

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
COUNCIL

14 OCTOBER 2015

Report of the Corporate Parenting Panel

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All

Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2014-15

Purpose of the Report

1. The terms of reference for the Neath Port Talbot Corporate Parenting Panel provides for an Annual Report to be produced by the Panel to full Council. The Annual Report for 2014-15 is included at Appendix 1.

Executive Summary

2. The Annual Report 2014-15 outlines the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel over the last year and highlights the progress that has been made. It also identifies future work of the Panel and some of the initiatives and actions it will aim to achieve during 2015/16.
3. The work programme for 2014/15 has focussed on the key areas - educational attainment, continued monitoring and improvement of accommodation for Care Leavers, holding a Looked After Children Information and Fun Day and representation of Looked After Children in the Youth Justice System
4. Several policies have been commissioned by the Panel and the Online Safety Policy has been recognised by the Fostering Network as an example of good practice.

5. The Information and Fun Day was a success and was enjoyed by all who attended.
6. The Panel has continued to support the improvement of educational attainment for Looked After Children and the action plan continues to be developed and monitored. The Panel has been proactive in addressing this issue which has become a national priority.
7. Accommodation for Care Leavers has been a priority for the Panel and significant improvement has been made. Work in this area will continue as it has been noted that there could be a surge in demand in the next few years due to the current number of Looked After Children.
8. It was identified that Looked After Children were over represented in the Youth Justice System. There have been positive developments within Neath Port Talbot in this area with a reduction in the number involved in the system.
9. There are challenges for the Panel going forward and these include identifying priority areas, avoiding duplication of the work of other groups and developing mechanisms to ensure all Elected Members are aware of their role and responsibilities as Corporate Parents. A seminar on Corporate Parenting will take place on 22 October and all Members are invited to attend.
10. Future work of the Panel includes continuing to develop and monitor existing work areas. In addition, identifying future priorities such as commissioning information on health services for Looked After Children.

Background

11. Looked After Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in our society and improving the lives of these children is a national priority. Providing care and support for them is the job of staff employed by the Council, partner agencies, foster carers and Elected Members.
12. The role of the Corporate Parenting Panel is to champion the rights of these children and young people to ensure their needs are being met, they are safe and have the best chances in life. The Panel monitors information that impacts on Looked After Children and holds partners and officers to account.

13. The Neath Port Talbot Corporate Parenting Panel was set up in 2013 and is chaired by the Leader of the Council.

Financial Impact

14. The work that has been developed around Looked After Children and Children and Young People Services has resulted in a reduction in the number of Looked After Children. This will have a positive impact with savings projected in the Forward Financial Plan.

Equality Impact Assessment

15. The activities of the Panel take into account that age is a protected characteristic and where necessary other protected characteristics are considered, such as race and disability. Where new or changes to policies are commissioned by the Panel equality impact assessments are undertaken as appropriate.

Workforce Impacts

16. The work that has been developed around Looked After Children and Children and Young People Services has resulted in a positive impact on the workforce with more stability.

Legal Impacts

17. There are a range of statutory legal requirements in regards to Looked After Children. The Panel helps to support the Council and its partners to discharge them by ensuring there is clear focus and responsibilities there to.

Risk Management

18. The role of the Corporate Parenting Panel is to champion the rights of Looked After Children. The Council is no longer subject to the serious concerns protocol and the Panel will minimise the risk of losing focus on the needs of Looked After Children.

Consultation

19. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendation

20. In accordance with the agreed terms of reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel, an annual report has been produced for full Council. Members have the opportunity to consider and comment on the information contained within the report and the proposed priorities for the next period.

Reason for Proposed Decision

21. In setting up the Corporate Parenting Panel the Council requires an annual report to be produced by the Panel setting out the work that has been undertaken and identifying future priorities.

Appendices

22. Appendix One - Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2014-15
23. Appendix Two - Terms of reference of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

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