



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education
LEAD OFFICERS:	Strategic Director of Children & Education (DCS)
DATE:	Thursday, 12 September 2024

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Children, Young People and Education
WARD/S AFFECTED:	(All Wards);
KEY DECISION:	Y

SUBJECT: Corporate Parenting Strategy 2024 - 2027

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Blackburn with Darwen (BwD) Corporate Parenting Strategy 2024 – 2027 aligns with the Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027, our values ‘Proud to be BwD’ and the Priorities for Children’s Services and Education: Stable Homes built on love, right support, right time, right person, effective transitions for all ages and needs, raising aspirations and fulfilling potential, systemic practice and the best start in life. This is underpinned by a trauma informed approach, a skilled and stable workforce and the right culture and values.

Through collaboration and coproduction, children in care and care leavers have produced the strategy which is now re-branded. They have developed their top five priorities that matter to them, and they want to see the impact of their contribution on this strategy, whilst understanding the commitment of corporate parents and holding them to account.

- Priority 1 – IDENTITY
- Priority 2 – HEALTH AND WELLBEING
- Priority 3 – STABLE HOMES
- Priority 4 – LEARNING
- Priority 5 – INDEPENDENCE.

Children in Our Care and Care Leavers have said why each priority is important to them and what they want to see being delivered by 2027. Corporate parents have then committed to what they will do by this date and agreed to be held accountable at the Corporate Parenting Partnership and by being reinterviewed.

Corporate Parents have also agreed wherever possible to be corporate grandparents to care leavers and their children setting out five roles which will be offered.

An Action Plan has been developed that will regularly be reviewed with our children in care, care leavers and corporate parents to illustrate impact.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board considers and agrees the new Corporate Parenting Strategy for 2024 – 2027.

3. BACKGROUND

The Corporate Parenting Strategy is the framework for the role of every Local Authority and their relevant partners (as defined in section 10 of the Children Act 2004) in the application of the corporate parenting principles, as set out in section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

The seven corporate parenting principles are:

- a. To act in the best interest, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people.
- b. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.
- c. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
- d. 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.
- e. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people.
- f. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships, and education or work.
- g. To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

The corporate parenting principles are intended to secure a better approach to fulfilling existing functions in relation to looked after children and care leavers and for the local authority to facilitate, as far as possible, secure, nurturing, and positive experiences for looked after children and young people and enable positive outcomes for them.

The Local Authority must have regard to the seven needs identified in the Children and Social Work Act when exercising their duties and responsibilities in relation to looked-after children and care leavers (relevant children and former relevant children).

It should be read and applied alongside the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review and The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3: planning transition to adulthood for care leavers.

Local authorities in England need to have regard to the 2013 Statutory guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services in relation to the appointment of the Director of Children's Services (DCS) and the designation of the Lead Member for Children's Services (LMCS). This guidance describes how those roles set the tone for the local authority to be an effective corporate parent.

At this time, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council (BwDBC) is the corporate parent to 334 children and 344 Care Leavers (as at 30.06.2024). As a corporate parent, the Council has a collective responsibility to be a good parent to children and young people in its care and is expected to do what any responsible parent would do for their children.

BwDBC has a strong corporate parenting ethos which recognises that the care provided for children is not just about keeping them safe. It recognises the importance of stability for children and the Permanence Policy sets out the commitment to children in the care of the Council and the ambition to secure emotional attachment, physical stability and long-term commitment to children. It also aims to ensure that all children in care receive access to appropriate, high quality and stable education, thus affording them with positive educational experiences.

When a child comes into care, the local authority becomes the Corporate Parent. Put simply, the term 'Corporate Parent' means the collective responsibility of the local authority, elected members, employees, and partner agencies for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by BwDBC.

The brand new, coproduced Corporate Parenting Strategy 2024 – 2027 has been developed through consultation, coproduction, interviews and regular workshops with our children in care and care leavers as well as corporate parents.

Children in care and care leavers have developed their own five priorities areas that all corporate parents have agreed to and will be held accountable for.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

A failure to embed the strategy would risk letting down our looked after children and care leavers and falling short in our collective role as corporate parents.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

No Policy Implications

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no new financial implications arising from the recommendation in this report. The delivery of the Corporate Parenting Strategy as proposed can be met from within existing budgetary provision.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council must produce, and work to, a Corporate Parenting Strategy in order to meet the requirements of, and its obligations pursuant, to the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

No resource implications

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

Children in our care and Care Leavers
Corporate Parents and Corporate Parenting Partnership
Corporate Communications Team

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION:	1
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Suzanne Kinder
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DATE:	28 th August 2024
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	
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