

Report of the Strategic Director for Children's Services to the meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on 18th January 2021

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Subject:

- **Draft Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy**
- **Draft Sufficiency Strategy**

Summary statement:

- This report introduces two new strategies to the Corporate Parenting Panel as the final stage of consultation before final "sign off".
- The Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy is an over-arching strategy that covers all areas of work including Corporate Parenting.
- The Sufficiency Strategy is a more detailed, sub-strategy that focusses in more depth on the issue of placement quality and sufficiency.

Mark Douglas
Strategic Director for Children's Services

Report Contact: Richard Fawcett
Phone: 07949 489308
Email: richard.fawcett@bradford.gov.uk

Portfolio:

Children and Families

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This report introduces the following new strategies to the Corporate Parenting Panel as the final stage of consultation.

- Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy
- Sufficiency Strategy

2. BACKGROUND

Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy 2021/22

2.1 The draft strategy has been written in consultation with practitioners and leaders across the partnership and aims to set out clear and ambitious aims for our children across the following areas of priority:

- A strong culture of Corporate Parenting
- Helping children to stay within their families
- Ensuring that our children and young people have a voice
- Having a safe, stable and secure home
- Having the right support to be safe, healthy and to achieve
- A positive transition to adulthood

2.2 Within each priority area the strategy identifies what we currently know, what we have already done and what we still need to do across the partnership.

2.3 This then influences the action plan arising from the strategy. The impact of which will be monitored by the new Children in Care Partnership and the Corporate Parenting Panel.

2.4 The production of the strategy has been influenced by the following drivers:

- The need to ensure that a reader is able to get a sense of Bradford, our children, our strengths and areas for improvement
- The need to set out our vision and ambitions for our children
- The need to articulate what “corporate parenting” means in Bradford
- The need to celebrate our children and young people and the challenges that they can face in the care system
- The need to create an accessible and easy to read document that brings all of this to life for the reader but which also provides a framework for the work that is needed.

2.5 The previous strategy was a three-year strategy. The decision was made that this new version would be a one-year strategy due to the fact that we are in a rapidly changing environment. Prior to the end of 2022 the Children in Care Partnership will begin work on scoping the next iteration and dependant on the levels of progress made, consideration will be given to a strategy that covers more than one year.

Sufficiency Strategy 2021/22

- 2.6 This is a sub-strategy and focusses in more detail on issues related to sufficiency of placements for children in care.
- 2.7 Publication of a Sufficiency Strategy is a legal requirement.
- 2.8 The draft follows the same outline as the over-arching strategy and is designed to be able to be read as a “free-standing” strategy if required.
- 2.9 It is supported by a detailed action plan which is already in place and being monitored within Provider Services. Next year the Children in Care Partnership will take a key role in monitoring progress.
- 2.10 The strategy inevitably links closely to other strategies. For example, a key contributor to the aim to reduce the number of children who need to enter care is the work being done in relation to the early help offer, which has its own strategy, partnership and action plan.
- 2.11 Again it has been decided that this will be a one year strategy for the reasons outlined above.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 None

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 4.1 N/A

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- 5.1 N/A

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

- 6.1.1 We have a legal duty to publish a Sufficiency Strategy.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

The diversity of the children in care population and the need for services to respond and embrace this is a key theme running through both strategies.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

N/A

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

N/A

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

N/A

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

N/A

7.6 TRADE UNION

N/A

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

N/A

**7.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS
(for reports to Area Committees only)**

N/A

7.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

Corporate Parenting is a key element of the Children in Care Strategy and one which the Corporate Parenting Panel will need to consider further in 2021.

7.10 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

N/A

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

8.1 N/A

9. OPTIONS

9.1 N/A

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 For members of the panel to note and approve the contents of the strategies or alternatively to offer feedback that can further strengthen these important documents.

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix 1 -Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy
- 11.2 Appendix 2 -Sufficiency Strategy

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 12.1 Copies of both draft strategies are attached.