

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL** held at Room 15 - Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford, SG17 5TQ on Monday, 30 April 2018

PRESENT

Elected Members (voting)

Cllrs S Dixon (Chairman)
Mrs A L Dodwell (Vice-Chairman)
Mrs A Barker
Mrs S A Goodchild
Ms C Hegley
Mrs T Stock
M A G Versallion
B Wells

Officers (voting)

Mrs S Harrison, Director of Children's Services
Mrs J Ogley, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing

Carers (non-voting)

Mr P Albon

Members in Attendance: Cllrs R D Berry
K Ferguson

Officers in Attendance:	Ms R Coals	– Principal Social Worker and Head of Professional Standards
	Mr A Coman	– Head of Corporate Parenting
	Ms A Craig	– Practice Manager Fostering
	Mrs J Edwards	– Head of Virtual School
	Mr L Manning	– Committee Services Officer
	Ms K Mathu	– CYP Participation Officer
	Miss N Phillips	– Practice Manager Adoption
	Ms S Rymell	– Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Early Help
Others in Attendance:	Ambassador	– For Children in Care Council

CPP/17/48. **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 5 March 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

Minute CPP/17/39 (Members' Interests)

Delete 'Councillor Mrs A Barker declared an interest as a member of the Council's Adoption Panel'.

CPP/17/49. **Members' Interests**

Councillor Mrs A L Dodwell declared an interest as a member of the Council's Fostering Panel.

CPP/17/50. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The following announcements and communications were made:

- The Chairman sought the views of the Committee on whether the Chairman of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be permitted to sit as a member of the Panel. Whilst some Members supported this suggestion the Director of Children's Services stated that it could be difficult for effective scrutiny of an issue to take place if the Member had helped to formulate it. She emphasised the need to be fully aware of boundaries and suggested that, as an alternative, the Member be appointed as an 'observer' instead. Whilst some Members concurred with the Director's suggestion others felt that the presence of the Overview and Scrutiny Chairman would be helpful, especially as some of the reports considered by the Panel were not submitted to the Committee. Following further comment the Director suggested that the Chairman of the Panel present a regular short update to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, thereby raising awareness of issues. In response the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee explained that the Committee had no wish to receive items simply to note and would only wish to consider those items that it could have an input into. If any reports were forwarded from the Panel to the Committee it would be because a decision was required. Given the views expressed the Chairman of the Panel stated that the current arrangements would continue but further discussion would take place.
- The Chairman thanked the Children in Care Council (CiCC) representative for attending and being available to provide her opinion.
- A Member asked for information on the current number of Looked After Children in comparison to past numbers be submitted to future meetings of the Panel. It was agreed that this would be a standing item on future

agendas and cover issues such as turnover and outcomes (parents, adopted, fostered, family guardianship).

CPP/17/51. Amendment to the Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel

The Panel considered a report which set out a request to amend the Panel's Terms of Reference to allow either the Executive Member for Families, Education and Children (the current Chairman) or the Deputy Executive Member (the current Vice-Chairman) to chair the Panel's meetings even when the Executive Member was present.

Points and comments included:

- The Chairman stressed that the reason for the proposed change was because he wished to make greater use of the Vice-Chairman/Deputy Executive Member's skills and experience. Doing so would create greater resilience, allow him to focus on other issues and compliment his management style. He added that he had raised the proposal with the Independent Chairman of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board who had raised no objection. The Director of Children's Services stated that the Panel was strong and, as long as the Executive Member attended its meetings on a regular basis and the Panel was working as it should, there was unlikely to be an objection from Ofsted.
- The possibility of co-chairing the meeting with a CiCC representative was raised and discussion took place on the dates and times on which the Panel's future meetings should be held to enable and encourage young people to attend. The Director of Children's Services suggested they should take place after 4.00 p.m. or during half term. The Vice-Chairman welcomed the suggestion and indicated that times could be flexible. Whilst some Members welcomed the proposals there was also some dissatisfaction at the lack of consultation amongst the Panel and the possible wider implications.
- The CiCC representative had no comment on the proposal.

RESOLVED

- 1 that the General Purposes Committee be requested to consider and approve an amendment of the Corporate Parenting Panel's Terms of Reference to allow the Deputy Executive Member for Families, Education and Children to chair the meetings of the Panel even when the Executive Member for Families, Education and Children was present;**
- 2 that the General Purposes Committee be requested to consider and approve an amendment of the Corporate Parenting Panel's Terms of Reference to allow a representative from the Children in Care Council to co-chair the meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel;**

3 that the Children in Care Council determine which of its members is able to act as co-chair.

(Note: It was subsequently established that amendments to the Corporate Parenting Panel's Terms of Reference could be authorised by the Monitoring Officer, after consultation with the Executive Member for Families, Education and Children and the Director of Children's Services where these have been recommended by the Panel itself (minute E/09/190 of the Executive held on 9 March 2010 refers).

CPP/17/52. Adoption Agency Statement of Purpose 2018/19

The Panel considered the draft Adoption Service Statement of Purpose for 2018/19.

Points and comments included:

- In response to a Member's query the Practice Manager Adoption stated that Parts 9 and 10 of the draft Statement ('Preparation and Assessment' and 'Procedure for Assessment' respectively) remained unchanged and a two stage adopter recruitment and approval process continued.
- A Member drew the Panel's attention to a number of errors in the draft document. The Chairman asked that any amendments be passed to the Practice Manager Adoption.
- Some Members sought clarification regarding the officer structure for corporate parenting following recent changes. The Panel was advised that this information was included in the Member Information Bulletin but a Member commented that it would not be seen by the foster carers or Children in Care Council. However, a foster carer stated that carers were updated by the Director of Children's Services. The Chairman suggested that the officer structure be circulated separately (a copy is attached at Appendix A).
- In response to a Member query regarding the Later Life Letter, the Practice Manager Adoption explained that the Letter was written by the child's social worker and would be given to prospective adopters. It would then be passed to adolescents/early adults and provide information on why the child had been adopted. It was noted that, in addition, all children placed for adoption would have a Life Story Book completed within 10 days of the adoption hearing.
- Discussion took place on the content of paragraph 3.1 of the draft document and where the responsibility for the Adoption Service rested. The Chairman stated that the Practice Manager Adoption would clarify this matter.

- A Member reminded the Panel of the need to find a replacement for her to sit on the Adoption Panel. The Chairman undertook to raise this matter with the Conservative Group for consideration at the Council's Annual Meeting.

RESOLVED

that, subject to the correction of any errors and clarification outlined in the preamble above, the draft Adoption Service Statement of Purpose 2018/19 be approved and adopted.

CPP/17/53. **Fostering Agency Statement of Purpose 2018/19**

The Panel considered the draft Fostering Agency Statement of Purpose for 2018/19.

Points and comments included:

- The Practice Manager Fostering advised that there had been no major changes to the document. Links had been added and issues raised with regard to the previous statement had been considered.
- Reference was made by a Member to various errors in the draft document and the Member undertook to advise the Practice Manager Fostering of these.
- A Member queried if the foster carers' views had been sought and, if so, where they were recorded. In response the Head of Corporate Parenting stated that this information was included in Item 8 (Results of Fostering Recruitment and Retention Strategy) (minute CPP/17/54 below refers). He added that, besides the 'Talktime' meetings he held sessions ('Tea with Alex') with the carers every two months to exchange views and ideas and help develop the service. A foster carer stated that he would welcome the attendance of other Members at the above.

RESOLVED

that, subject to the correction of any errors, the draft Fostering Service Statement of Purpose 2018/19 be approved and adopted.

CPP/17/54. **Results of Fostering Recruitment and Retention Survey**

The Panel considered a report setting out the results of the recent fostering recruitment and retention survey.

Points and comments included:

- With regard to possible methods of recruiting foster carers the Practice Manager Fostering stated that village fetes and radio advertisements

had been tried before and had not proved to be worthwhile. She added that she was open to any suggestions regarding improvements to the recruitment process.

- A Member referred to the survey undertaken by the Fostering Service of its in house foster carers which had focused on recruitment and retention. Whilst the 'headlines' from the survey were included in the officer report she stated that it would have been of use for the Panel to have seen the survey questions and, therefore, known the background. Another Member indicated her support for this and asked if carers had helped to draw it up. She also expressed her disappointment at the low response rate. The Chairman asked that the questions be circulated separately.
- A Member commented on the absence of a mentoring system to allow current foster carers to call on those who were previously carers for advice. One of the carers present indicated that his wife carried out a mentoring role whilst the Practice Manager Fostering advised that the Council did have a formal mentoring system.
- The Head of Corporate Parenting explained that 'Talktime' was a formal meeting with foster carers but the 'Tea with Alex' sessions were informal in nature. The latter had received positive feedback. A foster carer commented on the limited number of foster carers who attended the 'Talktime' meetings and other events and emphasised the need for others to become involved. The Practice Manager acknowledged this situation but added that many carers were very busy.
- A Member commented that some of the new communities arriving in Central Bedfordshire included families with various challenges and queried how the Council was responding. The Head of Corporate Parenting replied that the Council took full account of the need for ethnic and religious diversity amongst its carers. As an example, the Practice Manager Fostering referred to the work undertaken on the recruitment of Muslim carers.
- Mention was made of introducing 'cluster' meetings and of promoting fostering at school.

NOTED

the report on the results of the recent fostering recruitment and retention strategy.

CPP/17/55. **Work Programme**

Members considered a report setting out the Panel's proposed work programme. Deferring some items from consideration at the July meeting was discussed as was the possibility of arranging an additional meeting to deal with outstanding items.

Members considered in depth the challenges they faced in performing their role and how their effectiveness in meetings could be increased. They also expressed disappointment at the delay experienced between requesting that an item be submitted to the Panel and the delay before the report was actually submitted.

The Chairman stated that she would wish to see young people involved in helping to choose the report items.

RESOLVED

that the work programme, as attached at Appendix A of the report of the Committee Services Officer, be approved subject to the following:

- **The outcome of consideration by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel on the prioritisation of the Panel's workload and any changes that could subsequently arise to the work programme.**
- **The submission of the report on Looked After Children social worker churn to the September meeting of the Panel.**
- **The introduction of a standing item comparing the current number of Looked After Children to past numbers and covering issues such as turnover and outcomes (parents, adopted, fostered, family guardianship).**

CPP/17/56. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RESOLVED

that in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 2 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

CPP/17/57. **Final Report Virtual School for Looked After Children**

The Panel considered an exempt updated report for the Virtual School for Looked After Children which provided information on the role of the School and the validated outcomes at Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 for Looked After Children in Central Bedfordshire in the Academic Year 2016/17. It also included data for the academic year 2017/18 and identified the steps being taken in partnership with other agencies including schools and social care to raise the achievement and progress of all Looked After Children.

Points and comments included:

- The Head of Service, Virtual School and Vulnerable Pupils introduced the report and highlighted various points for Members' notice.
- The Head of Service advised the meeting that there was an open invitation to Members to attend a Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting and those interested should contact her.
- The Head of Service stated that Key Stage 4 progress was poor. Information on this would be circulated separately.
- The Head of Service stated that, in her next report to the Panel, she would set out details as to the current situation regarding the education of vulnerable children. She stated that this would be based on information supplied by the schools themselves.
- With regard to the fall in Looked After Children attendance at Key Stage 4 the Head of Service explained that this was a reflection of an issue that arose nationally with the age range 15-16 as some young people stopped fully engaging academically and choose to focus on other interests. It was also sometimes difficult for foster carers to assert control. The Head of Service stressed, however, that schemes were available to help achieve positive outcomes.

NOTED

the exempt updated final report Virtual School for Looked After Children for the Academic Year 2016/17.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.11 p.m.)

Chairman.....

Dated.....

CORPORATE PARENTING SERVICE – STRUCTURE CHART –OCTOBER 2018

Managers Reporting to Alex Coman (Sheryl Mallinson - PA)					
Nigel Stock Practice Manager Corporate Parenting	Ann Bolland	Sharon Hinds	Sarah Malivoire	Annie Craig Practice Manager Fostering	Nickie Phillips Practice Manager Adoption
Jayne Foster Micky Pompa Hannah Miles				Jackie Walsh Emma Thurlow- Pick Linda Day Jenny Howard	Gisele Farmer

CORPORATE PARENTING SERVICE – STRUCTURE CHART –OCTOBER 2018

Managers Reporting to Annie Craig – Fostering			
Jackie Walsh	Emma Thurlow Pick	Linda Day	Jenny Howard
Claire Gaunt-Warner Gemma Webb Liz Brian Nicola Sylvester Aetheria Henry Gill Robinson	Sue Deans Noeline Hutchinson Jessica Buck Matthew Canavan Jade Draper Charlotte Morgan Helen Falkner	Mechelle Mead Julia Barnwell	Victoria Ash

CORPORATE PARENTING SERVICE – STRUCTURE CHART –OCTOBER 2018

Managers Reporting to Alex Coman – Adoption
Nickie Phillips
Sarah O’Connor Laura Bonadies Peter Wilson Sophie Armagon Lisa Breach Anne Devine Penny Wilson Jack Webb

CORPORATE PARENTING SERVICE – STRUCTURE CHART –OCTOBER 2018

Managers Reporting to Alex Coman – Court and Permanency Teams		
Ann Bolland	Sarah Malvoire	Sharon Hinds
<p align="center">Ebenezer Puplambu Katie Lee Satvinder Matoo Rachel Liburd Limor Lancaster Bob Church</p>	<p align="center">Kirtie Baughan Sarah Hall Leigh Butler Anna Styles Fameda Kuddus Herbert Nyika Khundai Chenjerai</p>	<p align="center">Simon Bullen Mim Gale Beverley Sorenson Ghuzala Kausar Anna McCall Emma Hersey</p>

CORPORATE PARENTING SERVICE – STRUCTURE CHART –OCTOBER 2018

Managers Reporting to Alex Coman – Nigel Stock (Business Support – Margaret Newbery)		
Jayne Foster	Hannah Miles	Micky Pompa
Joe Price Sinead Collins Jo Storton Kelly Arnold Sharon Hewitt Lucie Jones Peter Ball	Kirenpreet Sidhu Wellington Gubwe Keshavardhan Jalagari Claire Seamarks Gina Brown Gavin Blackman Danielle Redman Claire Mountney	Sue Waller Rachel Keane Sam Gavin Tracey Fenn Susan Ibrahim Sandeep Sehmbi

This page is intentionally left blank