



## **Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council**

**16 January 2018**

<b>Subject:</b>	Corporate Parenting Board Update
<b>Director:</b>	Interim Director - Children & Families – Vince Clark
<b>Contribution towards Vision 2030:</b>	 
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### **DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That** the Council adopt the Participation Strategy, Pledge for Children in Care and Corporate Parenting Strategy which have been endorsed by the Corporate Parenting Board.

## **1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

This report summarises three key documents, the Participation Strategy, the Pledge for Children in Care and the Corporate Parenting Strategy that have been recently developed to underpin the Council's commitment and role as a corporate parent towards the children and young people in its care and towards care leavers who would like to see this reflected in the Council's interaction with them, both now and in the future.

All three documents are attached as appendices for detailed consideration.

## **1.1 Participation Strategy:**

At the heart of the Participation Strategy is the principle that the wishes and views of children and young people should contribute both to individual case decisions and to wider service improvement.

The participation strategy outlines the following key areas:

- What we mean by 'Participation'
- Why we promote 'Participation'
- The benefits of 'Participation'
- Evidencing the voice of the child in Sandwell
- Evidencing that children are being listened to effectively

## **1.2 Pledge for Children in Care:**

The pledge for children in care has been developed by the Looked After Young People's Board (LAYPB) and replaces a previous version. It has been designed to assess the effectiveness of the pledges by including a process to monitor the actions from the individual pledges. The pledge outlines the following 10 key areas which relate to the commitments made by Sandwell MBC towards looked after children.

- Providing children in care a welcome booklet with information about being in care.
- Ensuring children and young people will be kept safe from harm when living in care.
- Ensuring children in care do well in Education.
- Supporting children in care around their Health
- Getting children in care ready for independence and adulthood.
- Giving children in care a voice.
- Ensuring all children in care are allocated a social worker and independent reviewing officer.
- Ensuring children in care have a plan in place and are involved in their plan.
- Ensuring contact is in place where possible family and friends.
- Ensuring children in care have an opportunity to get involved with the Looked After Young People's Board.

## **1.3 Corporate Parenting Strategy**

The Corporate Parenting Strategy has been designed to help support children who come into care. The majority of Looked After Children need extra support in their lives because of the adverse childhood experiences they have endured. Their experiences often make it harder for them to do as well as their peer groups who are not in care, particularly in relation to their educational attainment, health needs and in their relationships.

The three-year strategy outlines what is required to support children and young people and focuses on the following five key areas:

- Looked After Children fulfil their educational potential
- Care Leavers successfully gain employment potential
- Looked After Children have good health and wellbeing potential
- Looked After Children and Care Leavers are well equipped for adulthood potential
- Looked After Children placed outside of the Borough are not disadvantaged

## **2 IMPLICATIONS FOR SANDWELL'S VISION**

The proposals in this report contribute to the following ambitions:

1. Sandwell is a community where our families have high aspirations and where we pride ourselves on equality of opportunity and on our adaptability and resilience.
2. Sandwell is a place where we live healthy lives and live them for longer and where those of us who are vulnerable feel respected and cared for.
3. Our workforce and young people are skilled and talented, geared up to respond to changing business needs and to win rewarding jobs in a growing economy
4. Our children benefit from the best start in life and a high-quality education throughout their school careers with outstanding support from their teachers and families.
5. Our communities are built on mutual respect and taking care of each other, supported by all the agencies that ensure we feel safe and protected in our homes and local neighbourhoods.
6. Our distinctive towns and neighbourhoods are successful centres of community life, leisure and entertainment where people increasingly choose to bring up their families.

## **3 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS**

For the Council to adopt the Participation Strategy, Pledge for Children in Care and Corporate Parenting Strategy, which have been endorsed by the Corporate Parenting Board. The Corporate Parenting Board would encourage the Council to use the attached documents to inform the ongoing work in raising outcomes for looked after children in Sandwell MBC

## **4 THE CURRENT POSITION**

All 3 documents have been approved at Corporate Parenting Board and are used to improve the outcomes for children in care and care leavers.

## **5 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)**

The participation strategy, pledge and corporate parenting strategy have been consulted with children in care, care leavers and professionals working in Children & Families.

## **6 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct resource implications arising from this report. However, the development and delivery of interventions to support the needs of children looked after and care leavers will have resource implications which will need consideration within the budget setting processes in the future.

## **7 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

This report has been produced in accordance with the Council's Constitution. The law and government guidance sets out the leading role of councillors to make sure their council is an effective corporate parent for every looked after child. This means supporting standards of care and wanting the same as any good parent would want for their child.

## **8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

An equality impact assessment is not required for this proposal.

## **9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

All three documents comply with the Data Protection Impact Assessment.

## **10 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT**

There is no requirement to engage crime and disorder policies or risk assessment methods because of this report.

## **11 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS**

All three documents will be reviewed and monitored on a yearly basis by the Corporate Parenting Board.

**12 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)**

All 3 documents support the health and wellbeing of children in care and care leavers.

**13 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND**

There is no impact on Council managed property or assets.

**14 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

14.1 It is recommended that Members consider the following:

14.2 Note the areas of positive work referred to within the corporate parenting strategy, participation strategy and looked after children's pledge, particularly the evidence that the Corporate Parenting Board has directly contributed to improving outcomes for children and young people in care;

14.3 Note and support the Corporate Parenting Board's commitment to better deliver its statutory responsibilities to looked after children and young people, their parents or carers, increased consultation, participation and challenge;

14.4 Use the corporate parenting strategy, participation strategy and looked after children's pledge to inform the ongoing work of the Corporate Parenting Board in raising outcomes for looked after children in Sandwell MBC.

**15 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Please see below all background papers in appendices.

**16 APPENDICES:**

**Appendix A: Participation Strategy**

**Appendix B: Pledges for Children in Care**

**Appendix C: Corporate Parenting Strategy**