

Slough's Corporate Parenting Panel

Terms of Reference 2016-17

Purpose of the Corporate Parenting Panel

The Corporate Parenting Panel is the primary vehicle for Councillors to demonstrate their commitment to deliver better outcomes for children and young people in care and care leavers. The Corporate Parenting Panel is as a key mechanism by which councillors can ensure that services provided to children and young people in care and care leavers meet their needs. In particular this includes:

- high quality care, nurturing supportive and meaningful relationships that encourage their growth of self-esteem, confidence and resilience; enabling young people to cope with change and difficult times
- the highest standard of education which is consistent with the needs and abilities of the child
- opportunities and encouragement for self-development and keeping fit and healthy
- encouragement to take up hobbies, acquiring life skills and being a good citizen
- opportunities for education, employment and training, including open days and work placements, apprenticeships
- assistance with the transition from care to looking after themselves, including the provision of suitable accommodation

Responsibilities of the Corporate Parenting Panel

The Corporate Parenting Panel should:

- ensure that all councillors, and services are fulfilling their roles and responsibilities as corporate parents pro-actively, this includes identifying and organising education/training events for all councillors to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to be effective corporate parents
- provide clear strategic and political direction in relation to corporate parenting
- investigate, on behalf of all councillors, ways in which the role of corporate parenting can be improved, using examples from other local authorities
- ensure that councillors undertake their annual programme of visits to children's homes
- ensure that the needs of children and young people in care and their carers are prioritised and this is reflected in the Pledge to Slough's children in care.
- receive quarterly reports of key performance and quality indicators (as set out in the Corporate Parenting Scorecard) relating to children and young people in care, and identify areas for improvement
- receive regular and/or annual reports on the level and quality of the range of services to children and young people in care and care leavers
- engage with and support the work of the Children in Care Council Reach Out groups

- listen to the views of children, young people and their carers and involve them in the assessment and development of services
- champion the provision of dedicated, specialist council-based work placements and apprenticeships for young people in care
- promote achievement and acknowledge the aspirations of children and young people in care by supporting celebration events and activity days
- meet with Ofsted inspectors where appropriate for their input into inspections
- participate as members of the Slough fostering panel
- agree an annual work plan based on the Corporate Parenting Strategy priorities/Pledge to Looked After Children, reviewing progress, membership of the Panel and the impact they have had on the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers
- Report formally to the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet/Council as agreed

Membership

Membership will be reviewed annually by the relevant political groups, at the commencement of each municipal year. The Chair and Vice Chair are fixed, filled by those Councillors present in the below Commissioner roles.

- Commissioner for Education and Children (Chair)
- Commissioner for Community and Leisure (Vice Chair)
- Five Councillors (*All seven elected member appointments to the Panel will be made on a politically proportionate basis)

Other stakeholder and partner representation at the Panel

- Director of Children's Services, Slough Borough Council
- Chief Executive, Slough Children's Services Trust
- Non-Executive Director(s) of the Slough Children's Services Trust
- Foster carer
- Care Leaver
- Representative of Children in Care Council
- Housing representative
- Thames Valley Police representative
- Health representative
- Virtual School Head
- Head of Young People's Service

Meetings

The Corporate Parenting Panel will meet a minimum of 4 times a year.

Each meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel will be based on one of the key themes within the Strategy (based on the Pledge), as agreed at the first meeting of each municipal year by the Panel.

Accountability/Governance

The Corporate Parenting Panel will provide a mid-year report to the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel setting out work to deliver the Corporate Parenting Strategy. This report will be presented by the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel. The Corporate Parenting Panel will provide an annual report on its work to deliver the Corporate Parenting Strategy to Cabinet and Council. The report will be presented by the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Administration

The Agenda for each meeting shall be agreed by the Director of Children's Services as part of an ongoing Forward Work Plan for the municipal year. Administrative support will be provided by Democratic Services, who will arrange the meetings of the Panel, maintain the Forward Work Plan and publish the agendas. The agreed agenda will be despatched by Democratic Services five clear days in advance of the meeting.

An officer from Democratic Services will be responsible for the minutes of the meeting and their subsequent circulation. The minutes will be restricted to Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel and those listed under 'Other stakeholder and partner representation at the Panel'. Requests from non-members to view the minutes will be considered based on the request fulfilling a valid 'need-to-know' requirement.

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the Director of Children's Services. Any revisions must be endorsed by the Member Panel on the Constitution before approval at Full Council.