

10 September 2019		ITEM: 9
Corporate Parenting Committee		
The Council Pledge to Looked After Children		
Wards and communities affected: All		Key Decision: Non Key
Report of: Janet Simon, Strategic Lead for Looked After Children		
Accountable Assistant Director: Sheila Murphy, Assistant Director, Children's Services		
Accountable Director: Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing & Health / Interim Director Children's Services		
This report is public		

Executive Summary

This report provides information to the Thurrock Corporate Parenting Committee on the Council Pledge for Looked After Children. All councillors are corporate parents to our looked after children. Ensuring that our looked after children are able to influence and shape the services provided for them is both a statutory duty and a key priority. This Pledge was therefore informed and developed with the Children in Care Council.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the Corporate Parenting Committee endorse and adopt the Thurrock Pledge for Looked After Children**
- 1.2 That the Corporate Parenting Committee ensure the Pledge for Looked After Children is understood and effective across services working with looked after children**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1** As the corporate parent of children in care, the whole of Thurrock Council is responsible for their well-being. As a good corporate parent this means being an advocate and helping looked after children become successful, well-rounded adults.
- 2.2** The Children and Social Work Act (2017) sets out seven corporate parenting principles to which local authorities must have regard when carrying out their functions in relation to looked after children and young people:

- To act in their best interests and promote their physical and mental health and well-being.
- To encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings.
- To take into account their views, wishes and feelings.
- To help them gain access to and make the best use of services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
- To promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for them.
- To ensure they are safe and have stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.
- To prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

2.3 In addition to meeting our statutory duties, the Pledge demonstrates the commitment of the Council to meet the identified needs of Thurrock looked after children and respect the views of the children and young people who took part in the development of the Pledge.

2.4 The Pledge sets out a number of promises that children and young people have identified which, if delivered, makes Thurrock Council a good parent and carer. Members, chief officers and partners are signed up to the Pledge which signifies their shared commitment to it.

2.5 The Thurrock Pledge informs children and young people of their rights and highlight Thurrock Council's commitment to actively involving children and young people in decision making and the shaping of services.

3. Issues Options and Analysis of Options

These are included in Appendix 1 attached to this report.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 To keep the Thurrock Pledge to children who are looked after under review. For Members to promote and support the active implementation of the Pledge in Council business.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 Not applicable

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community.

6.1 Not applicable

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead Finance

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Mark**
Deputy Head of Legal Social Care and Education

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 provides that a local authority in England must, in carrying out functions in relation to the children and young people have regard to the need—

- (a) to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;
- (b) to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;
- (c)to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;
- (d) to help those 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 those children and young people;
- (f) for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work;
- (g) to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

The children and young people mentioned in this subsection are children who are looked after by the Local Authority, within the meaning given by section 22(1) Children Act 1989; relevant children within the meaning of section 23A (2) Children Act 1989; and young people aged under 25 who are former relevant children within the meaning of section 23C (1) Children Act 1989 .

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Strategic Lead Community Development and Equalities

The Service is committed to practice which promotes inclusion and diversity, and will carry out its duties in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and related Codes of Practice and Anti-discriminatory policy. Placements and Staff members represent diverse backgrounds and heritage and are able to promote equality and diversity.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – there are no implications as a result of this report

- Not applicable

8 **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Not applicable

9. **Appendices to the report – there are two appendices for this report**

- Appendix 1 – The Thurrock Pledge for Children who are looked after

Report Author:

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Strategic Lead for Looked After Children