

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

DATE: **THURSDAY, 17TH JULY, 2013**

REPORT BY: **MEMBER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER**

SUBJECT: **MEMBER TRAINING – CORPORATE PARENTING**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To enable the Democratic Services Committee to consider the recommendations of the Joint Social & Health Care and Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on the 11 June, 2013 in relation to corporate parenting training.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Corporate parenting is the term used to describe the responsibility Flintshire County Council has towards the children and young people who are 'looked after', that is those who are in public care.

2.02 Good corporate parenting requires a 'whole authority' approach to the care and protection of children and young people who are looked after. Elected Members have a leading role in ensuring that Flintshire County Council acts as an effective corporate parent and takes positive action to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and young people in care.

2.03 A guidance document 'If this were my child....' was originally issued to all County Councillors in March 2005 setting out their key responsibilities as corporate parents to the children in their care. The document was re-issued in 2009. Since then, copies have been made available and a copy is on deposit in the Members' library.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 For a number of years Flintshire County Council has adopted a proactive approach towards member development and support in the forms of internally and externally facilitated presentations, seminars and workshops as well as through specific training courses. The Council has supported member's development through the allocation of a specific budget and applied its policy on an equal basis to all 70 Members.

3.01 During the recent joint Social & Health Care and Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on the 11 June, 2013, the Head of Children's Service presented the Corporate Parenting Activity Update report.

3.02 During consideration of the report, Councillor C.A. Ellis (Chair of the meeting) suggested that corporate parenting training should be made compulsory for all Members. This suggestion was supported by Members of both the Social & Health Care and Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committees who recommended:-

- That County Council be asked to consider making Corporate Parenting Training compulsory for all Members; and
- That Corporate Parenting training is provided during a future County Council meeting.

3.03 The impetus for such recommendations is appreciated. However, unlike with Audit and Planning training, Flintshire (as other authorities) does not have the power to make member training compulsory. It would be possible to recommend that the group leaders encourage their members to attend, but this would not become a formal requirement that individuals attend, even though the members at the joint meeting recognised the importance thereof.

3.03 The suggestion to hold a Corporate parenting training session during a County Council meeting was made to encourage greater member attendance at the training session. However, it should be recognised that the time available at County Council meetings is already severely constrained. It was for that reason that a 'business protocol' for meetings was prepared three years ago. Presentations to Council are limited to ten minutes, with ten minutes for questions. This would not be conducive to a meaningful training session.

3.04 The officers have discussed whether it is feasible to hold a training session immediately before or after a Council meeting. However, experience has shown many Members are in group meetings in the two hours before Council meetings. Given that it can be difficult to predict the length of a Council meeting and that several Members tend to leave towards the end of an afternoon meeting because of their personal commitments, it is also difficult to make a compelling argument for holding training at the rising of Council.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That having regard to the above, the Committee considers the recommendation of the Social & Health Care and Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committees that corporate parenting training for Members be compulsory.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 A sum of £11,122 is included in the Council's 2013/14 budget for members training and development activities

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None as a result of this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None as a result of this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None as a result of this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None as a result of this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 N/A

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Publication of this report constitutes consultation.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 None

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None.

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