

Agenda Item 5 (c)

By: Alex King – Deputy Leader
Peter Sass – Head of Democratic Services & Local Leadership

To: Selection & Member Services Committee – 26 November 2008

Subject: Children, Families & Education Policy Overview Committee – New Sub-Committee and revised terms of reference for the Children’s Champions Board

FOR DECISION

Summary: This report proposes the establishment of a Local Children’s Services Partnerships (LCSPs) Sub Committee and also seeks approval for revised terms of reference for the Children’s Champions Board.

Introduction

1. This Committee at its meeting on 8 October 2008 agreed to defer consideration of this report to enable it to be discussed by the Leaders of the three political groups. The Leaders met on 11 November 2008.

Local Children’s Services Partnerships Sub Committee (LCSP’s)

2. (1) At the meeting of the Children, Families & Education Policy Overview Committee (C, F & E POC) on 19 September, a report was considered which requested support for the establishment of an LCSPs Sub Committee. This Sub Committee would have an overview of the LCSPs and would report to the C, F & E POC on a regular basis. A copy of the report to the C, F & E POC which sets out the proposed terms of reference, work programme, size and meeting arrangements is attached as **Appendix 1**.

(2) The C, F & E POC recommended the establishment of a time limited Sub Committee and suggested that at an early meeting it should decide whether it wished to extend its Membership to include Church and Teacher Advisor representatives.

(3) The C, F & E POC received a report at its meeting 13 November 2008 updating them on progress with establishing the Sub Committee and also gave details of informal meetings with Members to discuss the LCSP’s. The Committee noted that further consideration would be given at the County Council meeting as to whether to expand the Membership to include a church and a teacher advisory representative

Children’s Champions Board

Background

3. (1) The Children’s Champions Board was set up in response to the Victoria Climbié inquiry to address elected Members important Corporate Parent role. The Board is advisory to the C, F & E POC and has played a significant role in developing

and deepening Members understanding of the issues around Corporate Parenting and Looked after Children, and their role in addressing these issues.

(2) There are two reasons for bringing this to the attention of this Committee. The first is to regularise the appointment of the Board which, when it was first established, was dealt with by the Policy Overview Co-ordinating Committee because, at that time, its activities spanned two Policy Overview Committees. Second, with the enhanced Corporate Parenting responsibility as well as the new National Indicators, the terms of reference for the Board have been reviewed.

Reasons for reviewing the terms of reference

(3) The Board wished to review its Terms of Reference to reflect the changed and enhanced responsibilities of Board Members as Corporate Parents. Although all elected County Council Members have Corporate Parenting responsibilities, Members of the Children's Champions Board have, in addition, 'Level 2 (Targeted)' responsibilities, and the Chairman also shares 'Level 3 (Specialist)' responsibilities with the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Educational Achievement and key senior officers.

The Process So far

4. (1) To address the need for more detailed wording, the officer team drafted some additions to the existing Terms of Reference. These were considered by the Board on 8 July, at which Members agreed a new version. The revised wording takes account of all the enhanced Corporate Parenting responsibilities set out above, as well as the new National Indicator Set, which was coming into use while the review was underway. The revised draft Terms of Reference are set out in **Appendix 2**.

(2) The revised draft Terms of Reference were presented by the Board Chairman, Mrs Allen, with the support of the new Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Educational Achievement, Mr Ridings, to Cabinet Members on 8 September 2008. At this meeting, the document received the support of Cabinet Members.

(3) At its meeting on 24 September 2008 the Children's Champions Board agreed the revised terms of reference for submission to this Committee and the County Council, for formal adoption.

Meeting of the three Leaders – 11 November 2008

5. (1) The three Leaders were keen to see reflected in the work of the County Council a definition on the role of the elected Member as a corporate parent.

(2) Corporate Parenting is a term which recognises public agencies accountability for discharging parental responsibilities and that good results depend on children/young people receiving a range of inputs so as to help them fulfil their potential throughout life. Effective corporate parenting requires co-operative working across agency boundaries.

(3) A distinction can be made between the terms 'Corporate Parent' and 'Corporate Parenting'.

(4) The 'Corporate Parent' is represented by the Director of Children's Services and elected Members of the local authority.

(5) 'Corporate Parenting' describes the functions required of a local authority to promote the welfare and safety of children looked after by them, which are undertaken by officers of the local authority with the support of partner agencies/professionals.

(6) The National Children's Bureau has distinguished three kinds of corporate parenting:-

- Universal responsibility – all elected Members and officers;
- Targeted responsibility – Corporate Parenting Groups/staff working with Looked After Children; and
- Specialist responsibility – Lead Member for Children/Director of Children's Services.

(7) The three Leaders would also like to suggest an additional term of reference for the Children's Champions Board:-

"(g) to report in a timely manner to the relevant local Member(s) as and when such may be required."

(8) Whilst recognising that the Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Committee have proposed that the Local Children's Services Partnership Sub-Committee should be time limited the three Leaders feel there will inevitably be a need for a permanent mechanism.

(9) The Leaders suggested that the Children's Champions Board should submit an annual report to the County Council on the work of the Board. Within the report it would be helpful to include information on the number of Looked After Children placed by other authorities in Kent.

(10) The view was also expressed by the three Leaders that it would be helpful if each Member had made available to them information on the number of Looked After Children placed within their electoral division, including information on the educational achievement and attainment of these children.

6. Recommendations

- (a) the Committee agree to recommend to the County Council the establishment of a Sub Committee of the Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Committee to have an overview of the LCSP's on the terms set out in the report attached as **Appendix 1**, and
- (b) the appointment of the Children's Champions Board be regularised by

agreement to its appointment by the County Council, with the revised terms of reference, as set out in **Appendix 2**.

- (c) The views of the three Leaders be referred to the Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Committee for consideration.

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Background Information: *none*

By: Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership
To: Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Committee
Subject: Local Children's Services Partnerships (LCSPs) – Proposal to establish a Sub-Committee

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This reports sets out a proposal to establish a Sub-Committee of Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Committee to have an overview of the Local Children's Services Partnerships (LCSPs)

Introduction

1. (1) At the last meeting of the Policy Overview Committee (POC) on 3 June 2008 Members received a report on the LCSPs, an updated version is set out below.

(2) The Kent Children's Trust (KCT) has agreed to introduce 23 Local Children's Services Partnerships Trusts across Kent from September 2008. The local partnerships will be the local "delivery arm" of the KCT, their key purpose is to strengthen integrated working to improve outcomes for local children, young people (CYP) and families. The LCSPs will be based on the geography of the existing school clusters and increasingly draw together all public and voluntary services for CYP and families in that locality including schools, early years settings, health and youth services.

(3) Key elements of LCSP Working - being introduced from September 2008

(i) Local Children and Young People's Plan (LCYPP)

Each LCSP will agree and deliver a LCYPP based on the Kent CYPP and focussed on the particular issues that local C&YP face. All localities have prepared a first working edition of their LCYPP in readiness for September 2008. A range of multi agency data has been provided to support this planning. Local multi agency data sets can be viewed on:

http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Children/kct_localdata.cfm

(ii) Local Children's Services Partnership Board

The local Board will lead the development of integrated planning and delivery and work with existing partnership groups, for example Crime Disorder Reduction Partnerships. The Board will report to the Kent Children's Trust and be accountable for delivering the LCYPP. A local Partnership Agreement has been developed to support the effective operation of the LCSP Board.

(iii) Local Children's Services Partnership Manager and Teams

Each local partnership will be managed by a LCSP Manager who will lead the development of integrated working, support the Partnership Board and ensure outcomes are improved. Appointments have been made to 20 of the 23 posts and cover arrangements are in place for the 3 vacancies.

Staff currently part of the cluster teams have transferred to the new LCSP and further staff will be deployed as the LCSPs develop. There will also be much stronger links with professionals across partner agencies particularly as the integrated processes for CAF, lead professional and Contact-Point are implemented.

Improving outcomes across the ECM framework is acknowledged to be a long term agenda. The introduction LCSPs in September is a significant milestone in Kent and forms part of a long term change programme to embed highly effective children's trust arrangements.

LCSP Sub-Committee

2. (1) It is suggested that a Sub-Committee of this POC be established to oversee the operation of LCSPs with a particular focus on the LCYPP which will make recommendations to the POC on best practise and suggestion for improvements.

Terms of Reference:-

(2) To oversee the operation of the Local Children's Services Partnerships (LCSPs) and make recommendations to the Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Committee

Work Programme

(3) Meeting would provide an opportunity to review 3 - 4 LCSPs at a time making recommendations at the next meeting of the POC. There would be 2/3 study days a year spread around the country, which would consist of visiting localities in the morning and a meeting of the Sub-Committee in the afternoon.

Size of Sub-Committee

(4) It is suggested that the Membership of the Committee be based on the proportion 4:2:1 – which is the same size as Select Committees – with the Membership drawn from across the county.

Time limited

(5) This Sub-Committee will be time limited and it would review its operation after 1 year to give Members the opportunity to recommend improvements.

Meetings

(6) It is recommended that the Sub-Committee meets 6 – 8 times a year. The meetings would be programmed so that there is timely reporting of the outcomes to the five meetings of POC in the year.

Recommendation

3. That, subject to approval by the County Council at its meeting on 11 December 2008, a time limited Sub-Committee of the Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Committee be established to have an overview of the Local Children's Services Partnerships (LCSPs) on the terms set out in the report.

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Background Documents: None

CHILDREN'S CHAMPIONS BOARD

REVISED DRAFT OF TERMS OF REFERENCE, July 2008

1. To develop expertise that enables Members to act as Champions for Kent children who are looked after, or are in need, with a particular focus on those in need of protection;
2. To consider statistical information that includes staffing levels, relevant indicators from the National Indicator Set (NIS) and national Looked After Children returns.
3. To consider reports from the Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB), Kent Children's Trust Board, and in relation to Looked After Children, and any changes to relevant legislation and guidance;
4. To develop a framework for gaining feedback from staff involved in Child Protection or Safeguarding work and Looked after Children work, Foster Carers and users of services;
5. To lead on ensuring that the targeted Corporate Parenting roles and responsibilities of the Local Authority are being met, including:-
 - a) To be aware of national expectations regarding the service to Looked After Children and Care Leavers, including those contained in Every Child Matters, the Healthy Care Initiative and the Care Matters agenda;
 - b) To have access to qualitative as well as quantitative information on the service, and to ensure that Children's Champions Board Members have enough background knowledge to understand and evaluate this information;
 - c) To consider ways in which the Children's Champions Board will hear and respond to the views of Looked After Children, their parents and carers;
 - d) To have an understanding of the arrangements that need to be in place in order to be an effective Corporate Parent;
 - e) To undertake an in-depth analysis of the needs of the County Council's care population and all aspects of the service required to meet those needs, so there is clear evidence to inform future action.
 - f) To take action continually, in conjunction with officers and partner agencies, to improve the service and ensure it responds to changing needs.

Additional Terms of Reference suggested by the Three Political Group Leaders

- g) To report in a timely manner to the relevant local Member(s) as and when such may be required.

6. To support the Chairman of the Children's Champions Board in undertaking their specialist Level 3 Corporate Parenting responsibilities.