

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL – TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose of the Corporate Parenting Panel

- 1.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel assists the Council to fulfil its legal obligations and responsibilities towards looked after children and care experienced young people, under the Children Act 1989 and associated legislation, including the corporate parenting principles set out in section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- 1.2 The Corporate Parenting Panel (the 'Panel') is a collaborative forum. It is not a decision-making body of Slough Borough Council. Its role is to advise the Lead Member for Children's Services and other elected member bodies on how to deliver better outcomes for children and young people in care and care experienced young people.
- 1.3 In particular this includes ensuring the Council and its relevant partners comply with the corporate parenting principles:
 - to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people;
 - to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
 - to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
 - to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
 - to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
 - for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
 - to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

2. Responsibilities of the Corporate Parenting Panel

- 2.1 The Panel should:
 - Champion and provide clear strategic and political direction in relation to corporate parenting
 - Support the development of a corporate parenting strategy and to monitor and review its implementation.
 - Focus on improving outcomes for looked after children and care experienced young people.
 - To consider recommendations from internal and external inspections and reviews.
 - To hear the voice of looked after children and care experienced young people, including involving them in meetings.
 - To monitor the education needs of care experienced children, promoting positive engagement of education partners in corporate parenting.

- To ensure the Council actively promotes opportunities for children looked after and care experienced young people across the whole Council
- To ensure that the voice and opinions of as wide a range of care experienced children and young people, including those with disabilities, are heard and that their views are used to co-produce services, shape policy and monitor performance.
- To advise the Lead Member for Children's Services, Cabinet and other relevant member bodies on issues relating to corporate parenting.
- To advise the Slough Children First board and other partners on issues relating to corporate parenting.
- To report annually to the Council on the work of the Panel.

2.0 Membership

2.1 Membership will be reviewed annually as follows:

- (a) For the council by the relevant political groups, at the commencement of each municipal year.

2.2 All six elected member appointments to the Panel by the Council will be made on a politically proportionate basis.

2.3 Attendance at meetings

Looked after children and care experienced young people and carers will be invited to attend meetings on a topic by topic basis and provided with opportunities to facilitate their involvement, including informal meetings to allow views to be sought and represented to the panel by members. In addition the Panel members are expected to attend events to meet relevant children and young people and people associated with corporate parenting responsibilities.

Chairing the Panel

2.4 The Panel shall elect a chair at its first meeting each municipal year.

2.5 The Lead Member for Children's Services shall be entitled to attend the panel as a participating observer.

2.6 The co-opted members of the Panel shall be as follows:

- The council's Executive Director of People - Children
- Chief Executive, Slough Children First (if different to the Executive Director)
- Director of Education
- Foster carer
- The council's Service lead for strategic housing services
- Thames Valley Police representative (will attend when necessary)
- Designated Nurse for Children in Care
- Virtual School Headteacher

- The council's service lead for Communities and Leisure

The panel can elect to invite representatives of the children in care council, care experienced children and carers and other relevant representatives on a topic by topic basis or for the whole of a municipal year. Consideration should be given to a representative for specific groups of children and young people, for instance unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and children with disabilities.

3.0 Operation of the Panel

Meetings

- 3.1 The Panel will meet a minimum of four times a year.
- 3.2 Each meeting of the Panel will be based on one or more of the key corporate parenting principles set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- 3.3 Where possible the meetings should be available to view by the public, even if public attendance is not possible. Due to the nature of some of the work of the panel, some meetings are not held in public, however in these situation agenda papers and minutes should be made public where these do not disclose confidential information. The annual report must be published.
- 3.4 The Panel will provide an annual report to the Council and has the right to report to Cabinet or other elected member forums such as overview and scrutiny.