

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE -
24TH NOVEMBER 2008**

REPORT ON: THE CORPORATE PARENT- A CHARTER

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT NO: 569 - 2008

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides information from the 'Welcome to my World', corporate parent event held on Monday 9th June 2008 in the Caird Hall, Dundee. It follows from Report 270-08; Dundee City Council Corporate Parenting Policy In Respect Of Looked After Children.

This update report includes information for elected members and senior managers on the Scottish Government's recent publication, 'These Are Our Bairns: a guide for community planning partnerships on being a good corporate parent'. It also provides details of a proposed Dundee City Council Charter for Corporate Parents, which has been formulated as a result of the event 'Welcome to my World'.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee:

- 2.1 Adopt a Corporate Parent Charter for Children and Young People Who are Looked After by Dundee City Council.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications for consideration

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 Background

The 'Welcome to my World' event, which was held on the 9th June 2008 in the Caird Hall, was acknowledged as a great success by those who attended.

At the event, participants were asked to make a personal, written commitment about what they would do to champion the needs of children for whom the local authority is a Corporate Parent. It is now proposed that these pledges are turned into a Dundee City Council Charter for Corporate Parents. If adopted the Charter would include a set of values, actions and behaviours which any individual, in their role as a corporate parent, would endeavour to meet. The Charter - Being a Corporate Parent ' is attached, as Appendix 1 to this report.

As a result of the 'Welcome to My World' event a DVD for training purposes has also been produced. The DVD contains direct footage from the event, interviews with elected members, officers and planning and service delivery partners, along with material put together by the young people themselves. This DVD,

accompanied by a Guidance Note on the Role of a Corporate Parent, will be distributed to elected members. It is proposed that, if adopted, the pledges of the Corporate Parenting Charter will be included in this guidance note. It is also proposed that the DVD will be used both locally and nationally for training purposes.

4.2 **'These Are Our Bairns' (Scottish Government, 2008)**

On the 9th September 2008 the Scottish Government's publication, 'These Are Our Bairns, a guide for community planning partnerships on being a good corporate parent' was launched. The format of this launch was based on the 'Welcome to My World' event held in Dundee and children and young people from the City played a crucial role in this national event. The first national use of the 'Welcome to My World' DVD was at this launch.

The publication, 'These Are Our Bairns', builds on the Scottish Executive 2007 publication 'Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must do Better'. It reinforces the role of the corporate parent and the importance of the role to all those involved in community planning partnerships.

This guide for community planning partnerships states that 'Corporate parenting operates at the strategic, operational and individual levels. It highlights three key elements of the role of a corporate parent:

- The statutory duty on all parts of a local authority to co-operate in promoting the welfare of children and young people who are looked after by them, and a duty on other agencies to co-operate with councils on fulfilling that duty.
- The co-ordination of the activities of the many different professionals and carers who are involved in a child or young person's life, and taking a strategic child centred approach to service delivery.
- The shift in emphasis from 'corporate' to 'parenting' defined by Jackson et al 2003 as *'the performance of all actions necessary to promote and support the physical, emotional, social and cognitive development of a child from infancy to adulthood'*.

4.3 **Dundee City Council Charter - Being a Corporate Parent**

Corporate parenting is not only a responsibility but a real opportunity to improve the futures of looked after children and young people. It needs to be recognised that all parts of the system have a critical contribution to make if corporate parenting is to be a success. Good parenting demands continuity and organisations, by their nature, are continuously changing. Staff move on, elected members change, structures change, procedures change. One challenge of being a corporate parent is to manage these changes while giving each individual child or young person a sense of stability.

The adoption of a Charter encompasses the three key elements of the role of a corporate parent and will contribute to an overarching outcome that "*children and young people who have experienced the care system will be confident individuals, successful learners and responsible citizens and effective contributors.....*" (*The Scottish Government 2008*).

The Charter will also ensure that there is a continuity of defined expectations of 'Being a Corporate Parent' in Dundee.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management.

There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and Head of Finance have been consulted in preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Alan G Baird
Director of Social Work

DATE: 3rd November 2008

Dundee City Council Charter

Being a Corporate Parent

In Dundee we believe that being a corporate parent is more than fulfilling our statutory duties. We have a social and moral obligation to do our very best for those children and young people for whom we are corporate parents.

Like any good parent, we want our children and young people to enjoy school and do well there; we want them to be healthy and happy, secure and confident. We want to maximise their potential that could include going to college, university or apprenticeships, to find good jobs, to have loving relationships and happy lives. In addition, we want them to be included and effective members of our communities and, in the fullness of time, to be good parents themselves.

Dundee City Council and its planning and service delivery partners have adopted a Charter - 'Being a Corporate Parent'. This Charter includes a set of values, actions and behaviours which any individual in their role as a corporate parent will endeavour to meet.

'Being a Corporate Parent'

Dundee City Council Charter for Corporate Parents

We will fully understand and accept our responsibilities as corporate parents.

We will enable all partners to have an understanding of how they can contribute to making positive changes in young people and children's lives in Dundee.

We will work together to ensure that each child and young person can reach their full potential.

We will promote a person centred planning approach with one plan and a lead professional.

We will keep the child or young person at the centre of all assessments.

We will listen to children and young people and acknowledge and recognise their experience of us as parents.

We will ensure that children and young people are at the centre of any discussions and are involved in agreeing appropriate outcomes.

We will ensure that children and young people are involved in, and informed about, the plans that affect their life.

We will engage looked after children, young people and care leavers, in the most appropriate manner, in all aspects of service development and delivery.

We will work as advocates for all children and young people and will respect and promote their human rights.

We will take time to hear the child's story and combine our own professional strengths to improve meaningful outcomes.

We will use our professional and personal energies to take every opportunity to consult and involve children and young people in shaping their futures.

We will communicate better through opening our ears, hearts and minds.

We will listen, guide and above all take responsibility.