



AGENDA

SELECT COMMITTEE - CORPORATE PARENTING

Wednesday, 18th March, 2015, at 2.00 pm

Ask for: Denise Fitch/Gaetano Romagnuolo

Swale 2, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone

Telephone 03000 416090/416624

Tea/Coffee will be available 15 minutes before the start of the meeting in the meeting room

Membership

Mrs Z Wiltshire (Chairman), Mr R E Brookbank, Ms C J Cribbon, Mr S J G Koowaree, Mr B Neaves, Mr M J Northey, Mr R J Parry, Mrs P A V Stockell and Mrs J Whittle

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

1. Apologies for absence
2. 2.00 pm - 3.30pm - Jenny Boyd - Director of Local Delivery West, Councillor Dick Madden - Lead Member for People Operations and Chair of Corporate Parenting Panel, Sheila Woodward - Community Involvement and Engagement Manager, Essex County Council (Pages 3 - 6)
3. 3.40pm - Paul Brightwell, Head of Quality Assurance, Specialist Children's Services, Kent County Council (Pages 7 - 12)
4. 4.25 - Wrap up session to identify key points from hearing sessions

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services
(01622) 694002

Tuesday, 10 March 2015

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CORPORATE PARENTING SELECT COMMITTEE

Hearing 5

Wednesday 18th March 2015

Witness Guide for Members

Below are suggested themes and questions. They have been provided in advance to the witnesses to allow them to prepare for the types of issues that Members may be interested to explore. All Members are welcome to ask these questions or pose additional ones to the witnesses via the Committee Chairman.

Themes and Questions

Jenny Boyd – Director of Local Delivery West, Essex County Council

Councillor Dick Madden – Lead Member for People Operations and Chair of Corporate Parenting Panel, Essex County Council

Sheila Woodward – Community Involvement and Engagement Manager, Essex County Council

- Please introduce yourselves and outline the roles and responsibilities that your posts involve.
- What are your corporate parenting duties and responsibilities?
- Please provide an outline of the corporate parenting structure in Essex County Council.
- In your view what constitutes good and effective corporate parenting?
- Please describe the main challenges faced by Essex County Council as a corporate parent before undergoing transformation.
- What specific measures did Essex County Council adopt in order to enhance the fulfilment of its corporate parenting responsibilities?
- In what ways does Essex County Council, and its councillors in particular, capture the views of local children and young people in care?
- What monitoring mechanisms are available to Essex County Council councillors to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people in care?

- Are there any other issues with relevance to the review that you wish to bring to the Committee's attention?

Kent County Council

Corporate Parenting Select Committee

A model of effective corporate parenting according to the National Children's Bureau

Key elements of the model

This proposed model suggests a framework for the systems and processes that need to be in place if a local authority is to meet its responsibilities as a corporate parent. The model cannot be seen in isolation because consideration will need to be given to how it fits with other local authority departments, council committees and partner agencies. Corporate parenting may be delivered through different systems and structures in different authorities; however, it is suggested that the components of the model need to be in place, irrespective of the local structure, if responsibilities are to be met.

Components

Whatever structures exist in your council, **children's participation** is an essential part of the process and every local authority is expected to establish a Children in Care Council to ensure that every child has the opportunity to give their views. This may provide opportunities to involve children in drawing up the **local Care Pledge**. Parents, family and carers have similar contributions to make if the objective of hearing and taking into account the views of all stakeholders is to be achieved.

The group in the centre of Figure 1 carries responsibility for corporate parenting. Although it is not mandatory, most local authorities have created a specific corporate parenting board, panel or committee to fulfil this function, and different models are described in the section on governance. Its **leadership and governance within the council must be clear** – for example, there should be clarity concerning the group's powers to deploy resources and individual members must be clear about the authority they exert.

Where the group or its individual members do not possess these powers, the **decision-making processes** that will apply within their council or agency **must be well defined** – especially the relationship of the corporate parenting group to other management, resources, scrutiny committees and boards.

The group requires a sophisticated level of **management information** to carry out its role. This information should cover **quantitative** data, such as education outcomes for looked after children, and also **qualitative** data, such as the views of consumers of services concerning the quality and suitability of the services to meet their needs and achieve good outcomes.

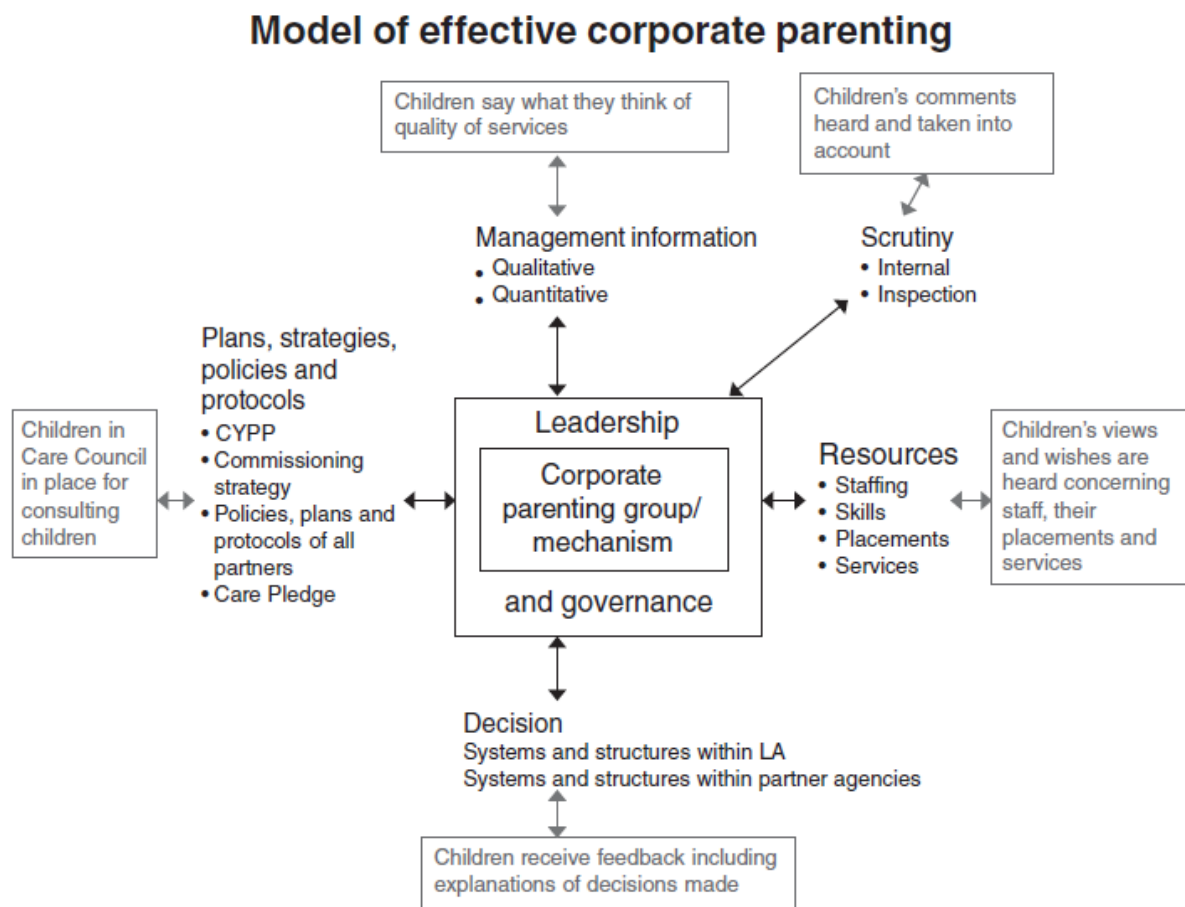
The group must be able to ensure, or argue its case for, the right resources in all agencies.

Resources include:

- staffing
- skills
- placements and
- other support services.

Plans, strategies, policies, protocols and partnerships should assist and inform the work of the group.

Figure 1: Model of Effective Corporate Parenting



Source: National Children's Bureau

Corporate Parenting Select Committee

Paul Brightwell, Head of Quality Assurance, Specialist Children's Services, Kent County Council

Biography

My name is Paul Brightwell and my substantive post within KCC is Head of Quality Assurance, Children's Safeguarding Unit, Specialist Children's Services. I am currently on a secondment as the Service Manager for Canterbury / Swale Children and Young People's Service within East Kent Area Specialist Children's Service. This is an operational position which I have taken in order to refresh my experience in front line practice and assist with the work being undertaken for SCS's next Ofsted Inspection. I have been professionally qualified in Social Work since June 1992.

Since 1998 I have specialised in practice and policy with looked after children and care leavers. I have had a lead role in helping to develop KCC's understanding of Corporate Parenting and how this should be put into the practice and behaviours of KCC Officers and elected Members of the County Council.

My professional qualifications are: BSc(honours) Psychology (2i); Certificate of Qualification in Social Work; MA (Social Work); Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Social Work (children and Families) (Distinction). More recently I have been doing research for a PhD on the subject of creativity in Social Work.

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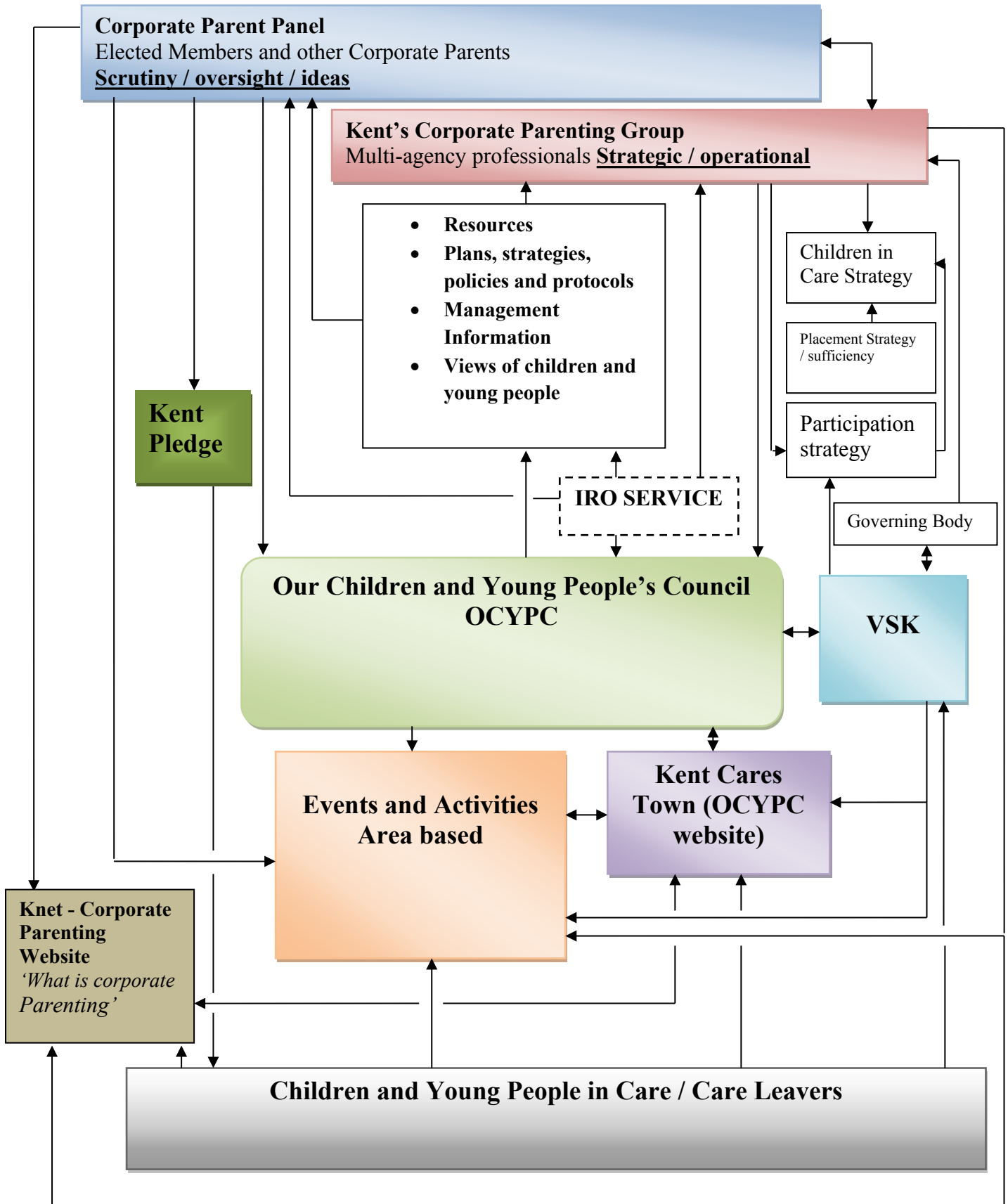
Themes and Questions

Paul Brightwell, Head of Quality Assurance, Specialist Children's Services, Kent County Council

- Please introduce yourself and outline the roles and responsibilities that your post involves. Please describe your involvement with the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) service in Kent.
- Please outline the key functions of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) service in Kent.
- Please discuss the main, recent findings from your quality assurance audits of practice with children and young people in care in Kent (both quantitative information about performance and the quality of practice). What are the key issues that require improvement – if any?
- In what ways, if any, can Kent's IRO service be improved?
- To what extent, according to your findings, are children and young people in care in Kent engaged in the decisions that affect them? What else – if anything – can be done to improve their involvement in the decisions that affect them?
- To what extent are the monitoring mechanisms available to Members effective in ensuring the safety and well-being of children and young people in care in Kent?
- In your view, what else – if anything – can KCC Members do in order to fulfil their corporate parenting role?

- Are there any other issues, with relevance to the review, which you would like to raise with the Committee?

Framework of Kent's Corporate Parenting Leadership and Governance



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