

**To: The Leader (Executive Member for Council Strategy and Community Cohesion)
18 April 2019**

**Review of Terms of Reference of Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel
Executive Director: People/Executive Director: Delivery**

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval of changes proposed to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel and for the Panel to meet in its revised form from May 2019.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Panel be renamed the Corporate Parenting Advocacy Panel.
- 2.2 That the revised Panel focusses on the advocacy role currently undertaken by the existing Panel.
- 2.3 That scrutiny of performance be undertaken by the Children, Young People & Learning Overview & Scrutiny Panel.
- 2.3 That the Panel be authorised to make recommendations to the most appropriate decision maker or body, as necessary.
- 2.5 That it be noted that the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning be agreed to continue as a be a non-voting member of the Panel.
- 2.6 That the revised Terms of Reference set out in the Annex to this report be approved.
- 2.7 That Debbie Hartrick, Designated Nurse for Children Looked After, East Berkshire CCG, be co-opted onto the Panel's membership.

3 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Panel has met over a series of workshops to clarify its remit and to agree the best approach to continue with the work of the Council's Corporate Parenting function from May 2019. The discussions are summarised below.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 The Panel remains as it is, with co-opted members being included as necessary.

5 Supporting Information

Membership

- 5.1 The Panel proposes to co-opt a number of bodies, from the organisations detailed in the draft Terms of Reference. Debbie Hartrick, Designated Nurse for Children in Care at the CCG has requested to be co-opted to represent the health of Looked After

Children at Panel meetings. The Panel has discussed which organisations they would like to be represented and this is reflected in the draft Terms of Reference.

- 5.2 A number of additional partners will be notified and sent information relating to the meeting, and will be welcome to attend as relevant.
- 5.3 The Panel recommends that members of Say it Loud, Say it Proud (SiLSiP) be co-opted onto their membership to hear about their perspective of being children looked after. However, as the Panel will not be alone with or considering the case of individual children, Disclosure and Barring Checks should not be required.

Relationship to Overview and Scrutiny

- 5.4 During its workshops, the Panel discussed its relationship with, and independence of, the Council's scrutiny function which is responsible for holding the Executive and relevant Executive Member to account for performance relating to Children Looked After. The Panel will continue to receive a small amount of data on a regular basis in order to aid their understanding of the lived experience of Children Looked After. This would clarify the Panel's role in engaging with issues pertinent to Children Looked After, and to advocating on their behalf.
- 5.5 While the Panel will focus on its advocacy role, Panel members consider that their independence from Council decision-making bodies to be valuable in their engagement with Children Looked After. This will allow Panel members to approach matters with an open-mind, and to advocate more effectively on behalf of Children Looked After. For this reason and to avoid any conflict between the scrutiny and advocacy functions, it is proposed that the Executive Member remains on the Panel's membership in a non-voting capacity.
- 5.6 Where the Panel recognises an inconsistency or any concerns relating to the performance data they receive, this will be recommended to Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel for further exploration.

Activity of the Panel

- 5.7 The Panel will act as an advocate for Children Looked After and care leavers, recommending changes where appropriate to address problem areas in the lives of these young people. It is important to note that the Panel will not be considering individual cases. An example of this was the granting of council tax exemption for care leavers which was agreed by the Executive on the Panel's recommendation.
- 5.8 The Panel's meetings will each focus on a particular theme throughout the year relating to key partners, primarily Health, Children Looked After, Social Workers and Education. Representatives from each area shall be invited to present at the meeting in question in relation to their work in that particular area. The Panel will consider whether there are any matters arising from its discussion which would benefit from representation to a Council decision maker on behalf of Children Looked After.
- 5.9 The Panel shall consider the questions 'what if this were my child?' and 'what can we do to put this right?' as suggested in the Local Government Association's Corporate Parenting resource pack.
- 5.10 Corporate Parenting Advocacy Panel shall work in a similar way to a task and finish working group to identify issues and work to troubleshoot and move them on. Due to the focussed scope, the Panel will be able to work intensively on issues and

advocate for children and young people through the Council's decision making processes.

- 5.11 Meetings of this Panel will not be open to the public but periodically information shall be made available of the recent work of the Panel.

6 Consultation and Other Considerations

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The Borough Solicitor has provided advice on the competition, eligibility of chairmanship and governance of this panel.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 There are no financial implications.

Consultation Responses

- 6.3 Not applicable.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 Not applicable.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 Not applicable.

Background Papers

Executive Reports Establishing the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel in July 2006, and revised Terms of Reference approved in October 2010.

Draft Terms of Reference for Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel

Contact for further information

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