

BARNSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF: INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

TITLE: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING
PANEL (2021/22)

REPORT TO:	CABINET
Date of Meeting	16 JUNE 2022
Cabinet Member Portfolio	CHILDREN'S SERVICES
Key Decision	No
Public or Private	Public

Purpose of report

To present, for Cabinet's consideration, the latest Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Panel (*Please see Appendix*).

Council Plan priority

The terms of reference of the Corporate Parenting Panel, together with the role of elected members as corporate parent to both children and young people in care, as well as those leaving care, support the following priorities:

- **Healthy Barnsley** – By ensuring this group of children and young people are protected from harm and are enabled to live independently and maintain their wellbeing thereby reducing inequality in both health and income
- **Learning Barnsley** – Children and young people are enabled to achieve the best range of outcomes through improved educational achievement.

Recommendations

That Cabinet notes the progress and achievements made by the Panel in supporting children and young people in care, together with care leavers, in accordance with our statutory responsibilities, during this period.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Both the Children Act (2004) and the Children (Leaving Care) Act (2000) continue to place a statutory duty upon the Council to protect children from suffering significant harm and to provide continued financial and transitional support for care leavers aged up to 25.
- 1.2 More recently, Part 1 of the Children and Social Work Act (2017) and the publication of subsequent statutory guidance, requires the Council to give due regard to act in the best interests of and to secure the best outcomes for looked after children and care leavers.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The Corporate Parenting Panel's latest annual report demonstrates its continuing compliance with the responsibilities indicated in Paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 and the added value which it brings to the experience of children and young people both in and leaving care, particularly in helping them stay safe and healthy; improve their aspirations and prospects as well as enjoy enriching lives in accordance with the Council's 'Pledge' to children in care and the Local 'Offer' to care leavers in the Borough.

2.2 Notably, Sections 2.0 and 3.0 of the enclosed Annual Report outline the role and responsibilities, firstly of the Panel itself and, secondly, of elected members as a corporate parent. Moreover, Section 8 of the Annual Report indicates the progress and achievements made by the Corporate Parenting Panel towards improving the range of outcomes for children in care and care leavers, including on the following, during 2021/22:

- Safeguarding and protection.
- Health and wellbeing.
- Achieving their potential through education.
- Permanence, quality of placements and placement stability.
- Promoting engagement, participation and inclusion.

In addition, the Annex to the Annual Report outlines the Panel's priorities looking forward into 2022/23: The role of the Corporate Parenting Panel has ensured that all children in need of care in any part of Barnsley, together with those from other areas who are placed in the Borough, receive the help and support which they require in order to stay safe and healthy, gain a good education and to lead rewarding lives.

2.3 During a period in which social distancing, self-isolation and restrictions upon the public's movement could, potentially, have seriously impacted upon provision, the Council and its partners have continued to ensure that the whole range of our statutory responsibilities are fully met and that no children in care or care leavers were exposed to a greater risk of harm as a result of any lockdown or restrictions

3.1 IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

3.1 Financial and Risk

3.2 Consultations have taken place with representatives of the Service Director of Finance (S151 Officer) and are detailed in the paragraph below.

3.3 There are no direct financial implications arising from this annual report. Financial performance. Resources, budget and spend in relation to discharging the Panel's responsibilities is regularly reported through the Council's budgetary procedures. The Year-end Q4 corporate finance report outlines the increased cost pressures in 2021/22 in safeguarding vulnerable children and young people and meeting the placement needs of children in care and care leavers.

3.4 Additional investment / resources £4M have been provided for children social care in 2022/23 to address increase service demands and activity, particularly in relation to increased social workers (to address rises in caseloads) and rise in looked after children numbers and placement costs.

3.5 Legal

3.6 The Corporate Parenting Panel continues to comply with the statutory responsibilities indicated in Paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 of this report. During 2022/23 the Panel will consider the outcomes emerging through the Independent Review of Children's Social Care in England which will help inform the development of the Borough's forthcoming Children in Care Strategy, to be considered by Cabinet later this year.

3.7 There are no other legal implications emerging through consideration of this report.

3.8 Equality

3.9 Assessments for children in need of help or protection in the Borough include provision for meeting any specific needs as part of promoting equality. One of the proposals being considered by the Chair of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care is whether to recommend that children who experience care should be designated as having a protected characteristic under Equality legislation.

3.10 Sustainability

3.11 There are no implications for sustainability in the Borough emerging through this report

3.12 Employee

3.13 There are no direct employee implications emerging through consideration of the Panel's latest Annual Report

3.14 Communications

- 3.15 The Annual Report will be published and promoted through the Council's Web Site and to make stakeholders aware of the importance of the Panel's work and the value it adds to supporting vulnerable children and young people in the Borough.
- 3.16 This is the fourth annual report of the Panel to have been published following Ofsted's standard inspection of Local Authority Children's Services in the Borough (2018) which awarded 'Good' judgements in every key area of the inspection, including services for children in care and care leavers. Further, in a follow-up visit to the local Test of Assurance undertaken by the Government's National Implementation Advisor for Care Leavers in 2018, Barnsley was cited as an exemplar for good corporate parenting in their first annual report.
- 3.17 More recently, the LGA 's Peer Review of Children's Social Care undertaken earlier this year, concluded that children in care "...*Are served well in Barnsley.*"
- 3.18 These outcomes have provided assurance, to our communities, of the Council's continuing commitment towards fulfilling our 'Pledge' for children in care and in delivering our 'Local Offer' to care leavers, particularly as we pursue our ambitions for the Borough approaching 2030.

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Annual Report has been drafted with the valuable help and input of children in care and care leavers, including representatives from the Barnsley Care4Us Council.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The exclusive purpose of this report is to present the latest annual report of the Corporate Parenting Panel and its continued compliance with the statutory responsibilities indicated in Paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 earlier.

6.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Please see Paragraphs 1.1, 1.2 and 3.4 of this report.

7.0 GLOSSARY

- 7.1 None, applicable.

8.0 LIST OF APPENDICES

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Panel (2021/22)
Annex to Appendix: Corporate Parenting Panel Work Programme (2022)

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email governance@barnsley.gov.uk so that appropriate arrangements can be made

10. REPORT SIGN OFF

Financial consultation & sign off	Senior Financial Services officer consulted and date <i>Joshua Amahwe (19/05/2022)</i>
Legal consultation & sign off	Legal Services officer consulted and date <i>Jason Field and Marianne Farrell 23/05/22</i>

Report Author: Sophie Wales

Designation: Interim Executive Director (Children's Services)