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To: Children, Families & Education Policy Overview Committee  
16 January 2009

Subject: PROPOSAL FOR KENT'S CORPORATE PARENTING FRAMEWORK

Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary: The report outlines a proposal for Kent's Corporate Parenting framework as a means for ensuring that Kent is effective in orchestrating the delivery of services that lead to better outcomes for children and young people in and leaving care.

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## **Introduction**

1. The report is divided into a number of sections, beginning with a summary of the key issues with respect to Corporate Parenting and its implications for Local Authorities (2.1 to 2.3). This is then followed by proposals for the development of a Corporate Parenting Group/Forum (3.1 to 3.3) and a 'Children in Care Council' (4.1 to 4.16). The Corporate Parenting Group/Forum and the Children in Care Council are areas identified, as needing to be strengthened in order to ensure that Kent is able to demonstrate that the Corporate Parenting framework meets the requirements considered necessary. With respect to the latter point, the proposal has been influenced by guidance produced by the National Children's Bureau on behalf of the DCSF as part of the Care Matters initiative.

## **Corporate Parenting – background information**

2. (1) Corporate Parenting is a term that describes public agencies' accountability for discharging parental responsibilities towards children and young people in and leaving care. An effective Corporate Parent does what any good parent would do for their child to help them fulfil their potential throughout life. In addition to the specific responsibilities of Local Authorities as the Corporate Parent, Care Matters has clarified the key role that partner agencies, such as Local Health PCTs and District Councils have in delivering Corporate Parenting along with Social Workers, Foster Carers, Designated Teachers, Connexions PAs and other front-line staff who work with children and young people in and leaving care.

- (2) Kent's definition of Corporate Parenting (at Appendix 1) is based upon the definition of Corporate Parenting provided in new guidance commissioned as part of the Care Matters initiative (D.Hart and A. Williams. Putting Corporate Parenting into Practice. NCB 2008). The NCB guidance defines three levels of corporate parenting, which are summarised below. An indication of the County Councillors and Senior Officers within the authority who would be expected to take on these differing roles and responsibilities is provided against each level of responsibility:
- i) Universal responsibility (level 1) – *all County Councillors and Members, members of CFE SMT and section SMTs and Kent Children's Trust*
  - ii) Targeted responsibility (level 2) – *County Councillors who are members of a corporate parenting group (e.g. Children's Champion Board) and/or who undertake visits to Children's Homes (regulation 33 visits), and members of any sub-structure of KCT covering LAC.*
  - iii) Specialist responsibility (level 3) – *this level is represented by individuals in the authority where Corporate Parenting is at the heart of their role. In Kent this includes the Managing Director for Children, Families and Education, the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Educational Achievement, the Chair of the Children's Champion Board and the Chair of any sub-structure of KCT covering LAC. It could also be argued that this role comes within the remit of the Chief Executive and the Leader of the County Council.*
- (3) A copy of the NCB guidance has already been provided to all elected Members in conjunction with a Corporate Parenting workshop, held in June 2008, for elected Members in relation to helping them understand their Universal (level 1) Corporate Parenting responsibilities. An awayday event was held for members of the Children's Champion Board in July 2008, which focussed on their Targeted (level 2) roles and responsibilities. The awayday provided an opportunity for the CCB to identify key actions that they will need to undertake to ensure that the CCB is demonstrating their corporate parenting responsibilities at this level.

## **The Corporate Parenting Framework**

3. (1) A flowchart outlining a model of effective corporate parenting is presented at Appendix 2 (taken from the NCB 2008 guidance, page 11). The model provides an account of the key components necessary to deliver effective corporate parenting. The three key components of the model are:
- I) A Corporate Parenting Group/Forum
  - II) The provision of management information - both quantitative and qualitative
  - III) A Children in Care Council – the means by which children and young people are consulted
- (2) While all of the components of the model exist there remains a need to clarify more clearly the working arrangements for (i) and (iii).
- (3) Systems already exist for the provision of management information (issue ii) and it is envisaged that MIU in partnership with the policy and performance

team and other sections of CFE will provide these groups/forums with necessary information they require. This is likely to come from a range of sources, including ICS, IRO Tracking and Pledge Tracking Systems. Qualitative information will be provided through local audit findings, the Children in Care Council (page 4) and other mechanisms for ascertaining the views of children and young people and their families.

## **The Corporate Parenting Group/Forum**

4. (1) The Corporate Parenting Group/Forum carries the responsibility for overseeing the delivery of Corporate Parenting within the Local Authority. Leadership and governance of the group/forum needs to be set at a level sufficient to enable the group to carry out their roles and responsibilities. Membership of the group will therefore involve senior officers with commissioning powers – particularly in relation to staffing, skills, placements and other support services. Elected Members involved in any Corporate Parenting group should ideally have the authority of Cabinet/POC to undertake the Targeted (level 2) corporate parenting responsibilities on behalf of the County Council.
- (2) Within Kent there are two strategic groups which, it can be argued, collectively demonstrate the roles and functions required of a Corporate Parenting Group/Forum. These are:
  - i) A sub-structure of KCT focussing on LAC strategy (which is still being debated), and
  - ii) The Children’s Champion Board
- (3) An example of the possible requirements required of any sub-structure of KCT is presented in the draft Terms of Reference at Appendix 3, which is based on the work undertaken in the multi-agency review of Kent’s LAC services (chaired by Marilyn Hodges). The expectation is that such a group will be part of the sub-structure of KCT, although this is yet to be confirmed.
- (4) The purpose and multi-agency nature of such a group would make it well suited to take on the role of a Corporate Parenting Group/Forum in partnership with the Children’s Champion Board. The Terms of Reference (TOR) of the CCB (appendix 4) has recently been updated, in part to ensure that the CCB are able to demonstrate their targeted (level 2) Corporate Parenting role and responsibilities. The CCB TOR are to be approved by the Selection and Member Services Committee on 26 November 2008 and then to the County Council for formal adoption on 11 December 2008.
- (5) Linkages between the groups could be achieved through:
  - i) Sharing of minutes
  - ii) Regular meetings between the Chairs of the two groups (in their role as specialist (level 3) corporate parents), and
  - iii) Through the Policy and Performance Manager – Looked After Children/Leaving Care, whose role to both groups would be expected to provide advice and support.

## **The Children in Care Council**

5. (1) Care Matters has introduced a number of proposals to improve the delivery of Corporate Parenting. One of these is the expectation that every Local Authority will put in place (from April 2009) a 'Children in Care Council', with direct links to the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member (Care Matters, White Paper, page 22). The Children in Care Council is highlighted as one of the key components for delivering effective Corporate Parenting in the NCB model at Appendix 2.
- (2) Not all LAC will see the Children in Care Council as being the preferred way to express their views. The development of the Children in Care Council must therefore work alongside other mechanisms already available for children and young people to express their views, such as Student Voice and Viewpoint.
- (3) The design and delivery of the Children in Care Council should ideally meet the following requirements:
- i) Inclusiveness (to all LAC in Kent)
  - ii) An opportunity for meaningful participation of children/young people
  - iii) Effectiveness – the ability to influence practice and services and for children/young people to feel confident that their voices are being heard
- (4) Achieving these goals presents Kent with greater challenges than most other authorities, whose LAC populations are smaller and less diverse. A fully formed 'Children in Care Council' in Kent will therefore take time to develop. Council meetings may initially involve a relatively small number of children and young people and increase in scope as the framework fits into place and evolves.

### ***Proposed framework for the Children in Care Council***

- 6 (1) It is proposed that the Children in Care Council is built around a centripetal framework, beginning with the development of a central council and enabling at a later stage the development of district/area councils and sector councils (representing the needs of particular LAC groups such as UASC, LAC with a disability, KCC LAC placed out of Kent and OLA LAC) over a 2 to 3 year timescale.
- (2) The children/young people attending council meetings will be aged 11 years plus. It will be the responsibility of the CIC members to ensure that the views of younger children are represented and considered in council meetings on all issues where this is relevant. The Children in Care Council will also be expected to look at how they consult with and keep younger children informed of what is discussed at CIC meetings.
- (3) It is proposed that the Children in Care Council Chair (a young person elected by the CIC) will be supported by a young person with experience of the care system, employed through KCC's apprenticeship scheme. A job description and person specification for this post will be developed for this role. This will include the following responsibilities:
- (i) To support the Chair of the Children in Care Council

- (ii) Along with the Chair, to maintain a link with the DCS and Specialist (level 3) Corporate Parents (i.e. Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Educational Achievement; Chair of the Children's Champion Board; Chair of the LAC Strategy Group).
  - (ii) Chair Central Children in Care Council meetings when no Chair is available
  - (iv) Attend Area/District and Sector Council meetings (once in place), where applicable
  - (v) To produce an annual report/account of the work of the Children in Care Council
  - (vii) To act as a voice for children and young people in relation to promoting participation and involvement
- (4) Members of the Children in Care Council will initially be identified through Upfront and 16plus, with the aim that each district/local partnership should have a young person representative on the central council, including asylum and disability. In the longer term, each area/sector council will select a representative to sit on their behalf on the central council.
- (5) It is proposed that the Children in Care Council should be encouraged to develop strong links with Kent's Youth Council, including enabling a place on the Youth Council to be reserved for a CIC representative.

### ***Links to DCS and Lead Member***

7. The Director of Children's Services (Managing Director CFE) and Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Educational Achievement would not be expected to attend every 'Children in Care Council' meeting – although the Children in Care Council may want to invite them to particular meetings (or parts of a meeting). In order to ensure a regular dialogue between the Children in Care Council and DCS and Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Educational Achievement it is proposed that 3 specific meetings a year take place between the CIC chair and other members of the CIC to meet with and feedback issues to the DCS and Cabinet Member for Children, families and Educational Achievement.

### ***Financial Implications***

8. (1) It is assumed that the cost of funding the Children in Care Council would come out of Kent's allocation of the Care Matters grant. It is recognised that the pressure on this grant from other Care Matters initiatives (e.g. Pledge, Personal Education Allowances) is significant. Work has been undertaken with Finance (Anthony Kamps and Simon Pleace) to identify areas in the pledge where savings are feasible.
- (2) The Children in Care Council will require:
- i) Administration officer support (e.g. arranging meetings, typing letters/memos, recording meeting outcomes/decisions)
  - ii) Youth Worker support, Connexions PA and/or IRO support re help and advise the chair of the Children in Care Council and support meetings and other CIC events
  - iii) Assistance with transport for CIC members – to attend meetings, events etc

- iv) Subsistence costs
  - v) A small annual budget (£15k) to enable the CIC to put on events and support young people's initiatives
- (3) The key additional resource pressures on the Care Matters grant from developing the Children in Care Council are iii, iv, and v. Issues i and ii could be provided through existing resources in the relevant services/agencies.

### ***Consultation with and ongoing involvement of children and young people***

9. (1) A consultation exercise will be undertaken through the central Children in Care Council (once in place) in order to ascertain the views of children and young people in and leaving care regarding what they want from a Children in Care Council and how this should be delivered. The findings of the consultation will be used to inform the future development of the Children in Care Council.
- (2) The Corporate Parenting website (children's page) [*in development*] will include issues covered by the Children in Care Council and outline how children/young people can share their views and attend council meetings. Viewpoint, for example, could be adapted to enable children/young people to vote on key issues being discussed at CIC meetings – alternatives, such as phone texts will also be explored.
- (3) Upfront and 16plus will be expected to support the KCC LAC on the CIC. Schools (designated teachers) and ILSS could be used to ensure that OLA LAC are aware of and involved in the work of the council – including helping to establish an OLA LAC Sector Council.

### **Recommendations**

10. Members of the Cabinet are requested to:

- i) Note the revised Terms Of Reference (TOR) for LAC Strategy (at Appendix 3)
- ii) Note the revised TOR for the Children's Champion Board (Appendix 4),
- iii) To agree that Kent's Corporate Parenting Group/Forum be represented by the Children's Champion Board and a sub-structure of KCT (see section 3), and
- iv) To agree the proposed framework and implementation plan for Kent's Children in Care Council (section 4)

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*Background Documents:* None  
*Other Useful Information:* None

## KCC's definition of Corporate Parenting

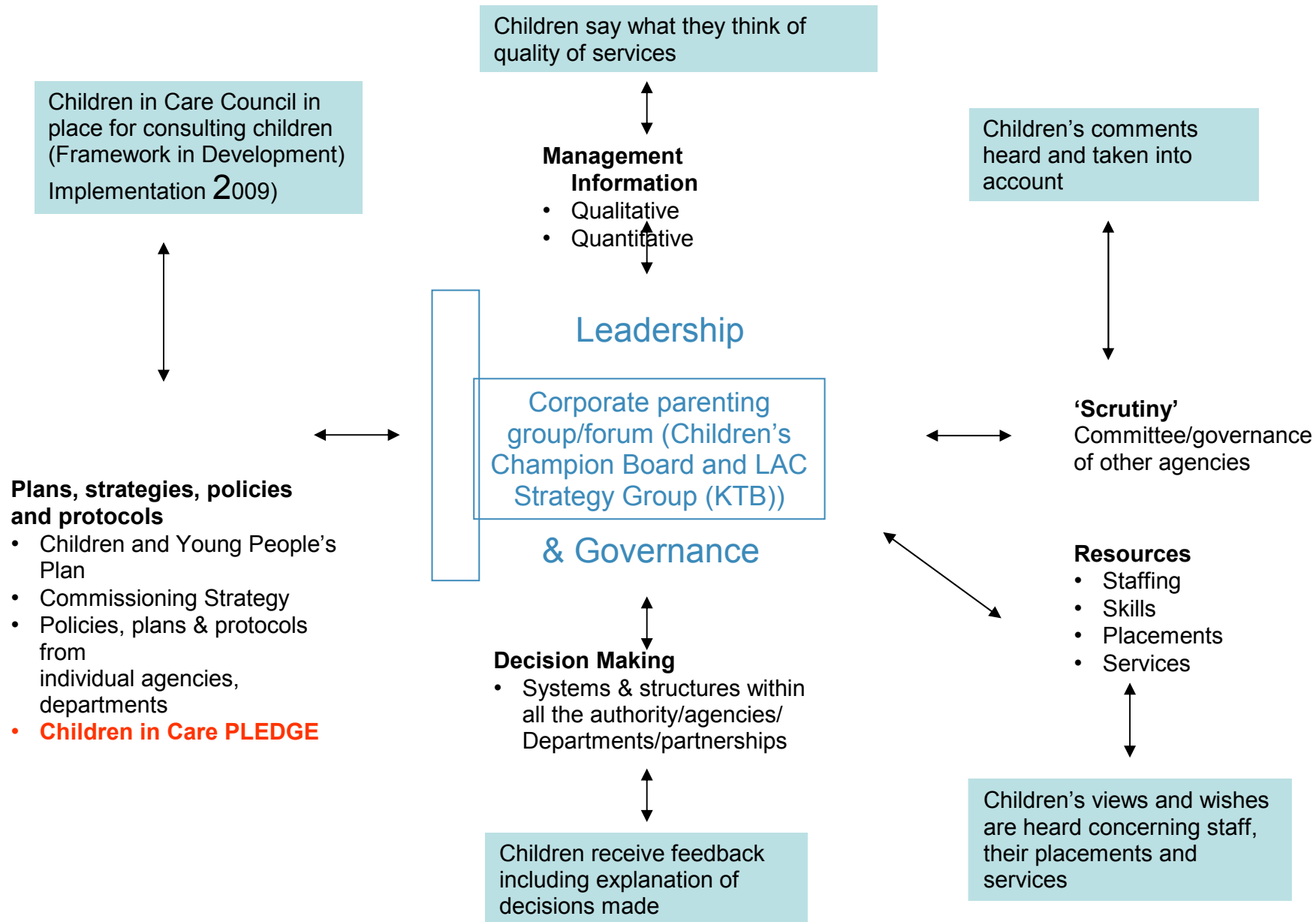
*“Corporate parenting cannot replace or replicate the selfless character of parental love; but it does imply a warmth and personal concern which goes beyond the traditional expectations of institutions.”* (Utting, 1991)

- 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.
- A distinction can be made between the terms 'Corporate Parent' and 'Corporate Parenting'.
- The **Corporate Parent** is represented by the Director of Children's Services and elected members of the local authority.
- **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.
- The National Children's Bureau have distinguished three levels of corporate parenting:
  - .Universal responsibility – all elected members and officers
  - .Targeted responsibility – Corporate Parenting Groups/staff working with looked after children
  - .Specialist responsibility – Cabinet Member for Children, Families and educational Achievement/Director of Children's Services

*“Corporate Parenting is not 'good enough' on its own. Every child and young person needs at least one individual to whom s/he is 'special', who retains responsibility over time, who is involved in plans and decisions and who has ambitions for the child's achievement and full development.”* (Jane Rowe, 1990)

# Effective Corporate Parenting

Appendix 2



Draft 3**Draft Terms of Reference outlining key areas of focus for a LAC Corporate Parenting Group****Scope**

The LAC Corporate Parenting Group will ensure better outcomes are promoted for the following groups of children and young people in and leaving care:

- Kent County Councils' Looked After Children and Care Leavers – placed both in and outside of Kent (this includes Citizen Children and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children)
- Looked After Children placed in Kent by another local authority (OLA LAC)
- Children and young people receiving short break (respite care) from Kent County Council

**Accountability**

The LAC Corporate Parenting Group is expected to be a sub-structure of KCT, although this is still being debated. KCT Executive Board will specify the expectations of the Trust Board in terms of outcomes that any LAC Corporate Parenting Group will be expected to deliver upon.

The LAC Corporate Parenting Group will provide a minimum of an annual report to KTB on progress on issues relating to the delivery of effective services to LAC and Care Leavers with recommendations for future action by the board.

From 2009, the LAC Corporate Parenting Group will also provide an annual report to the Children in Care Council.

**Aims and objectives**

To monitor the implementation of actions/tasks outlined in the multi-agency LAC Action Plan Matrix (developed from the findings of the Review of LAC Services)

To monitor the implementation of Kent's pledges for Looked After Children and Care Leavers (KCC LAC Pledge and Other Local Authority LAC Pledge) and the contribution of the pledge to promoting better outcomes for children in care.

To ensure that Looked After Children and Care Leavers, and their parents/families, are provided with opportunities to participate in decision making and the development of services.

To provide strategic direction for the development of services for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

Alongside ECM, to promote the implementation of the Healthy Care initiative.

Alongside the Children's Champion Board, oversee the development and implementation of KCC's framework for delivering effective corporate parenting.

To monitor agency performance against agreed activity – including the National Indicator Set (NIS) and Vital Signs.

## **Sub-groups**

The LAC Corporate Parenting Group may set up time-limited sub-groups to undertake specified work on its behalf but must keep the proliferation and the work of the sub-groups under review.

## **Membership**

Chair – the Children’s Trust Board will identify a suitable chair from the group’s membership.

Members will be of sufficient seniority to represent their agency:

- A representative from each of the Children, Families, Health and Education Directorate’s sections senior management teams
- The Head of CSS Provider Unit Services (Fostering and Adoption)
- A senior representative from the East Kent PCTs
- A senior representative from the West Kent PCTs
- The County Manager of 16plus
- The Connexions lead for Looked After Children/Care Leavers
- The Manager of Upfront (KCC’s Rights Service for Looked After Children)
- The LCSP’s manager with responsibility for the Integrated LAC Service
- A senior representative from KCC Youth Service
- A senior representative from KCC Youth Offending Service

The LAC Corporate Parenting Group will also be supported/advised by the CFE Policy and Performance Manager for LAC/Leaving Care (including the role of supporting the Chair develop the agenda for LAC Strategy Group meetings and the production of annual reports to KTB and the Children in Care Council).

## **Appointment of members and substitutes**

Each of the agencies listed above will nominate their representative together with a named alternative representative.

The terms of reference requires a consistency in representation to enhance the effectiveness of the LAC Strategy Group. Therefore, only the nominated representative or the named alternative representative may attend the LAC Corporate Parenting Group, unless prior consent of the Chair has been given.

## **Co-option of members**

Other members can be co-opted into the LAC Corporate Parenting Group for a period of time to fill in a knowledge gap under the direction of the Chair and with the agreement of standing members.

## **Meetings**

The LAC Corporate Parenting Group will meet at least quarterly and more frequently in the first six months to ensure it forms properly:

No business shall be transacted at any meeting unless a quorum (at least six members, which must include a representative from each of CFHE's CSS, SPP and CDMT sections and at least two other agencies) is present.

Voluntary agency members must declare an interest to the Chair if they or their agency stands to gain from a decision to be taken. In such cases the Chair must decide whether that member should withdraw from that discussion.

3 October 2008

By: Overview, Scrutiny and Localism Manager  
To: Children's Champions Board – 24 September 2008  
Subject: **REVIEW OF THE BOARD'S TERMS OF REFERENCE**  
Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary: This report sets out the development of, and forward process for, reviewing the Board's Terms of Reference and securing approval for the revised draft Terms of Reference, which are appended.

## FOR INFORMATION

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### **Reason for Review**

1. 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, Board 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**

2. (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 at an informal meeting on 8 July, at which Members arrived at an agreed 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 appended to this report.

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

### **Next steps**

3 The revised draft Terms of Reference will be formally submitted to the Selection and Member Services Committee and the County Council for formal adoption in the autumn.

## **Recommendation**

4. Members are asked to note the process which has been followed so far and the next steps to be taken to secure approval for the revised draft Terms Of Reference by the Selection and Member Services Committee and the County Council.

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*Background Information:* None  
*Other Useful Information:* 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;
  - 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.