

## ASSESSMENT OF A SELECT COMMITTEE TOPIC REVIEW

\* - sections to be filled in by the proposer of the topic

### **\*Subject of Proposed Review:-**

The Role of an elected Member as a Corporate Parent

### **\*Reason for the Review:-**

(see Note 1 below)

What is the definition and scope of a being a Corporate Parent?

Who are the Corporate Parents and what is the definition of a looked after child?

What is the role of the Kent County Council officers and other agencies?

What is the best practice around the country, and which elements of other local authorities' practice should Kent County Council adopt?

How can Members support the individuals and groups who are charged with caring for looked after children and young people?

What are the legal implications of being a Corporate Parent?

The importance of the role of the elected Member needs to be continually re-enforced so that all Looked After Children in Kent are safe, and have the same opportunities and outcomes as any other young person in education, employment, housing and health.  
What are the Council's objectives and strategy to achieve this?

Do Members understand what the role of a Corporate Parent is?

How can Members champion the wellbeing and welfare of looked after children? In practice how would Members become engaged as Corporate Parents generally, or if a looked after child or young person had a specific problem or issue?

Do Members know how they can access the support they require to be an effective Corporate Parent?

How does a Corporate Parent ensure that they are known for this role within the community they serve? What can the County Council do to support an elected Member to discharge this role?

### **\*Issues to be covered by the Terms of Reference:-**

Ensuring that every elected Member understands:

1. Their legal obligation as a Corporate Parent.
2. Understanding the risks and impact on the County Council if the elected Member does not discharge their role as a Corporate Parent effectively
3. Learning from best practice across the county and overseas of how elected

representative of the people engage and support Looked After Children

4. Engage with Looked After Children to understand what works well for them, what does not work quite so well and how they would like to see an elected Member
5. How can we be certain that every child is safe? Is our monitoring as effective as it could be?

If a Looked After Child is placed in the County by another Local Authority. Who is the Corporate Parent the Member in whose electoral Division the child resides?

**\*Scope of the review:-**

The Select Committee will wish to engage:

Looked After Children Placed in Kent

Survey elected Members of their knowledge of the " role of an elected Member"

Research best practice through direct contact with other local authorities across the UK

Desktop research of practice in other countries

Telephone, video Conference calls or visits to other Local Authorities

**\*Purpose and objectives of the Review:-**

Create a robust strategy with positive objectives to enable Members to champion Looked After Children and young people.

**Proposer of the review - (Please print name and sign)**

.....Margaret Crabtree

**To be completed by the Directorate/Cabinet Member(s)**

**Are there any reasons why this review should not be put forward for inclusion in the work programme for 2014/16? (see Note 2 below)**

No

**Will the review support the achievement of “Facing the Challenge”? If yes, please identify aim(s) and give details:-**

Yes. As the council moves to integrate services around client groups and take a single council approach to projects it is very timely to refocus all members awareness of their corporate parenting responsibilities.

These responsibilities should be evident through the whole council and all its services. This will ensure that our children in care are both placed at the heart of services delivered directly to them and that all parts other of the council consider how they can also make a difference to this set of children.

It is also timely that, as the council moves to embed its new commissioning authority approach, there is active consideration of this key corporate responsibility and how members and the council will ensure it is supported and enhanced by future commissioning arrangements.

**How will the review contribute to corporate objectives and priorities?**

It will strengthen the council’s ability to improve the service to some of the most vulnerable people in Kent

**How will this review have an impact on KCC policy development and/or help to influence national policy?**

As set out above it will enable KCC to ensure that this key statutory responsibility is at the forefront of its move to be commissioning authority.

It will also enable KCC to learn form the best practice elsewhere and to incorporate this into its practice.

**How will this review add value to the County Council and residents of Kent?**

It will ensure that in this a member led authority, members are clearly able to articulate their personal responsibilities, the qualities of these services and the value they bring to the people of Kent.

**Does the review need to be completed within a specific timeframe? If yes, please give details:**

Yes. To get the most value from this review it will need significant support from officers with professional expertise both in Children in Care services and wider policy. this resource is currently focusing on raising standards and preparing for the Ofsted inspection that is expected in the first half of 2015.

**Any additional comments from the Portfolio Holder/Corporate Director:-**

In agreeing the title of the review and the terms of reference, the phrase "Children in Care" should be used rather than "Looked after Children" as this is the phrase now used in government guidance.

**Portfolio Holder's Signature:-**

**Strategic Director's Signature:-**

**Contact Officer:-**

Daniel Waller

**Date:-**

04/12/14

**Notes**

**Note 1 - Possible reasons for the review**

1. Key public issue, identified by
  - Member contact with constituents/member surgeries
  - Contact with key representative bodies/forums
  - Media coverage – Public interest issue covered in local media
  - Focus groups/citizens panels
2. Issue highlighted via a previous reviews
3. Issue recommended to another body e.g. Cabinet, Scrutiny Committee, a Cabinet Committee, Directorate or an external body.
4. Poor performing service i.e.:-
  - High level of complaints/dissatisfaction with service
  - Performance standards poor/below target – (evidence from PI's or benchmarking)
  - Identified through external review/inspection (OFSTED/Audit etc)
  - Budgetary overspends
5. Key reports or new evidence published
6. County Council priority
7. Central Government priority/New Government guidance or legislation published

**Note 2 - Possible reasons why a review should not established added to the work programme.**

1. Issue being examined by

- Cabinet
- Scrutiny
- Officer Group
- another internal body
- an external body

2. It has been the subject of a topic review by other Councils from which details of best practice can be obtained.

3. New legislation or guidance expected.

4. **NB:** Before suggesting that a review should not be included in the work programme the following should be considered:-

Could consideration of this issue 'add value' without causing unnecessary duplication, for instance by:

- i) Looking at this issue in conjunction with another group,
- ii) Through appropriate timing of the topic review,
- iii) Through considering another group's findings rather than duplicating the same/or similar activity.