



CABINET

Subject Heading:

Havering Corporate Parenting Strategy

Cabinet Member:

Councillor Robert Benham, Deputy Leader, Lead Member for Children and Learning.

SLT Lead:

Robert South, Director, Children's Services

Report Author and contact details:

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Policy context:

To support our community of children Looked After by the local authority and those leaving care.

Financial summary:

The Corporate Parenting strategy will be implemented from existing resources.

Is this a Key Decision?

This is a Key Decision.

When should this matter be reviewed?

The Havering Corporate Parenting Panel should oversee the implementation of the strategy and provide an annual update to the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

Reviewing OSC:

Havering Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Communities making Havering
Places making Havering

Cabinet, 5th August 2020

Opportunities making Havering
Connections making Havering

[X]
[X]

SUMMARY

This report presents the Havering Corporate Parenting Strategy for approval by Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

- approves the Havering Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020-2023;
- agrees for the Havering Corporate Parenting Panel to oversee implementation of the strategy; and
- that an annual update should be provided to the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Havering Council has a duty to seek out every opportunity to support children and young people in our care. This strategy, informed by views of children and young people and presenting to Havering's Cabinet for approval, will deliver our ambition to support children in care and care leavers who (for whatever reason) are not able to live with their birth parents.

REASONS AND OPTIONS

Reasons for the decision:

2. Corporate parenting refers to the shared responsibility across the Council to ensure that children and young people in our care or leaving care are supported to thrive. Young people in care and care leavers are vulnerable individuals who often have difficult and traumatic experiences in some of the most formative years of their lives.
3. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 guides the actions of corporate parents towards children in care and care leavers. These are covered in detail in Havering's Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Other options considered:

4. It is good practice to state our ambition across the Council in relation to children in our care. Havering has the option of not producing a Corporate Parenting Strategy. This option has been discounted on the basis that it does not meet good practice standards. In addition the local authority would not be in a position to articulate its strategy in relation to children in our care, to regulators such as Ofsted when necessary.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

5. The Havering Corporate Parenting Strategy will be implemented within existing resources.

Legal implications and risks:

6. The Council has various duties under the Children Act 1989 to children its care and to children and young people who leave its care. It also has a duty under s 1 Children and Social Work Act 2017, in carrying out functions in relation to the children and young people in its care and formerly in its care who meet statutory criteria to have regard to the need—
 - (a) to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;
 - (b) to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
 - (c) to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
 - (d) to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;
 - (e) to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;
 - (f) for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work;
 - (g) to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

7. In achieving these obligations it must have regard to the statutory guidance. This states amongst other things:

“The critical question that local authorities should ask ... is: ‘would this be good enough for my child?’ Local authorities that have a strong corporate parenting ethos recognise that the care system is not just about keeping children safe, but also to promote recovery, resilience and well-being.

Strong corporate parenting means strong leadership, challenge and accountability at every level. The quality of support can be measured in how the child or young person experiences the support they receive and the extent to which they feel listened to and taken seriously.

To that end, many top tier local authorities have established Corporate Parenting Boards or Panels to look strategically at the way in which their looked-after children and care leavers experience services.”

Human Resources implications and risks:

8. The recommendations made in this report do not give rise to any identifiable HR risks or implications that would affect either the Council or its workforce.

Equalities implications and risks:

9. An Equality and Health Impact Assessment (EqHIA) has been carried out in relation to the Corporate Parenting Strategy and is included as Appendix One to this report.

Health and Wellbeing implications and Risks

10. The health and wellbeing of children in our care are central to our safeguarding duty. The Havering Corporate Parenting Strategy makes clear our priorities to safeguard young people, specifically including a priority on health (both mental health and physical wellbeing).
11. All services of the council have a role to play as corporate parents. We have a commitment to ensure good access to quality of education and training opportunities for those in our care. We want them to be safe in our green spaces, sports facilities and be able to interact socially with other people safely.
12. The strategy, to be delivered across the Council, is informed by an Equality Health Impact Assessment and will secure better health and wellbeing of children, young people and young adults leaving care.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet, 5th August 2020

None