

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2015/2016 REPORT NO. 170

MEETING TITLE AND DATE:

Member & Democratic Services Group
– 13 January 16
Council – 28 January 2016

REPORT OF: Tony Theodoulou

Interim Director of Children's Services

Contact officer and telephone number:

Linda Hughes 0208 379 8222

E-mail: Linda.Hughes@enfield.gov.uk

Agenda - Part:	1	Item: 11
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Subject: Reference from Member & Democratic Services Group: Enfield's Corporate Parenting Board for Looked After Children - Changes to Terms of Reference		
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Cabinet Member consulted: Cllr Orhan		
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks approval to change the Terms of Reference for Enfield's Corporate Parenting Group to increase representation by Elected Members on this Group from two to four. The Group is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Education, Children's Services and Protection and also includes the Shadow Cabinet Member for Children's Services. This is body on which Council has agreed to waive the proportionality requirements, so that its membership remains balanced between both political groups.

As Cabinet Member, Councillor Orhan has the key role in overseeing partnerships and plans, to ensure that the Council's looked after children are safeguarded and that their life chances are promoted. However, the 2004 Children Act conferred a legal responsibility on all Elected Members within a Council to fulfil the duties of a good corporate parent. In Enfield, this role is discharged in part through the functions of the Corporate Parenting Group, chaired by the cabinet member and attended by the shadow cabinet member.

The proposal to increase the number of Members on the Group would ensure fuller representation on the strategic board responsible for overseeing the welfare of the Councils looked after children and was approved for recommendation on to Council by the Member & Democratic Services Group on 13th January 2016.

In addition Member & Democratic Services Group identified a need to clarify the arrangements for deputising as chair the Group, should the Cabinet Member not be present. It was recommended that in these instances the deputy should

come from one of the other councillors chosen at the meeting, which has been reflected in section 4.2 of the appended Terms of Reference.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the proposal to increase the representation of Elected Members on the Council's Corporate Parenting Board from two to four (split 2:2 between both groups) along with the deputy chairing arrangements are approved, as detailed in the Terms of Reference attached as Appendix 1.

3. BACKGROUND

Corporate Parenting refers to the responsibility of a Local Authority and its partner agencies to safeguard its looked after children and to ensure that their life chances are promoted. Elected members have a key role to play in ensuring that a Council's obligations to its looked after children are met. The 2004 Children Act sets out the specific responsibilities in this regard. Elected members must be satisfied that;

- Effective policies and practices are in place to promote the welfare of looked after children
- Appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure the participation of looked after children in the services which affect them
- The needs of looked after children are prioritised
- Appropriate scrutiny is in place to inform service improvement
- Services are monitored for their effectiveness in meeting the needs of looked after children

The Corporate Parenting Group is an important mechanism for allowing Members to scrutinise the work of officers in order to satisfy themselves that these responsibilities are being met.

Members of Kratos, the Children in Care Council, sit on the Corporate Parenting Group and this provides Members with an opportunity to hear directly from looked after children about the services they receive. The young people from Kratos enjoy the opportunity to speak directly to the Members and officers on the Corporate Parenting Group and their active involvement helps shape service development and delivery.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not applicable

5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To extend the involvement of Elected Members in the governance arrangements for the Council's looked after children

6. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, RESOURCES AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS

6.1 Financial Implications

None identified in relation to this proposal.

6.2 Legal Implications

The proposal seeks to assist the Council to fulfil its Corporate Parenting duties as defined in the 2004 Children Act

7. KEY RISKS

There are no identified risks

8. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES

8.1 Fairness for All

The Corporate Parenting Group oversees all the services to looked after children and ensures that the needs of vulnerable children are fully met.

8.2 Growth and Sustainability

The Corporate Parenting Group ensures that looked after children and care leavers have access to targeted services which prepare them for employment, education and training.

8.3 Strong Communities

The Corporate Parenting Group provides strong leadership, encourages the active citizenship of looked after children and listens to their views. It coordinates partnership working to achieve the Council's aims.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

The Corporate Parenting Group provides a governance function for services for looked after children. This ensures that looked after children have every opportunity to fulfil their potential and achieve positive outcomes in line with their non looked after peers.

10. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

A key role of the Corporate Parenting Group is to scrutinize the performance of a range of services to ensure that these are effective.

11. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

There are no health and safety implications

12. HR IMPLICATIONS

There are no HR implications

13. PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

There are no public health implications

Background Papers: None