

Central Bedfordshire Council

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

2 February 2015

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO CORPORATE PARENTING PLAN 2014 - 2017

Report of:

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Purpose of this report:

- This report summarises the key points of the Corporate Parenting Approach Plan 2014 – 2017
- Makes explicit the Action Plan to implement the Approach Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee is asked to note the content and support the implementation of Central Bedfordshire Council's approach to Corporate Parenting 2014 – 2017.

Issues

1. Key internal and external partners have commented on the Approach Plan. Core members of the Children in Care Council and a group of care leavers have also commented on it.
2. The Central Bedfordshire Council's Approach to Corporate Parenting Plan (Appendix A) consists of three sections.
3. Section One describes the legislative framework, leading to the rationale in creating the new Corporate Parenting Service and its achievement so far.

4. Section Two sets out the Priorities and Strategic Objectives for 2014 to 2017. There are seven Objectives:
 - **Objective 1:** Supporting families to stay together where it is safe to do so by managing risk and supporting children on the edge of care
 - **Objective 2:** Delivery of sufficiently good quality and affordable placements and permanence options for children who come into our care
 - **Objective 3:** Ensuring all Looked After Children (LAC) achieve their potential in education, employment and training
 - **Objective 4:** Ensuring the physical, emotional and mental wellbeing of our looked after children is good and that they are safe from harm
 - **Objective 5:** Listening to and acting on the views of looked after children and young people
 - **Objective 6:** Supporting and guiding our young people through the transition from being looked after to living independently
 - **Objective 7:** Expectations of Council Officers in discharging their duties as Corporate Parents
5. Section Three describes the Corporate Parenting Panel's monitoring role.
6. There are four Appendices to the Approach Plan. Appendix 1 is Central Bedfordshire's pledge to Children in Care. Appendix 2 is the Charter to Care Leavers. Appendix 3 is the Action Plan which was produced by the Corporate Parenting Operations Group and sets out the actions needed to implement the Central Bedfordshire Council Approach to Corporate Parenting Plan.
7. Appendix 4 is the Sufficiency Plan. The Sufficiency Plan outlines how the Council will meet its statutory duty to take steps that secure, so far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation within its area to meet the needs of Central Bedfordshire's LAC and Care Leavers.
8. The Sufficiency Plan also captures the known demand for accommodation for our children and Care Leavers and provides details of how the Council will commission and influence accommodation provision and other types of provision to meet the changing demand from our children and young people.
9. This approach is coherent and complimentary to the Approach to Corporate Parenting Plan and aims to support the vision to deliver better outcomes for our LAC and care leavers by having the right placement or accommodation in the right place, at the right time.

Reason/s for decision

10. Not only is it good practice to have an Approach to Corporate Parenting Plan, it is also an Ofsted requirement.

Council Priorities

11. The Central Bedfordshire Council Approach to Corporate Parenting Plan supports the Council's priorities listed below:
 - improved educational attainment of looked after children and employment opportunities for care leavers
 - promote health and well being and protect the vulnerable. Looked after children and care leavers are considered vulnerable groups.

Corporate Implications

12. Corporate parenting responsibility impacts on the Council as a whole as well as the voluntary and independent sectors.

The Group adopts a one-Council approach to meet our corporate parenting responsibilities.

Legal Implications

13. There is a statutory requirement in the Children's Act 2008 for each Council to have a Sufficiency Plan.

Financial Implications

14. By providing better accommodation provision closer to home, the Council will secure efficiencies from placement budgets.

Equalities Implications

15. Looked After Children (LAC) and care leavers are considered vulnerable groups. In order to implement the Approach to Corporate Parenting Plan, an Action Plan (Appendix 3) has been drawn up with a view to meeting their specific needs.

Conclusion and next Steps

16. The Action Plan makes explicit the steps being taken to improve the life chances of our LAC, young people and care leavers. The Implementation and Monitoring system is described in Section Three of the Action Plan.

Appendices:

Appendix A - Our Approach to Corporate Parenting in Central Bedfordshire Council 2014 - 2017

Background Papers

None