

Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officers:	Chris Coyle, Assistant Director of Children's Services and Sara McCartan, Head of Service – Adolescent Services
Meeting Date:	2 February 2023

CORPORATE PARENT STRATEGY

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide scrutiny committee with an update regarding Blackpool's Corporate Parent Strategy.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 For the Scrutiny Committee to have oversight of the strategy to provide scrutiny and support.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 No other alternative options to be considered.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is

- "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience"

6.0 Background information

6.1 The term corporate parent describes the collective responsibility of the whole council, elected members, employees and partner agencies, for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children and young people who are or who have been one of 'Our Children'.

6.2 Blackpool's Corporate Parenting Strategy is designed to support the authority to be a good corporate parent and fulfils its duties corporately, in partnership with other statutory agencies, towards Our Children and Our Young People as described in the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

6.3 To ensure that the new strategy focusses on what Our Children and Our Young People identified as what matters to them we have worked alongside them to develop five promises (Appendix X(b)).

- 1) Care & Respect
- 2) Your Relationships
- 3) Your Health
- 4) Your Education
- 5) Your Future

These five promises, launched in October 2022, are now our strategic priorities in this strategy and further demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that the voice of our children and young people continue to drive the agenda and priorities.

6.4 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 10(a): Corporate Parent Strategy
Appendix 10(b): The 5 Promises

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 Any financial considerations in delivering the strategy will follow the relevant approval channels.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 There are no legal implications to consider. The Corporate Parenting Panel oversees the Corporate Parenting Strategy ensuring the authority fulfils its duties for Our Children and Our Young People as described in the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 There are no issues of concern, appropriate governance arrangements are in place via the

Corporate Parenting Panel. The Corporate Parenting Panel is the lead governance arrangement for the ownership and accountability of our Corporate Parenting strategy. The purpose of the Corporate Parent Panel is to ensure that the local authority delivers its 5 Promises and commitment to improve outcomes for children, young people and families through the ethos of Blackpool Families Rock.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 Key headlines from the Sustainability Impact Assessment tool have been considered and there are no sustainability, climate change or environmental adjustments to be made at this time.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 To ensure that the strategy focusses on what Our Children and Our Young People identified as what matters to them we have worked alongside them to develop five promises which are now our strategic priorities.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None

Blackpool's Corporate Parenting Strategy

2022 - 2024



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Foreword

As our Corporate Parents you have the privilege of making sure that we have a safe and happy childhood that will allow us to grow into independent adults. We think that it is important that we have been part of the writing of the new Five Promises and we are pleased that you are committed to keeping them. It shows that our corporate parents and everyone involved have the commitment to ensure children and young people influence and shape the services working alongside them.

You have been my Corporate Parent for almost 20 years I am pleased to say that I have seen massive improvements in the services that support me and other children and young people with similar experiences during that time.

Tom, Justuz Extra

Blackpool's ambition is to provide the very best care and support to all children, young people and families when facing challenges in their life. We know that children looked after and care leavers are some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in society. It is therefore crucial that we as Corporate Parents work together to improve the lives and outcomes for children in our care and those children who have left care thus ensuring that we meet the aims and aspirations for these, as for all other children, ensuring that they reach their full potential. Throughout this document we shall refer to children and young people who are looked after or leaving care as "our children and young people".

Victoria Gent, Director of Children's Services

Introduction:

Welcome to Blackpool's Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022 - 24. To ensure that the strategy focuses on what our children and young people identified as what matters to them we have worked alongside our children and young people to develop five promises. These five promises are now our strategic priorities in this strategy and further demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that the voice of our children and young people continue to drive the agenda and priorities.

What is Corporate Parenting?

The term corporate parent describes the collective responsibility of the council, elected members, employees and partner agencies, for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are or who have been one of Our Children or Young People:

'Corporate parenting principlesshould shape the mind-set and culture of every part of a local authority in how it carries out all of its functions in relation to looked-after children and care leavers.'

Applying Corporate Parenting Principles 2018

Governance Arrangements:

The Corporate Parenting Panel will be the lead governance arrangement for the ownership and accountability of this Corporate Parenting strategy. It will hold officers and partners to account for their delivery of the 5 Promises and the outcomes achieved. It is intended that each Corporate Parenting Board meeting will be themed around the 5 Promises in the strategy to ensure focus, robust monitoring and to maintain momentum.

The panel is made up of elected members, key service leaders, council officers, and service providers, representatives from wider partners and our children in care and care leavers. The Panel provides strong leadership ensuring that the needs of our children and young people are addressed whilst continuing to build on our strengths and achieve great outcomes. The ambitions and aspirations set out in this strategy are supported by a series of live plans that relevant Heads of Service are responsible for. These plans will drive the Five Promises and progress will be reported to the Corporate Parenting Panel on quarterly basis. Once a year there will be a 'Take Over' Panel where our children and young people will chair the Panel, set the agenda and hold the panel to account on areas they are passionate about.

Our Partners

For this Effective Corporate Parenting strategy to be successfully achieved it requires everyone involved including Blackpool council and its partners, such as health services, Police, schools, housing, elected members, officers, teachers, GP's etc to recognise their role as corporate parents and understand what they can contribute to enable us to be the best corporate parents we can be to all our children and young people. In Blackpool we have a wide range of partners who support our children and young people as their Corporate Parents. This Corporate Parenting Strategy is also underpinned by our Partnership commitment to ensuring that the needs of our children and young people are met in the best way possible by partners prioritising access to resources, but when providing a service we should always continue to challenge ourselves by asking 'would this be good enough for my child'.

Priority 1

PROMISE 1 – CARE AND RESPECT

We promise to care about you, so you feel safe and loved and we will always treat you with respect.

What Our Children and Young People say is important:

- Listen to Our Children and Young People
- Keep Our Children and Young People safe
- Be honest and open
- Involve Our Children and Young People in the decision made about their life
- Talk to Our Children and Young People and write about them with care and respect and in a way that they can understand
- Visit when we say we will and be on time
- Return calls and messages and be there when Our Children need us
- Do the things that we say we will
- Celebrate Our Childrens successes
- Spend time with Our Children and Young People so we get to know them really well
- Never give up on Our Children and Young People

What we will do as part of this strategy:

- Undertake good quality, meaningful life story work to support Our Children and Young People in understanding their journey
- Ensure Our Children and young people have the opportunity to create their own memory boxes where they can keep all the things that are important to them.
- Ensure Our Children and Young People are always be fully included in discussions and decisions made about their life and their future. Including ensuring Our Children are creatively engage in taking part and leading their In Our Care Reviews
- Foster trusted relationships by limiting the changes in those working with Our Children and young people. Where a child or young person has a change in the professionals supporting them, we will strive to ensure that there are meaningful 'hellos' and 'goodbyes'

Priority 2

PROMISE 2 – YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

We promise to build a trusting relationship with you and make sure you see and spend time with the people who are important to you

What Our Children and Young People say is important:-

- Make sure Our Children and Young People live with people they like and who really care about them.
- Make sure Our Children and Young People keep in touch and see the people who are important to them as long as it is safe.
- Continue to work together with Our Children and Young People family to look at ways that they could return home safely in the future.
- Make sure Our Children and Young People spend time with their brothers and sisters if they can't live with them and keep working to bring them back together wherever possible.
- Work really hard to make sure Our Children and Young People don't have lots of changes of people who support them.
- Support Our Children and Young People to build a good network of people around you who you like and trust.
- Spend quality time with Our Children and Young People so we get to know Our really well.
- Say goodbye to Our Children and Young People if we have to leave.

What we will do as part of this strategy:

- Ensure all workers will have a good understanding of Life Long links and Our children and young people will be engaged with the programme.
- Increase in the proportion of Our Children with long term home stability
- Decrease in the proportion of Our Children experiencing home instability

Priority 3

PROMISE 3 – YOUR HEALTH

We promise to support you to be happy and healthy

What Our Children and Young People say is important:-

- Make sure Our Children and Young People have the right support to meet any health needs they have.
- Make sure we arrange your health check with Our Children and Young People.
- Make sure Our Children and Young People understand the reasons why they are in our care.
- Make sure Our Children and Young People know their family's history in a way that they can understand.
- Make sure Our Children and Young People get the right support around your mental health.
- Help Our Children and Young People to make and keep friendships.
- Give Our Children and Young People opportunities to learn new skills to keep fit and healthy within your local community.
- Make sure Our Children and Young People have a passport to leisure.
- Make sure Our Children and Young People know their health history when you turn 18.

What we will do as part of this strategy:

- Implement the outcome findings from the School Nurse delivery review
- Increase the proportion of Our Children who have had their annual health assessments completed on time and that they report that this was a positive experience and they had choice as to where this took place.
- Increase proportion of Our Children and Young People will have and use their Passport to Leisure card.
- Increase proportion of Our Children and Young People will be registered with the dentist and will experience good oral health outcomes.
- Increase proportion of Our Children and Young People will be permanently registered with a GP.
- Our Children and Young People will tell us in their annual survey that they are happy with the support they receive around their health and feel that they experience positive health outcomes.

Priority 4

PROMISE 4 – YOUR EDUCATION

We Promise to care about your education and give you every opportunity to learn and achieve.

What Our Children and Young People say is important:

- Ensure Our Children and Young People attend a Nursery/School/ College where they are happy and able to achieve.
- Make sure Our Children and Young People get the right support around their learning if and when they need it.
- Give Our Children and Young People lots of opportunities to learn new things and take part in after school activities.
- Try our best not to move Our Children and Young People school unless it really isn't working for them.
- Make sure Our Children and Young People don't get taken out of their lessons just because we need to see them.
- Provide opportunities for Our Children and Young People to come and work with the council if it is right for them.
- Support Our Children and Young People to achieve their goals and career path whatever they choose to do.
- Support Our Children and Young People opportunities to have meaningful work experience.
- Make sure Our Children and Young People have the right equipment to support their learning.

What we will do as part of this strategy:

- Improve the quality of each child's Personal Education Plan (PEP), as this underpins and supports their education by providing a collective memory about a child's education; improving the educational experience of the child by helping everyone gain a clear understanding of the teaching and learning provision necessary to meet each child's educational needs.
- To further support our children we have recruited Academic Tuition Mentors (ATM) who work across the 13 schools that our children attend. This ensures that they have access to high quality tuition where it is needed. We know that access to consistent education is a key factor in ensuring stability for our children. We therefore have a central focus on supporting the child's home arrangements and advocate at every opportunity to promote educational stability. Where a school move is unavoidable we support timely moved to reduce missed education.

- Work with schools to encourage them to engage in training that helps them to understand the experience of our children and how this may impact on their educational journey. This includes expanding our Trauma Informed Training offer to schools;
- Enhance our focus on extra-curricular engagement of Our Children and support them to develop interests and activities outside of school;
- Continue to strongly support access to higher education, recognising that the path may not be easy and providing extra support over and beyond to ensure each young person's success.

Priority 5

PROMISE 5 – YOUR FUTURE

We Promise to help prepare you for the future and support you to fulfil your hopes and dreams

What we will do as part of this strategy:

- Work with Our Children and Young People to create the right plan for your future
- Support Our Children and Young People to learn life skills so that they can be independent in the future
- Be ambitious for Our Children and Young People and encourage them to dream big
- Make sure Our Young People know how much money they are entitled to and have support on how to manage it
- Make sure Our Children and Young People know and understand their rights as a child/young adult who has experienced care
- Support you to stay with the people you live with at 18 with if it's what you both want
- Help Our Children and Young People to find a good home when it is time for you to live independently
- Support Our Children and Young People into education, training or work so they can achieve their goals
- Continue to work with the Care Leavers Covenant to enhance Our Offer to Our Young People
- Listen to Our Children and Young People so they have a voice in how services continue to develop
- Keep the door open for Our Children and Young People so they can come back if they need us

What we will do as part of this strategy:

Ensure continuous professional development of all the professionals who support Our Children and Young people including:

- Support for our young people to sustain their homes by being proactive in the support that we provide;
- Support for our young people who would like to have therapeutic support to access their records;
- Support for our young people to raise awareness of their rights and entitlements as care experienced young people;
- Support to our practitioners to ensure our young people consistently lead their pathway plans.

We will also:

- Further develop our Staying Put Scheme so that more young people are able to stay at home for longer.
- Continue to work co-productively to ensure that our children and young people shape services working with them are right for them;
- Ensure our children and young people know that our support is always available whenever they need it including developing our offer to those who are over the age of 25 who would benefit from advice and support;
- Increase the Leaving Care Grant in line with the increase to the cost of living
- Continue to develop our post 18 offer from Health Services
- Further develop the Jobs in the Family Firm approach maximising on the refreshed and improved Care Leavers' Covenant.

