

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.

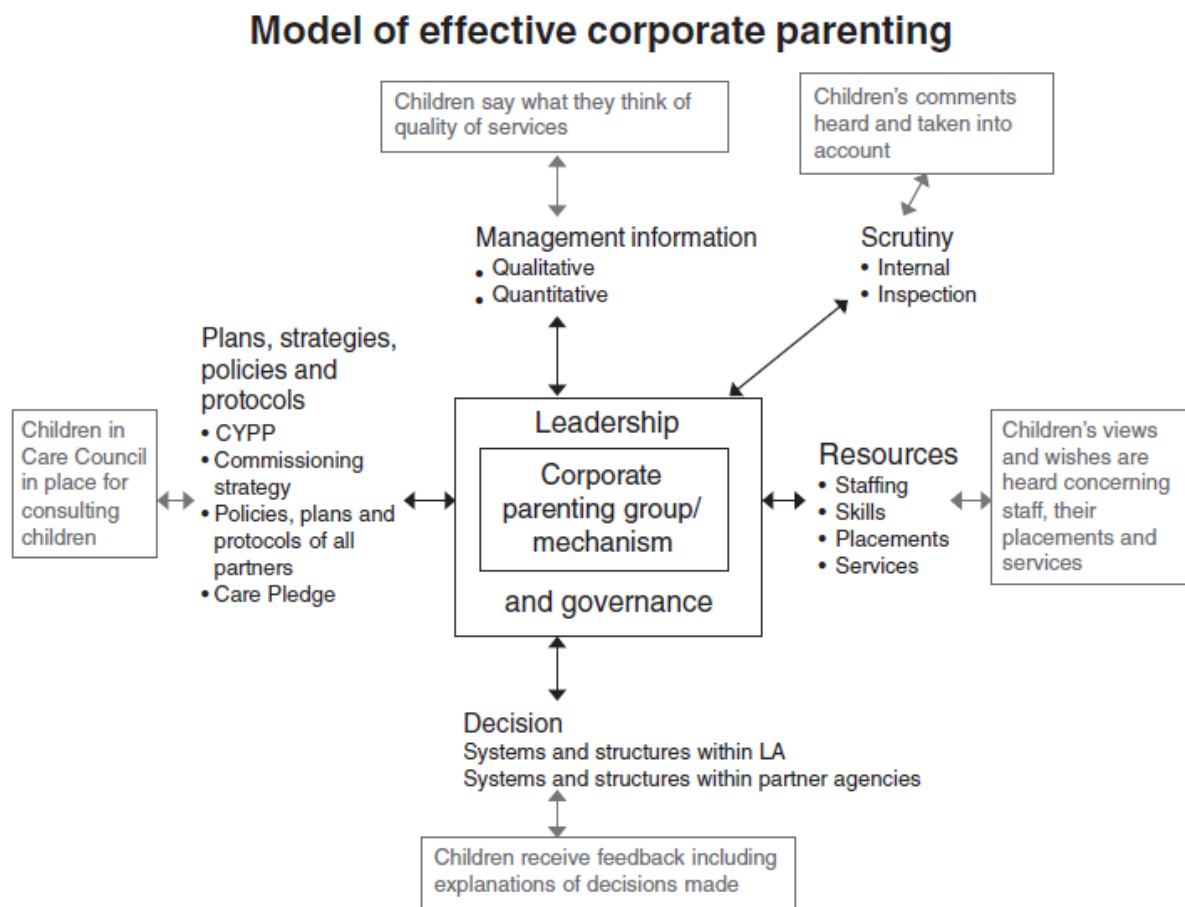
The group must be able to ensure, or argue its case for, the right resources in all agencies.

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