

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

REVISED CORPORATE PARENTING PLEDGE AND LAUNCH

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval and support to the Corporate Parenting Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers.
- 1.2 To seek support from Cabinet in the delivery of the pledge and oversight of the Council's contribution to this

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Children "looked after" by the Council must expect to be cared for as any good parent would do. The Children Act 1989 makes it clear that this is a responsibility for the whole Council and its partners. This is known as "Corporate Parenting"
- 2.2 Locally we have made a commitment to ensure our children are central to the development of services to improve their outcomes. This is reflected within the priorities, budget and future investment in children in care. Our ambition is for children to be looked after within a stable family home, have support to do well in school, in further training and in employment and progress successfully into adult life. We want them to take part in positive activities that enable them to be playing an active role within their community.
- 2.3 The Council and our partners' commitment to children in care and care leavers is contained within the **North Lincolnshire Corporate Parenting Pledge**. The Council regularly reviews how we deliver these functions and that there are tangible outcomes through active and regular feedback from the children and young people.
- 2.4 The innovative and child centred approach to Corporate Parenting in North Lincolnshire has been recognised through council scrutiny, internal reviews and inspections of services which were deemed "Outstanding" by Ofsted. Young people are at the centre of all aspects of the process and close links with the Children in Care Council are integral to the approach.

- 2.5 Children and young people have been supported in a number of activities. For instance, we have young people who have engaged in work experience opportunities at the Council and positive activities such as arts and crafts, drama and sports. They are also participating in preparation for adult life including, sports leadership, swimming lessons, interview skills and volunteering.
- 2.6 The Children Act 2004 requires the council to take the lead, via its Lead Member for Children's Services and its Director of Children's Services, in bringing together a partnership designed to address the needs of children and young people in care.
- 2.7 Under the Act, partners of the council have a duty to cooperate in this endeavour. The Corporate Parenting Pledge demonstrates the commitment of partners in taking an active role in promoting the needs of children in care and care leavers.

3 OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The Council and our partners last signed up to a Corporate Parenting Pledge in 2011 which specifically outlined the commitment to improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers. This pledge has now been reviewed and updated and it is planned to launch the revised pledge at an event on the 24th April 2013, 5 to 7pm. It is envisaged that the signing of the pledge will encourage all to be ambitious in their plans for these children and young people.
- 3.2 Delivery of the pledge is monitored through the multi-agency Children in Care Strategy Group and the Corporate Parenting Group which as representation from across Council. The CPG is held quarterly and include an informal opportunity for "creative conversations" between the children, young people, the Cabinet Member for People, the Shadow Cabinet Member for Children, Elected Members, Directors and partners. These are led by the children and young people and focus on everyone's role in fulfilling the pledge. They enable direct feedback and challenge from the children and young people.
- 3.3 The Children in Care Council has been fully involved in the review of and update to the pledge. It has been looked at during the GPK and Bizz groups to ensure that children and young people of all ages have been able to comment on the pledge and its contents. The work of the Children in Care Council (Bizz and GPK groups) will continue to underpin and support the success of the pledge and challenge the council and its partners through the "creative conversation" to ensure it is delivered.

4 ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 To ensure the continued success of Corporate Parenting in North Lincolnshire and to continue to enhance the outcomes achieved by children in care and care leavers, it is important that the whole council and partner agencies continue to provide support, encouragement and opportunities for these children and young people.
- 4.2 This will be demonstrated and reinforced by the renewed commitment of the Council and its partners in signing up to the revised pledge. As part of this, each chief officer within their directorate and all partners will be asked attend the event on the 24th April, sign up to the pledge, verbalise what they will do differently for children in care and care leavers and what improved outcome(s) will be achieved as a result of their pledge. Each director or chief officer is also asked identify a named Corporate Parenting champion who will lead in delivering their pledge.
- 4.3 The event will be led by young people and the Lead Member for People will be invited to open the formal signing of the pledge and will sign up to the pledge on behalf of the council. The young people will provide refreshments for the event and it will include displays of art work completed by children in care and care leavers, a creative writing competition and awards for children and young people to celebrate their achievements. It will also provide an opportunity for children and young people to meet their Corporate Parents.
- 4.4 It is important that, as part of this commitment, support and assistance is given throughout the council and its partners in building on the successful fostering and adoption services and the recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive carers. Safe, stable placements are key to delivering positive outcomes for children and delivering a broad range of family placements for all children and young people who enter the care system remains one of our key goals.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

- 5.1 There are no additional resource implications in committing to and delivering the pledge. However, the Council and its partners, by doing so, agree to using existing resources flexibly, effectively and creatively to support Children in Care and Care Leavers as Corporate Parents.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

6.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken. Any issues raised have been considered as part of the Corporate Parenting process.

6.2 Democratic services will review how we can ensure all integrated impact assessments consider the corporate responsibilities within the Council and Strategy development.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

7.1 As detailed above, Children in Care and Care Leavers represented by the Children in Care Council have reviewed the Corporate Parenting Pledge and approved the revised pledge to be launched and signed at the event in April.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That Cabinet approves and supports the revised Corporate Parenting Pledge and has oversight over the implementation of the pledge

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

North Lincolnshire Corporate Parenting Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers

