

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING

27 JULY 2022

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELL BEING

PROPOSED CORPORATE PARENTING DEVELOPMENT

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out proposals for consideration by the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting for the development of Corporate Parenting in Bridgend.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

- **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
- **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council appointed to the new post of Corporate Parenting & Participation Officer in March 2022 and this role commenced at the end of April 2022. The post is cited within the Case Management & Transition portfolio within Children's Social Care but has responsibility for working across the Council and with partners to promote and progress corporate parenting in Bridgend.
- 3.2 The Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer's role is to support and develop the governance and activity of Corporate Parenting in Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC). Following on from their induction, the Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer has identified steps to establish a refreshed approach to addressing how our

care experienced children and young people and our care leavers (our children and young people) are parented by their Corporate Parent.

4. Current situation/proposal

4.1 The first Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting meeting of the municipal year is an opportunity for Bridgend to begin and establish a revised approach to Corporate Parenting.

4.2 As a starting point to a refreshed approach, it is important there is a shared understanding of:

- what Corporate Parenting is;
- who has Corporate Parenting responsibilities and specifically,
- what these responsibilities are.

4.3 Following on from a shared understanding of Corporate Parenting, through the engagement of Councillors, workforce, partners and importantly our children and young people, there needs to be a strategic and operational plan for how these responsibilities are fulfilled, monitored and evaluated. It is proposed to develop a clear Corporate Parenting Vision and Strategic plan through the following:

4.3.1 Establishing a shared Vision for Corporate Parenting Responsibilities

In order to understand how well our children and young people are being cared for, our aspirations for them and our expectations for their lives. To have a holistic view, we must engage with all involved or responsible for the care of our children and young people and be led by the children and young people themselves. By working together, we can be clear on:

- What constitutes a good parent;
- What good Corporate Parenting is;
- What the responsibilities of Corporate Parenting, are and who has these responsibilities;
- The expectations we have of ourselves and our partners;
- Most importantly, what our children and young people expect from their Corporate Parents and how can we achieve this and in turn raise the aspirations they have of us.

This vision will be developed via detailed conversations in workshops on Corporate Parenting topics. It is proposed that an event will take place in September 2022 to progress the development of the vision and clear roles and responsibilities. Whilst the workshop will take place in September 2022, the Corporate Parenting & Participation Officer will be seeking to gain the views of our children and young people throughout the summer school holiday period. These views will be collated and presented in a format chosen by the children and young people.

4.3.2 Establishing a governance structure that supports the strategic and operational approach to Corporate Parenting

Bridgend County Borough Council already has an established Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting that meets quarterly and the current terms of reference for the Committee are set out in Part 3 Responsibility for Functions in the Council's Constitution. This Committee provides strategic scrutiny to Corporate Parenting. To

enable the Committee to deliver its responsibilities, it is proposed to develop a supporting multiagency Operational Group of professionals that can provide the expertise around how we collectively care for our children and young people. It is proposed the Corporate Parenting Operational Group will provide high level advice, guidance, and support to ensure all Directorates of the Council, key partner agencies and Elected Members understand and embrace their Corporate Parenting responsibilities resulting in a positive impact for our children and young people.

This work will be achieved through staff briefings, workshops, training and more especially through the direction and support of the Committee and its multiagency Operational Group driven by the priorities and objectives of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

The membership for the Operational Group will naturally evolve overtime according to the need for specific expertise. However, it is proposed that the core membership will include representation from Children Social Care, Adult Social Care, Education, Youth Justice, Leisure, Health, Housing and the commissioned Advocacy provider. The Chair will be elected by the Group at the first meeting, however, in order to ensure that there is continuity, regular reporting, monitoring of progress between meetings and clear lines of communication between the Committee and the Operational Group, it is proposed that the Operational Group be chaired by the Chair of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting. The draft Terms of Reference for the Operational Group will also be presented to the first meeting for consideration and approval with the intention for this to be ratified by the Committee in October.

4.3.3 Establishing a Corporate Parenting Performance Framework

In addition to the development of a strategy and operational plan, it is essential that we also measure and monitor the effectiveness of the care and parenting we provide for our children and young people. Therefore, it is proposed that the Corporate Parenting Operational Group identify key performance indicators on the priority themes identified within the workshop event along with any other relevant evidence for parenting performance. The Performance Framework would be both quantitative and qualitative and would be collated into an agreed formatted dashboard to be used by the Operational Group for benchmarking and reporting to the Committee for scrutiny.

It is proposed that the Performance Framework would highlight multiagency data and therefore, whilst it is recognised that Children's Social Care would host the dashboard, there is a commitment and expectation of all Council Directorates and partner agencies to provide their agreed data in a timely manner as agreed by the Operational Group.

4.3.4 Establish care experienced forums to provide our children and young people with a collective voice.

Whilst the Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer continues to engage with children and young people and champions their voice through briefings, training and supporting recruitment and selection panels there is a need for the establishment of regular forums that require more support. Having consulted with other local

authorities, it is noted that once an Operational Group, Strategic Plan and Performance Framework for Corporate Parenting is being supported and coordinated by the appointed officer, little time remains for the support needed to run participation groups on a regular basis.

It is proposed to therefore commission a specialist support to establish and facilitate a care experienced young people forum and a care leavers forum. The following points provide an explanation to the support:

- The purpose of this expertise is to establish an independent voice for our care experienced and care leavers with a dedicated resource;
- As the forums will be supported independently of BCBC, they will be able to provide suggestions and challenge;
- The recruitment, promotion for young people, session planning, young people liaison, facilitation and refreshments would be included within the support offered by two workers;
- The forums would benefit from two workers at all times which would enable more variety for activities and facilitation;
- The two forums will develop their own work programme from their experiences and as a collective voice from themes and issues drawn out of advocacy that is provided for children and young people in Bridgend;
- The forums will serve as a pool of expertise for the Corporate Parenting & Participation Officer and Children Social Care to call on for consultation, recruitment and selection along with specific projects;
- The forums will also act as a conduit for communication to all care experienced children and care leavers in Bridgend;
- The forums will be linked with regional and national projects that are relevant to their interest and status;
- It is hoped that these forums will further strengthen both the offer of advocacy across Bridgend and Children Social Care's / Bridgend Corporate Parents' understanding of the lived experience of our children and young people.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 There is no impact on the policy framework or rules arising from this report.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

6.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 Long term – the proposals enable the short term issues to be addressed whilst looking at how Corporate Parenting can be approached in a strategic manner to make plans for the future.

7.2 Prevention – the proposals that have been made mean that the responsibilities we all have for Corporate Parenting are identified and established into what we need to

report on. Measuring and reporting on these responsibilities will enable us to take early action on any issues identified.

- 7.3 Integration – the consultation workshop event is intended to draw out who has specific responsibilities for our children and young people in particular circumstances. Moreover, the event will identify where professionals and agencies need to work together in the future to forge a coherent approach to the care of our children and young people.
- 7.4 Collaboration – the success and effectiveness of our Corporate Parenting in Bridgend is dependent on how well we work together to achieve shared goals and aspirations for our children and young people. These goals and aspirations will be agreed and worked to in the proposed multiagency Operational Group and in liaison with the ; Committee.
- 7.5 Involvement – due consideration has been given to how different ‘providers of care’ are involved in the proposals around Corporate Parenting. Specific attention and proposals are given to enabling the voice and lived experience of our children and young people.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 The proposed Consultation Workshop event in September 2022 will cost approximately £400 and will be funded by the Social Services & Wellbeing Training budget.
- 8.2 The specialist participation support provided for 12 months will cost approximately £10,000 and will be funded from within existing Childrens Social Care budgets.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Committee consider the contents of this report and support the proposals set out in the report to establish:
- a shared vision for corporate parenting responsibilities;
 - a governance structure that supports the strategic and operational approach to Corporate Parenting;
 - a Corporate Parenting Performance Framework;
 - care experienced forums to provide our children and young people with a collective voice.

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Background documents:

None