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**Meeting:** Executive

**Date:** 9 March 2010

**Subject:** **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL - TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Report of:** Cllr Anita Lewis, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services

**Summary:** The report requests the Executive to endorse amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) following consideration by the Panel and the Constitution Advisory Group.

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**Advising Officer:** Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children, Families and Learning.

**Contact Officer:** Martin Pratt - Deputy Director of Children Families and Learning and Assistant Director, Specialist Services/Kathrin John – Head of Democratic Services

**Public/Exempt:** Public

**Wards Affected:** All

**Function of:** Executive

**Key Decision** No

**Reason for urgency/  
exemption from call-in  
(if appropriate)** Not applicable

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Priorities:**

The Corporate Parenting Panel plays a key role in ensuring that the Council is effectively discharging its duty, as corporate parent, to safeguard and promote the welfare of looked after children. This role links into the Council's priority of "Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people"

### **Financial:**

The establishment of one additional elected member place on the Panel will incur very minor additional costs in entitlement to travelling expenses.

### **Legal:**

The Children Act 2004 and the Children Act 2009 set out the duty of a local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of looked after children. This duty is exercised through the role of the corporate parent to children who are looked after.

**Risk Management:**

There are no specific risk management implications arising from this report.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

There is a requirement to ensure that all children and young people have the opportunities to make their views known about the services they receive and to make representations if they feel dissatisfied. The terms of reference of the Panel include provision to ensure that the views of looked after children are listened to and reflected in service delivery.

**Community Safety:**

There are no community safety implications arising from this report.

**Sustainability:**

There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

**Summary of Overview and Scrutiny Comments:**

This matter has not been subject to consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

1. that the revised Terms of Reference of the Corporate Parenting Panel, as set out at Appendix A to this report, be approved.
2. that the Monitoring Officer, after consultation with the Portfolio holder for Children's Services and Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children, Families and Learning, be authorised to approve future amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Corporate Parenting Panel where these have been recommended by the Panel itself.

*Reason for Recommendation(s): To approve changes recommended by the Corporate Parenting Panel, and the Constitution Advisory Group, to be made to the Terms of Reference of the Corporate Parenting Panel.*

**Executive Summary**

To request the Executive to approve proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Corporate Parenting Panel following consideration by the Panel and the Constitution Advisory Group and to also consider authorising the Monitoring Officer, after consultation with the Portfolio holder for Children's Services and the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children, Families and Learning, to amend the Terms of Reference in future, where the changes have been recommended by the Panel itself.

## Supporting Information

1. The Terms of Reference of the Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) were approved by the Shadow Executive on 17 March 2009. This was before Central Bedfordshire Council came into existence and therefore prior to the committee and staffing structures now in force.
2. The CPP has reviewed the Terms of Reference being particularly mindful of the current Directorate Structures and post titles. It also considered the level of officer support required at meetings and the number of Elected Members on the Panel and revisited the number of voting and non-voting members on the Panel.
3. The following changes were proposed by the CPP:-
  - an increase in the number of Elected Members from 8 to 9 to accommodate the Assistant Portfolio Holder for Children, Families and Learning;
  - the only voting members of the Panel should be the 9 Elected Members, the Director of Children, Families and Learning and the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing;
  - an increase in the number of Foster Carer co-opted representatives from 2 to 4;
  - officer support to the Panel should be determined by the relevant Director on a meeting by meeting basis;
  - a minor adjustment to the scoping of the Panel to clarify outcomes.
4. The revised Terms of Reference were considered by the Constitution Advisory Group at its meeting held on 25 January 2010. The Group was advised that the voting members should include the Foster Carer representatives, if a vote was taken. However the need for voting at all by the Panel was raised and it was suggested that there should be a consensus on recommendations and, if not, the issue should be referred for further discussion at the next CPP meeting.
5. The Constitution Advisory Group remained of the view however that it was important to retain provision for voting, but that voting rights should remain limited to the elected Members and Directors, as originally suggested by the CPP, given that the views of the Foster Carer representatives would undoubtedly be taken into account in reaching any decision, in any event.
6. Additionally the Constitution Advisory Group suggested that the proposal to review the frequency of meetings should not be included in the Terms of Reference and should therefore be deleted.

7. The CPP considered the views of the Constitution Advisory Group and the revised Terms of Reference at its meeting on 12 February 2010. The Panel resolved to accept the revised Terms of Reference subject to a minor adjustment to the Scope; but were of the view that the voting provision would be unlikely to be required very often in practice and that where possible consensus should be sought.
8. The revised Terms of Reference are now set out at Appendix A.
9. The Terms of Reference of the CPP do not form part of the Council's Constitution. It is therefore suggested to avoid the need to bring further reports to the Executive in the event of the CPP proposing further changes to its Terms of Reference, that authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer, after consultation with the Portfolio holder for Children's Services and the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children, Families and Learning, to make any necessary amendments to the Terms of Reference where these have been recommended by the CPP itself.

**Appendices:**

Appendix A – Revised Terms of Reference of the Corporate Parenting Panel

**Background Papers:** (open to public inspection)

Report of the Director of Children, Families and Learning to the Shadow Executive on 17 March 2009.

**Location of papers:**

Committee Section, Priory House, Chicksands