

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee **Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date of Committee **12th November 2007**

Report Title **Corporate Parenting Policy, Strategy and Action Plan – Progress report**

Summary The report provides an overview of developments in relation to the Local Authority’s Corporate Parenting Policy, Strategy and Action Plan. It will show that significant progress has been made in many areas since its approval by Council on 12th December 2006. Since this time the Government has produced its White Paper *Care Matters – Time for Change*, and the recommendations from that will need to be incorporated within Warwickshire’s Corporate Parenting Policy and Strategy and be reflected in future Action Plans.

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? [please identify relevant plan/budget provision]

No

Background papers

- DfES Green Paper consultation document *Care Matters: Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care*, October 2006
- County Council report 12.12.06
- DCSF White Paper *Care Matters – Time for Change*, June 2007

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-

Details to be specified

- Other Committees
- Local Member(s)
- Other Elected Members For information:
Cllr Heather Timms
Cllr Richard Grant – “noted”
Cllr John Whitehouse – “a very important report
which deserves full scrutiny by the Committee”
- Cabinet Member For information:
Cllr Izzi Seccombe
- Other Cabinet Members consulted For information:
Cllr John Burton
- Chief Executive
- Legal Richard Freeth – “fine”
- Finance
- Other Strategic Directors
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals Michelle McHugh, Scrutiny Officer

FINAL DECISION

YES

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 12th November 2007

Corporate Parenting Policy, Strategy and Action Plan – Progress report

Report of the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families

Recommendation:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the progress made in relation to the Corporate Parenting Policy, Strategy and Action Plan and examines future progress in November 2008.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Corporate Parenting Policy, Strategy and Action Plan was developed through an extensive consultation process involving children and young people, foster carers, staff and elected members. It was presented by young people to Council on 12th December 2006.
- 1.2 Since this time the Elected Members Steering Group has met with the lead officer within the Children in Need Division to review the development and progress of the plan. The Corporate Parenting Policy, Strategy and Action Plan provides a good basis to further develop services for children and young people in care so that their outcomes and life opportunities can be enhanced.
- 1.3 Within the past 12 months the Government has produced the White Paper *Care Matters – Time for Change*. This opens with the following statement:

“despite high ambitions and shared commitment for change, outcomes for children and young people in care have not sufficiently improved. There remains a significant gap between the quality of their lives and those of all children. Tackling this requires urgent, sustained action cross central and local government, from practitioners in all aspects of children and young people’s lives and from their carers and family and friends”.

2. New developments

- 2.1 The White Paper is underpinned by Corporate Parenting and the Government sees the role of corporate parent as key in improving outcomes for children in care as elected members and practitioners across the range of agencies and services are both responsible and accountable for the care, wellbeing and future prospects of children in care. To this end the Local Authority is seen as having responsibility for bringing services together across all agencies at all levels. To strengthen these arrangements it is recommended that the Local Authority develops a 'pledge' for children in care and sets up a Children in Care Council with direct links with the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member that will provide the forum for children in care to express their views and influence services.
- 2.2 Within the White Paper there have been opportunities for authorities to submit applications to pilot key proposals within the White Paper. Warwickshire has been successful in its application to pilot three initiatives that will now be reflected within the updated Action Plan. These have been the Virtual School Head Teacher, Private Tutoring and RIGHT2BCARED4.
- 2.3 The Virtual School Head Teacher will be tasked with driving up the educational standards of children in care, to work and support these children and track their performance including those who are placed out of county. The specific aims of the project are to:
- improve the educational provision for children in care
 - identify systems and processes to improve the educational achievement of children in care
 - investigate and recommend improved ways data can be collected and used to improve provision
 - review the way the County provides education for children where Warwickshire is the corporate parent and who are educated out of county
 - promote and disseminate good practice to schools and other agencies about how to improve the achievement of children in care
 - challenge present practice and act as a champion for children in care.
- 2.4 A comprehensive project plan has been produced including stretched educational targets for children in care. Its implementation is overseen by a Steering Group. The Virtual School Head Teacher has been appointed and will be employed in Warwickshire from January 2008.
- 2.5 Warwickshire is one of four Local Authorities to pilot Private Tutoring which is sponsored by HSBC. This pilot is intended to explore how private tutoring can be used to raise the standards of achievement of children in care. It is expected that as a result children and young people will achieve outcomes which would not otherwise have been possible to achieve. This provision is also available for children who are assessed as gifted and talented. The

protocols for identifying the children and the arrangements for appointing tutors are currently being progressed.

- 2.6 RIGHT2BCARED4 is about ensuring that the care leaving process is genuinely responsive to the needs of the young people concerned so that they only leave care when they are ready after they have been properly prepared. The pilots will identify models of best practice in empowering young people to be actively involved in planning their transition to adulthood.
- 2.7 The successful submission made by Warwickshire is a multifaceted approach that includes the development of advocacy for care leavers, the appointment of an Accommodation Partnership Officer and a Placement Support Youth Worker for Vulnerable Young People.
- 2.8 Further developments include the work which is being completed on the Healthy Care Matters which involves auditing and action planning our performance as agencies in meeting the Healthy Care Standards for children and young people in care. A small grant has also been awarded to develop a foster carers 'kite mark' and to provide children in care with opportunities to sample a range of activities that will promote their development and confidence. This work is in being developed in close collaboration with the Primary Care Trust.
- 2.9 Finally, the Children in Need Division is working closely with the Rainer Foundation – What Makes A Difference (this is a national charity for under-supported young people) to develop 'the pledge' for children in care that will be the focus of the Elected Members' Seminar planned for 13th December 2007.

3. Corporate Parenting Action Plan

The Corporate Parenting Action Plan is attached as **Appendix A** and this outlines the progress against each element of the plan. The Committee is invited to examine the progress in the light of the new developments outlined in section 2 of this report.

4. Summary

- 4.1 The Corporate Parenting Policy, Strategy and Action Plan has provided a focus for achieving better outcomes for children and young people in care. This has included a review of existing arrangements as well as the introduction of new ways of working. The successful applications to pilot initiatives under the White Paper have also provided additional resources to progress these developments.
- 4.2 The current action plan will now need to be updated to reflect the new developments as a result of Warwickshire gaining pilot status for RIGHT2BCARED4, Virtual School Head Teacher and Private Tutoring

initiatives. The revised action plan can then be overseen by the elected member Corporate Parenting Steering group and future progress reported to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee in a year's time.

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29th October 2007

Appendix A

CORPORATE PARENTING ACTION PLAN: PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT: OUTCOMES (October 2007)

Outcome	Action	To be achieved by:	Responsible agency/cies	Performance	Timescale	Progress September 2007
Being Healthy	The Integrated Care Pathway approach is introduced across the county for all looked after children.	The appointment of dedicated assessment services for children in care in the Leamington, Warwick and Stratford districts of the county.	Warwickshire PCT		October 2007	COMPLETED There is a dedicated doctor/nurse led service for children in care in Warwickshire.
		All children in care have their health needs adequately assessed and services are provided to meet assessed needs.	Warwickshire PCT	2006/07 80.6%	April 2007	COMPLETED The Health Care Pathway has been reviewed and amended.
		Using identified health needs of children, develop appropriate support, guidance and training to carers and staff on health issues highlighted.	Warwickshire PCT		October 2007	CONTINUING An audit of health needs of a sample of children in care has started and the findings will inform improvements in the follow up arrangements and any training and development needs for carers, IROs and social workers.
	That there are positive outcomes resulting from dedicated CAMHS service for looked after children being introduced.	In line with the Service Specification for the CAMHS-LAC Service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children in care receive timely CAMHS services according to the assessment of their need. ➤ Carers and others have prompt access to CAMHS advice. 	Coventry & Warwickshire Partnership Trust/CYP&F		April 2007	COMPLETED The Service Level Agreement has been in place since April 2006. All posts have been recruited to and multiagency Panels have been meeting and initial user feedback is positive. The service is subject to ongoing review, monitoring and development.

Outcome	Action	To be achieved by:	Responsible agency/cies	Performance	Timescale	Progress September 2007
Being Healthy (continued)	Arrangements are put in place to ensure that looked after children have access to initiatives supporting health and emotional well being.	To ensure a consistent approach a review of direct work services to children will determine whether support is provided in the most appropriate way that supports children in dealing with trauma and in developing resilience.	CYP&F		July 2007	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>Children's Services have now defined and agreed their quality standards regarding direct work with children.</p> <p>A budget bid to increase staffing capacity is being submitted to enable this to be achieved.</p>
		Training is delivered to staff and carers about the impact of early emotional trauma and how resilience may be nurtured for children in long-term care	CYP&F		July 2007	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>Four courses are available to staff on communicating effectively with children.</p>
		With the contribution of young people a development plan will be devised and implemented that will promote healthy lifestyle choices and wellbeing for children in care in line with the UN Convention Rights of the Child.	Warwickshire PCT/CYP&F		January 2008	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>A successful multi agency event took place on 19th June. A submission was successful to the GOWM for initial funding to promote the well being agenda. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Wellbeing events for children in care ➤ Promoting Positive Activities – Voucher Scheme ➤ Well being 'kite mark' for foster carers. <p>The HELAC Group has revised its terms of reference and membership and is now the Health and Wellbeing Coordinating Group for Children in Care.</p>

Outcome	Action	To be achieved by:	Responsible agency/cies	Performance	Timescale	Progress September 2007
Staying Safe	Continuing priority is given to reducing placement instability and providing care arrangements to meet the principles of this policy.	Implementing a Permanency Planning Protocol and the use of a Toolkit that will focus attention on planning for the child's longer term placement needs that will ensure that placements proceed on the basis of preparation and the involvement of the child/young person.	CYP&F		April 2007	COMPLETED The Children in Need Division have been approached to participate in a research project with the University of East Anglia as having in place effective model for permanency planning.
		A review of the arrangements for recruiting, supporting and training permanency/long term foster carers will determine whether different arrangements are required that will promote stability outcomes	CYP&F		September 2007	PROGRESSING This work will now be included within a wider review of fostering arrangements and priorities.
		A review and the development of strategies that will prevent the disruption of foster placements by ensuring that the support needs of the child and carers throughout the duration of the placement are addressed.	CYP&F	2006/07 Adoption 8.5% Family placements of LAC 92.6% Long-term placement stability 67.3%	July 2007	PROGRESSING An initial collation of data relating to disruption in foster care has been drawn together. This requires ongoing work so that support issues can be identified and appropriate actions taken.

Outcome	Action	To be achieved by:	Responsible agency/cies	Performance	Timescale	Progress September 2007
Staying Safe (continued)		Where children are placed out of county the principles and outcome statements in the policy will be strengthened and reflected in the commissioning and contracting arrangements.	CYP&F	2006/07 Distance of LAC from home 12.3%	April 2008	PROGRESSING The working group has concluded its work and the report and recommendations are being considered in light of the recommendations made in Care Matters – Time for Change.
Enjoying and Achieving	Ensure that looked after children are reaching their full educational potential, both in key stage and examination performance, and using all opportunities provided in schools.	The TELAC service ensures effective ways of working that will optimise the amount of educational support to looked after children thereby reducing exclusion.	CYP&F (TELAC)	2006/07 (25YP) GCSE 52% at least 1 GCSE A-G 4% at least 5 GCSEs A-C	September 2007	COMPLETED The educational attainment and achievements for children in care will be enhanced through the Virtual School Head Teacher Pilot from September 2007. Work is ongoing as part of the county Behaviour Strategy regarding support for vulnerable children. There is now an established system in place for monitoring exclusions. Independent Education Advocacy Worker from Barnado's in place.
		Looked after children at Key Stages 2 and 3 will be entered for end of key stage assessments unless exceptional circumstances apply.	CYP&F (TELAC)		April 2007	COMPLETED This is an ongoing requirement and all children have been reviewed in relation to key stage assessments by their TELAC worker.

Outcome	Action	To be achieved by:	Responsible agency/cies	Performance	Timescale	Progress September 2007
Enjoying and Achieving (continued)		That a strategy will be put in place that will closely track and ensure appropriate support and intervention is coordinated on behalf of the child ensuring effective communication between the child or young person's carer, social worker, school and TELAC service at critical educational 'key' stages, particularly in the lead up to Key Stage 4 (GCSE).	CYP&F (TELAC)		January 2007	PROGRESSING The work currently being completed on clarifying roles and responsibilities of ESW, TELAC and SWs will serve to strengthen communication and coordination in this area. It also now needs to incorporate information about the Virtual School Head Teacher and Private Tutoring Pilots. A leaflet will be produced.
		Ensuring that a current Personal Educational Plan (PEP) is available at each looked after review and is reviewed accordingly.	CYP&F (TELAC)		January 2007	COMPLETED The format and style of Personal Education has been reviewed and amended and procedures for completing PEPs are amended accordingly.
		Increasing the number of children in care who enter further education or employment through strengthened Pathway Planning and multi-agency arrangements.	CYP&F		September 2007	COMPLETED Arrangements are now in place between TELAC, Leaving Care Services and Connexions that will ensure better targeting of Connexions provision for young people without positive destinations.
		To develop systems and track post 16 education and training for young people to ensure that they access facilities that support their ongoing educational development.	CYP&F		April 2007	PROGRESSING This will build on the work outlined above.

Outcome	Action	To be achieved by:	Responsible agency/cies	Performance	Timescale	Progress September 2007
Enjoying and Achieving (continued)	The children in care have access to social and leisure opportunities to help them grow and mature.	The care planning process will ensure that the child/young person has access to opportunities that support their development, interests and confidence.	CYP&F		April 2008	<p>COMPLETED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Foster Care Conference planned for March 2008 will focus on 'aspirations' for children in care. ➤ The Wellbeing Agenda includes promoting Positive Activities through a voucher scheme. ➤ The kite mark initiative will ensure that foster carers are promoting sport, leisure and personal development interests of the children in their care.
		To review the arrangements for providing continuing support and life skills training for young people during the transition to independent living and leaving care.	CYP&F		September 2007	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>Life Skills workshops are available to young people via Barnado's, the evaluation is positive and will be continued.</p>
		Key managers within the County Council will put in place an action plan that will deliver social and leisure opportunities for children in care.	CYP&F		September 2007	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>This action is being progressed alongside the strategy for promoting Healthy Lifestyle Choices and Wellbeing.</p>
Positive Contribution	There is evidence that looked after children play an active part in their reviews.	The involvement of young people in their reviews either directly at the review meeting or independently outside the formal review increases to 90%.	CYP&F	<p>2006/07 Participation in reviews 91% (Projected 96.7%)</p> <p>LAC Reviews on time 72% (Projected 89.9%)</p>	September 2007	COMPLETED

Outcome	Action	To be achieved by:	Responsible agency/cies	Performance	Timescale	Progress September 2007
Positive Contribution (continued)		The circumstances of non involvement in the review process are known and recorded/reported.	CYP&F		September 2007	COMPLETED
		The Consultation Booklet for looked after children about the review process is revised and distributed.	CYP&F		September 2007	COMPLETED The booklet has been completed and received well by young people, carers and staff.
	Looked After children will be involved in helping design services and practices to meet their needs, and will be in regular discussions with elected members to ensure that their responsibilities are being met.	To continue initiatives that seek to ascertain the views of young people about their care experience.	CYP&F		April 2007	COMPLETED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Care Leavers Forum remains an active Group. ➤ Forum Members produced the Corporate Parenting Leaflet for Young People. ➤ A Young People's Group now meets in Rugby. ➤ The SIGMA initiative continues to provides opportunities for children of all ages to comment on their experiences. ➤ Successful consultation event 17/08/07 – further event planned 23/09/07. ➤ The policy regarding engagement of young people in staff recruitment have been approved. ➤ Young People and elected members seminar planned for 13/12/07 on 'the pledge. ➤ Young People Care Leaver Forum through a successful grant application have now secured a mobile headquarters.

Outcome	Action	To be achieved by:	Responsible agency/cies	Performance	Timescale	Progress September 2007
Positive Contribution (continued)		To train and support young people in working with the CYP&F Directorate in service development.	CYP&F		September 2007	<p>COMPLETED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Warwickshire Care Leavers Forum supports young people who contribute to service development. ➤ The Leaving Care Coordinator will be reviewing issues of training and support to young people in light of the White Paper recommendations. ➤ Young People are engaged with the Rainer Foundation in developing the Warwickshire Pledge/Children in Care Council.
		To develop opportunities for elected members to meet young people in care.	CYP&F Elected members		April 2007	<p>CONTINUING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Elected Members Steering Group has been established. ➤ Elected Members Seminar is planned for 13/12/07 to focus on aspects of the Care Matters – Time for Change agenda. ➤ Work has started on the ‘Pledge’ to Children in Care and setting up of Children In Care Council.
		To explore the opportunities for developing a befriending /mentoring scheme for young people in care and leaving care.	CYP&F		September 2007	<p>PROGRESSING</p> <p>The Leaving Care Development Manager is now working with the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation to try to secure funding to develop a mentoring project.</p>

Outcome	Action	To be achieved by:	Responsible agency/cies	Performance	Timescale	Progress September 2007
Achieving Economic Well Being	There is a coordinated programme of training, work experience and employment opportunities for looked after children provided through the County Council.	All young people leaving full-time education receive information about training and employment opportunities available across the County Council and partner agencies.	WCC CYP&F		January 2008	PROGRESSING A working group is in place to develop this programme. This includes a representative from Environment & Economy Directorate and Connexions. This is a longer term development and a series of meetings with key partners is planned to progress this.
	That looked after children are provided with care and supported housing arrangements that reduce exposure to harmful influences.	Through working with local partners and organisations to plan for and implement a housing strategy that will meet the future placement needs of children leaving care.	CYP&F		January 2008	PROGRESSING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Supporting People have completed research on the current and projected needs of care leavers that have informed proposed service development in Nuneaton/Bedworth. ➤ The Rugby Housing Strategy have recognised the needs of care leavers within the borough. ➤ Within the RIGHT2BCARED4 submission an Accommodation Partnership Officer and Placement Support Youth Worker for Vulnerable Young People will be appointed.
		To review, develop and improve the managerial coordination of the supported lodgings placements scheme.	CYP&F		September 2007	PROGRESSING To be progressed by the Accommodation Partnership Officer as part of the RIGHT2BCARED4 national pilot.