

Participation & Corporate Parenting Update to Corporate Parenting Special Advisory Group 29th January 2019

Recommendation

Members to consider the proposal of a Corporate Parenting Board to provide strategic leadership across the borough to ensure that all local authority departments and key partner agencies promote and champion their responsibilities as corporate parents to improve outcomes for our cared for children and care leavers. The Board would provide strategic intelligence and regular reports on impact to the Corporate Parenting Special Advisory Group and contribute to and drive a Corporate Parenting work plan.

Background

Children's Services is reviewing its approach to corporate parenting and participation with children and young people who are looked after and our care leavers, to strengthen our whole council offer and to strengthen their outcomes.

A natural starting point is to consult with children and young people to find out what they are collectively telling us about their priorities in addition to the usual 'voice' work led by the professionals in young people's lives.

We are planning a 'Make A Noise' consultation for 20th February which will see children and young people of all ages come together in the half term holiday to take part in a fun afternoon with participation activities and informal chat. The event will give a snapshot of what our children and young people are happy with and what they want their corporate parents (the council and wider partners) to get better at and prioritise.

The learning from the consultation will influence and strengthen the work of the Corporate Parenting Special Advisory Group and pave the way for a work plan which would be driven by the proposed Corporate Parenting Board. Invitations to the Make a Noise consultation will be sent directly to all elected Members.

Corporate Parenting Board

The Corporate Parenting Board will not take the place of the current Executive Decision making functions and roles within the council, and seeks to complement our existing governance arrangements.

The Board would be chaired by the Director of Children's Services with the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Special Advisory Group as Deputy Chair.

It is envisaged that this new group would comprise of Directors, or their nominated leads from across the Council, Elected Members and also include our partners in health, the third sector and the police. The Board would promote the broader responsibilities of each member agency to support children and young people in care and care leavers and hold each other to account.

An important element of the new Corporate Parenting Board is the plan to invite nominated members of the Children in Care Council (CIOC) to be full group members. The CIOC is predominantly led by Care Leavers and plans are underway to reinvigorate this group to build momentum and refocus. The re-energising of the CIOC will be one of the tasks of the Participation Officer, a role which is currently in the planning stages.

Feedback on these proposals should be directed to the Director of Children's Services for further consideration by the Children, Young People & Education Senior Policy Team meeting, including how the new arrangements would impact on the Council's Executive functions.

Jayne Ivory- Director of Children's Services

Janette Clarke – Head of Service, Permanence, Children's Services