



## Council 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2022-23</b>
<b>Executive Member</b>	Councillor Scott Edwards, Executive Member Children, Families, Education & Skills
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<b>Are there public sector equality duty implications?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972</b>	

### List of Appendices

#### Appendix A – Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2022-23

##### 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1. To provide the Council with an update on the Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report.

##### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1. The annual report is structured as follows:

- **Executive Summary.** Summarising the report as a whole.
- **Governance and Statutory Context.** Sets out the legal underpinning of corporate parenting, and the structure and role of the Board, including in light of the creation of the Trust and creation of two unitary councils.
- **Board activity.** Summarises the activity of the Board during the reporting period, including meeting arrangements, membership and service reports.

- **Young people’s participation and successes.** Including details of the summer celebration event for children in care, and how the Board celebrates and includes young people.
- **Corporate Parenting Board diagnostic.** Details about a diagnostic exercise carried out with the Local Government Association, with identified strengths, risks and opportunities for development.
- **NCT’s Improvement Plan progress.** Setting out progress achieved and areas for development under the improvement plan’s six key headers.
- **Appendix: four priorities.** Progress and areas of development in respect of the four priorities set out in the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-25.

### **3. Recommendations**

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3.1. It is recommended that the Council:

- i) Approve the content of the Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report which gives an overview of the Corporate Parenting Board’s activities.
- ii) Note that the Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-25 sets out four key priorities and the update on each areas progress contained in the annual report.

3.2. Reasons for Recommendations:

- To promote and monitor the Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Corporate Parenting Strategy;
- To encourage all Members and employees to recognise their role as corporate parents;
- Provides members with an overview of the work of Northamptonshire Children’s Trust and supports the discharge of their Corporate Parenting duties.

3.3 Alternative Options Considered – Do Nothing – The Council has statutory duties as Corporate Parent for children in care and care leavers. Whilst the role of the Director of Children’s Services and Lead Member is defined in legislation there are wider corporate responsibilities on all staff and elected Members. Not approving the Corporate Parenting Annual Report would mean that the Council may fail to deliver all or parts of its statutory responsibilities in this area.

### **4. Report Background**

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4.1. Local Authorities and their partners are responsible for ensuring that Children in care and care leavers are as safe and well cared for as any other child. This responsibility is called ‘Corporate Parenting’ and applies equally to children who have entered the UK from overseas and are separated from their families. Corporate Parenting responsibilities rests not only with social workers and their managers, but also Council Officers and Members and any other agency that

provides services and support to children in care such as health services, housing departments, the police and schools. Corporate parents have specific duties for young people leaving care and making the journey to independence.

- 4.2. The report sets out the role, structure and activity of the Corporate Parenting Board, including progress achieved against the Northamptonshire Children's Trust Improvement Plan and the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

## **5. Issues and Choices**

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- 5.1 Being a Corporate Parent means doing everything we can for every child in the Council's care, and every care leaver, to give them the opportunities that other children get. This covers everything from keeping an eye on their progress at school, to looking after their health and wellbeing, to preparing them for life as independent adults – and supporting them when they get there.
- 5.2 The Council has statutory duties as a Corporate Parent for children in care and care leavers. Whilst the role of the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member is defined in legislation there are wider corporate responsibilities on all staff and elected members.

## **6. Next Steps**

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- 6.1. For the Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report to be presented to Members in accordance with the Council's governance framework.

## **7. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **7.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation**

- 7.1.1. The annual report sets out the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities and aspirations for children and young people and is intended to help the local authority devote appropriate finances and resources to meeting these aims.

### **7.2. Legal and Governance**

- 7.2.1 The collective responsibility for Local Authorities in terms of Corporate Parenting is set out in the Children Act 1989 and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. The central role of councils as effective Corporate Parents has been emphasised by government in the publications Care Matters: Time for Change (DCSF 2007), Care Matters: Time to Deliver (DCSF 2008) and consolidated in aspects of the Children and Young Persons Act (2008) alongside other legislation and statutory guidance that determines our duties as set out in the annual review. The Board itself is not a statutory body, however, selected service reports are required to be seen by a suitable oversight body, and Board fulfils this function.

### **7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans**

7.3.1. The Annual Report aims to help the Council and Northamptonshire Children's Trust meet its Corporate Parenting objectives and priorities.

7.3.2. The Council has identified 'Brighter, Better Futures' as a key priority of the corporate plan. This will be done by supporting partners and the Children's Trust to provide higher standards of support. The Annual Report enables the Council to gain oversight of the services delivered by NCT and to help the Council to understand how better support for Children, Young People and Families can be delivered.

### **7.4. Risk**

7.4.1. Relevant risks are those associated with the Council and the Trust failing to meet its Corporate Parenting responsibilities and aspirations for children and young people, including:

- Children and young people have poor outcomes and do not achieve their potential.
- NCT and Council employees do not recognise their role as corporate parents.

7.4.2. Overall, these risks imply a deleterious impact on the outcomes for children in care.

### **7.5. Consultation**

7.5.1. The Council continues to work with partners including Northamptonshire Children's Trust to promote the objectives and outcomes within the report as needed.

### **7.6. Consideration by the Executive**

7.6.1. This report was considered by the Executive at its meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

7.6.2. The Executive welcomed that the board was positive in both its intentions and commitment to its legal obligations and commented that it had produced a constructive report, noting the four priorities that formed the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2025.

7.6.3. The Executive also noted that a North Northamptonshire specific report would be received for 2023/24 and praised the excellent communication and involvement of young people in the findings of the report before members.

### **7.7. Consideration by Scrutiny**

7.7.1. This report has not been considered by the Council's Scrutiny committees.

## 7.8. **Equality Implications**

7.8.1. The report considers the safety and wellbeing of North Northamptonshire children in care and care leavers, including those living out of county.

## 7.9. **Climate and Environment Impact**

7.9.1. None specifically identified.

## 7.10. **Community Impact**

7.10.1. The recommendations aim to improve outcomes for North Northamptonshire children and young people in care and care leavers, including in the community.

## 7.11. **Crime and Disorder Impact**

7.11.1. None specifically identified.

## 8. **Background Papers**

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8.1. [Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2022-23 – Report to Executive on 12 October 2023](#)