

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

4 February 2013

Review of Corporate Parenting Board

Report of the Executive Director Children's Services

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Corporate Parenting Board on the progress of the Review of the Corporate Parenting Board and make recommendations to the Board on changes to enhance its effectiveness.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Corporate Parenting Board first met in September 2006 and has met quarterly since that date. At the first meeting the terms of reference were confirmed as set out in the Council Constitution and it was further agreed the Board would report to the Children's Trust.
- 2.2 The Corporate Parenting Board meets quarterly. Young people from the Change Council attend the Corporate Parenting Board, and play an active role.
- 2.3 The Lead Member for Children and Young People commissioned this Review and asked Cllr Paul Stewart, Children's Policy lead to lead it.

3 Terms of Reference of the Review

- 3.1 It was agreed that Cllr Paul Stewart, Children's Policy Lead, would lead on the Review, assisted by Cllr Linda Williams and Cllr Doris McKnight. Young people from the Change Council were invited to be members of the Review Group. The Change Council appointed Daniel and Kieran to be part of the Review Group.
- 3.2 The terms of reference of the review were agreed as:
- The Review will look at how the Corporate Parenting Board operates – what works well and what could be improved.
 - This will include consideration of how Corporate Parenting Boards/Panels work elsewhere.
 - Report back to the Corporate Parenting Board in February 2013, with recommendations, with a view to taking a report to Cabinet in March 2013.

4 Progress of the Review

4.1 An initial meeting of the review group on 20 October agreed draft terms of reference. The group used this meeting to scope the review and spent some time considering what works well and what works less well in terms of the Corporate Parenting Board.

4.2. The draft terms of reference were reported back to the Corporate Parenting Board in November 2012. Members of the Board contributed to a development session looking at what works well and what could be improved.

4.2.1 What works well?

- Good attendance from elected members since attendance was opened up to all members.
- Young people's attendance, which is always good.
- Young people attendance from all settings; foster care, children's homes and care leavers.
- The commitment of the Lead Member is very good.

4.2.2 What could be better?

- Reports could be shorter and more interesting – presentations are often better.
- The minutes could be more geared towards actions.
- Could improve way the young people's issues get on the agenda.
- Members going to the Change Council.
- An Action Monitor would assist in tracking issues to make sure that important items stay on the agenda.
- The Civic Centre committee rooms that are used are not always suitable. The young people on the Review group felt that the smaller committee rooms, where everyone can see each other, were better suited to the Corporate Parenting Board than the more formal laid out rooms.

4.3 In December the group had the opportunity to observe Durham's Corporate Parenting Panels. Although there were some positives seen there, members of the review group generally preferred Sunderland's approach as young people are more directly involved in the work of our Board.

5. Suggestions for improvement

5.1 Membership - The review felt that it would be a good idea to include Scrutiny Members and representatives from People Boards in the Corporate Parenting Board.

5.2 Agenda - The idea of an annual work plan was discussed, with a programme set for the full year so the members know which items are coming up.

Members felt that lengthy written reports were not always helpful and agreed that presentations might be better.

There would also need to be space on each agenda for items from young people.

Performance reports should concentrate on highlights rather than covering the same ground at every meeting.

5.3 Rooms - It would be helpful if the better laid out committee rooms could be booked whenever possible.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Membership of the Corporate Parenting Board should be extended to members of Children's Scrutiny Panel and a representative from each of the People Boards, as well as the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Policy Lead for Children's Services.

6.2 All other elected members should be invited as participant observers to the Corporate Parenting Board, as all members have corporate parenting responsibilities.

6.3 The Corporate Parenting Board should agree an Annual Work plan with items against each date in the calendar, this is to ensure a wide spread of topics. Young people from Change Council should be involved in setting the work plan for the year in an annual event for members and young people.

6.4 Other agenda items can be added by Members or young people to augment the items on the annual work plan.

7. Appendix

App 1 - Timeline for changes.

