

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**REPORT TO COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

10 JUNE 2015

**REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE
LEGAL & REGULATORY SERVICES**

**CORPORATE PARENTING CHAMPION AND BUDGET RESEARCH AND EVALUATION
PANEL NOMINATION REPORT**

1. Purpose of the Report.

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a) request the Committee to nominate one Member as its Corporate Parenting Champion to represent the Committee as an Invitee to meetings of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee;
- b) seek nominations for the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel in line with the Corporate Resources & Improvement Overview & Scrutiny Committee's recommendations made as part of the 2015/16 budget setting process.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives

2.1 The key improvement objectives identified in the Corporate Plan 2013-2017 have been embodied in the Overview & Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes. The Corporate Improvement Objectives were adopted by Council on 25 February 2015 and formally set out the improvement objectives that the Council will seek to implement between 2013 and 2017. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees engage in review and development of plans, policy or strategies that support the Corporate Themes.

3. Background.

Corporate Parenting Champion

3.1 Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the responsibility of a local authority towards looked after children and young people. This is a legal responsibility given to local authorities by the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. The role of the Corporate Parent is to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children. The Council as a whole is the 'corporate parent' therefore all Members have a level of responsibility for the children and young people looked after by Bridgend.¹

¹ Welsh Assembly Government and Welsh Local Government Association 'If this were my child... A councillor's guide to being a good corporate parent to children in care and care leavers', June 2009

- 3.2 In order to further develop and enhance the Council's corporate parenting role with its partners, a Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee comprising all Members of Cabinet was established by Cabinet on 4 November 2008.
- 3.3 The inaugural meeting of the Cabinet Committee was held on 27 November 2008. It has been agreed that the Cabinet Committee will meet bi-monthly. The terms of reference for the Cabinet Committee are:
- to ensure that looked after children are seen as a priority by the whole of the Authority and by the Children and Young People's Partnership;
 - to seek the views of children and young people in shaping and influencing the parenting they receive;
 - to ensure that appropriate policies, opportunities and procedures are in place;
 - to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Authority in its role as corporate parent against Welsh Government guidance.
- 3.4 At its inaugural meeting, the Cabinet Committee requested that a Corporate Parenting "Champion" be nominated from each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to become permanent invitees to the Cabinet Committee.
- 3.5 At its meeting on 27 May 2014, Cabinet agreed that the Chairperson of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee be appointed as an invitee to the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee, in addition to the Corporate Parenting Champion.

Budget Research and Evaluation Panel

- 3.6 In considering the challenges associated with continued budget reductions, Members of the 2015 /16 Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) recognised the need for a 'whole Council' response to be adopted in managing anticipated cuts to services against a backdrop of increasing demand, public sector reform and the challenging financial outlook.
- 3.7 It was consequently recommended that the BREP continue in its current form as a standing working group to enable Members to feed in community intelligence gained from their representative role and engage in shaping future service provision.

4. Current Situation / Proposal.

Corporate Parenting Champion

- 4.1 The Committee is requested to nominate one Member as its Corporate Parenting Champion to represent the Committee as an invitee at meetings of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee.
- 4.2 The role of the Corporate Parenting Champion is to represent their Overview and Scrutiny Committee, partaking in discussions with Cabinet over items relating to children in care and care leavers.

- 4.3 In this role, it is also suggested that Champions provide six monthly updates to their Committees to ensure that Members are informed of the ongoing work of the Cabinet-Committee and particularly any decisions or changes which they should be aware of as Corporate Parents.
- 4.4 It is also proposed that Members consider how the services within the remit of their Committee affects children in care and care leavers, and in what way can the Committee therefore assist in these areas.

Budget Research and Evaluation Panel

- 4.5 The BREP has previously been set up on an annual basis and focussed on examining the annual draft budget proposals to aid the scrutiny process. In contrast, the standing BREP whilst examining annual draft budget proposals, also undertakes informal consideration of proposals related to medium and longer term reviews linked with the Council's Strategic Change Management Programme. It seeks to assist management in the delivery of the plans to support change and the Medium Term Financial Strategy by fully utilising its community representational role to inform policy changes and provide challenge and the BREP will develop its terms of reference and methodology within that function.
- 4.6 The Standing BREP will be constituted from the membership of the Corporate Resources and Improvement Overview & Scrutiny Committee, with the Chair and one other nominated Member from each Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In order to achieve the necessary focus and analytical depth, good practice would recommend that the total membership of the Panel be no more than 10 Members. The Chair of the BREP should be nominated by the members of the BREP itself at its first meeting.
- 4.7 The standing Panel's Forward Work Programme (FWP) should be informed by the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and Strategic Change Management Programme.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

- 5.1 The work of the Community Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental well being in the County Borough of Bridgend.

6. Equality Impact Assessment.

- 6.1 There are no equality impacts arising from this report.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 None.

8. Recommendation.

The Committee is asked to:

- i. Nominate one Member of the Committee as its Corporate Parenting Champion to represent the Committee at meetings of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee;
- ii. Nominate the Chair and one other Member of the Committee onto the standing Budget Research & Evaluation Panel.

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Background Documents

Bridgend County Borough Council Constitution

Part II of the Local Government Act 2000: Executive Arrangements

Report of the Corporate Director – Children to Cabinet, 4 November 2008: Establishment of a Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee

Report of the Corporate Director – Children to the Inaugural Meeting of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee, 27 November 2008

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate Development & Partnerships to Corporate Resources and Improvement Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 30 January 2009