooperation between 'relevant partners', including the police, the NHS and education providers, while those partners have a duty to cooperate with the local authority in turn. Guidance on the Act highlights that corporate parenting is a 'task [that] must be shared by the whole local authority and partner agencies.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 defined for the first time in law the responsibility of corporate parents to ensure, as far as possible, secure, nurturing and positive experiences for looked-after children and young people, and care leavers.

It is nationally recognised as good practice for Councils to establish a corporate parenting panel.

As corporate parents, all councillors should seek to stay informed about children in the council's care, and care leavers. However, the establishment of a corporate parenting panel can provide a useful forum for regular, detailed discussion of issues, and a positive link with children in care forums. Members of the corporate parenting panel can also use their position to raise awareness of the role amongst colleagues and provide support to the lead member for children's services.

3. DETAILS

For some time there has been uncertainty among members and officers about the role of the Children's Champions Group. The title appears to imply that the role is to represent all children whereas the true focus is actually on children in care and care leavers.

In order to clarify the role and purpose, the Children's Champions Group proposed that the name is changed to "Corporate Parenting Panel" and hence changes to the terms of reference. Appendix 1 of this report is a copy of the minute from the Children's Champions Group held on 22 October 2019. Appendix 2 is a copy of the revised terms of reference.

4. CONSULTATION

This was discussed by members of the Children's Champions Group.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications

6. LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no climate change or environmental implications

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

This decision has no risk management implications

9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no equality implications

10. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

None

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Extract from minutes of Children’s Champions Group 22 October 2019

Appendix 2 – Revised terms of reference of Corporate Parenting Panel

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Appendix 1

Extract from Minutes of Children's Champions Group held 22 October 2019

"Terms of Reference

The updates to the Terms of Reference were reviewed, including the change of name from Children's Champions Group to Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP).

Concern was expressed that changing the name would limit the Panel's activities to Children Looked After (CLA) only and not all children in North Somerset. It was noted that there were several mechanisms for raising concerns relating to children including the Safeguarding Board, Mental & Advocacy Services, the Youth Justice Plan and social workers being the 'voice of the child' for individual cases. Concerns can also be raised directly with Councillor Gibbons, the Executive Member for Children & Young People's Services. It would also be difficult for the Panel to cover the wide-ranging needs of all children in North Somerset.

It was agreed that CLA were sufficiently important to need their own group. CPP has both a scrutiny and campaigning role on behalf of CLA.

It was noted that the number of North Somerset Councillors that could serve on CPP would no longer be limited to 9 and there would no longer be a need for political balance. This was to enable any Councillor who was interested in CPP to serve.

Resolved:

(1) that the updates to the Terms of Reference be approved;

(2) that the change of name from 'Children's Champions Group' to 'Corporate Parenting Panel' be referred to the Children & Young People Services Policy & Scrutiny Panel (CYPS);"

Appendix 2

Corporate Parenting Panel Terms of Reference

The remit for the Corporate Parenting Panel is as follows:

- (1) To advocate as Corporate Parents on behalf of children and young people looked after by North Somerset Council, including care leavers, and support other elected Members and senior managers across the Council in fulfilling their statutory responsibility as a Corporate Parent and in understanding the impact on looked after children of all Council decisions.
- (2) To examine how the Council's commitment to looked after children and young people in the care of the Council is being carried out in practice, and to make recommendations to the Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services on how this could be improved.
- (3) To promote involvement of all Councillors and Council committees in the corporate parenting role.
- (4) To consider the impact of Council decisions and the activities of relevant partner agencies in contributing to positive outcomes for looked after children and young people and care leavers.
- (5) To engage with and listen to children and young people in care, their carers and care leavers and to respond to their views and take into account the issues they raise when acting on their behalf.
- (6) To develop and implement a work programme
- (7) To provide an annual report and other reports as necessary, as and when appropriate, about matters to do with children and young people in the care of, or who have left the care of, the Council and to report as necessary to the Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services.
- (8) To consider key performance information to ensure that the Council is securing a permanent home for children within the care system.