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**To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)      Date: 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018**

**Subject: Corporate Parenting and the Corporate Parenting Board**

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**1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To confirm Council members' responsibilities as corporate parents and the role of the Corporate Parenting Board.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) are recommended to:
- 1) Note the content of the report including their roles and responsibilities as Corporate Parents
  - 2) Identify any further recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

**3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 The term 'corporate parenting' has been used for some time. Essentially, a 'corporate parent' is responsible for all children and young people in the care system, and all young people who have left care, up to the age of 25. Children come into care for a variety of reasons and once they are in care, the Council, including councillors and staff, take on a corporate parenting responsibility for these children.
- 3.2 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 (the Act) confirmed these responsibilities in law. As a result, the Council now has a legal duty, as well as a moral responsibility, to our looked after children. Specifically, the Act outlines responsibilities in the following areas with regard to children in care and care leavers:
- (a) to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of children and young people
  - (b) to encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
  - (c) to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people
  - (d) to help children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
  - (e) to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for children and young people
  - (f) for children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
  - (g) to prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

In short, the Corporate Parenting duty can be summed up by asking ourselves 'would this be good enough for my own child?' and by recognising that 'these children are our children'.

- 3.3 In addition, the Act requires that a core offer is published by December 2018, which sets out what the Council will offer to its care leavers. This is a responsibility for the Council as a whole, and not just Children's Services. It is important that other Directorates are aware and supportive of the offer. Work has begun on this.
- 3.4 The Corporate Parenting Board is the body in the Council that reviews and focuses on the progress of our looked after children and care leavers. This is chaired by the Lead Member for Children's Services (LMCS). A work programme for the year is being developed.

#### **4 Children looked after**

- 4.1 There are currently 662 children who are looked after by Coventry City Council. There continues to be a trend for these numbers to increase. The last twelve months has seen looked after numbers rise by 40. A significant proportion of this increase has come from Coventry's agreement to take more unaccompanied asylum seekers and an increase in connected persons placements. Of the children in care 75.8% of them are in foster care, 9.8% live in supported accommodation, 8.8% live in a children's homes, 3.8% live with their birth parents under a care order and 1.8% are placed for adoption. 55.7% of children now live within the city boundary.
- 4.2 Outcomes for looked after children continue to rise and the performance of the Council is improving.

#### **5 Care leavers**

- 5.1 There are currently 290 care leavers. This number is forecast to increase significantly as the Council is now responsible for care leavers until the age of 25. Performance in this area of work has always been strong as compared to statistical neighbours and national benchmarks. The service is judged as good by Ofsted. Staff are currently in touch with 95.8% of care leavers and 62.2% are in Employment, Education or Training. 96.0% of young people live in accommodation judged to be suitable for their needs. This is considerably above the performance of other local authorities. Plans are underway to improve the service and outcomes for children further.

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