

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the University of Alberta crest. The crest is a shield divided into four quadrants. The top-left quadrant shows a building, the top-right shows a stag's head, the bottom-left shows a sailing ship, and the bottom-right shows a beaver. Above the shield is a crown with four maple leaves. Below the shield is a banner with the motto 'ANNE FOR A'.

Agenda Item 12

Development of a Family Firm Approach

Falkirk Council

Title: Development of a Family Firm Approach

Meeting: Executive

Date: 21 March 2017

Submitted By: Director of Children's Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report seeks to update Members on progress to develop a "Family Firm" approach within the Council and with partners which will support and encourage young people who are, or have been, Looked After, into employment.
- 1.2 This development was one of the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Committee in relation to outcomes for Looked After children, presented to the Executive in November 2016. Members requested a proposal for a "Family Firm" approach be brought forward by the end of March 2017.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1 The Executive is asked to:-

- (1) note the progress made to date in developing a "Family Firm" approach;**
- (2) agree the direction being taken in developing this approach.**

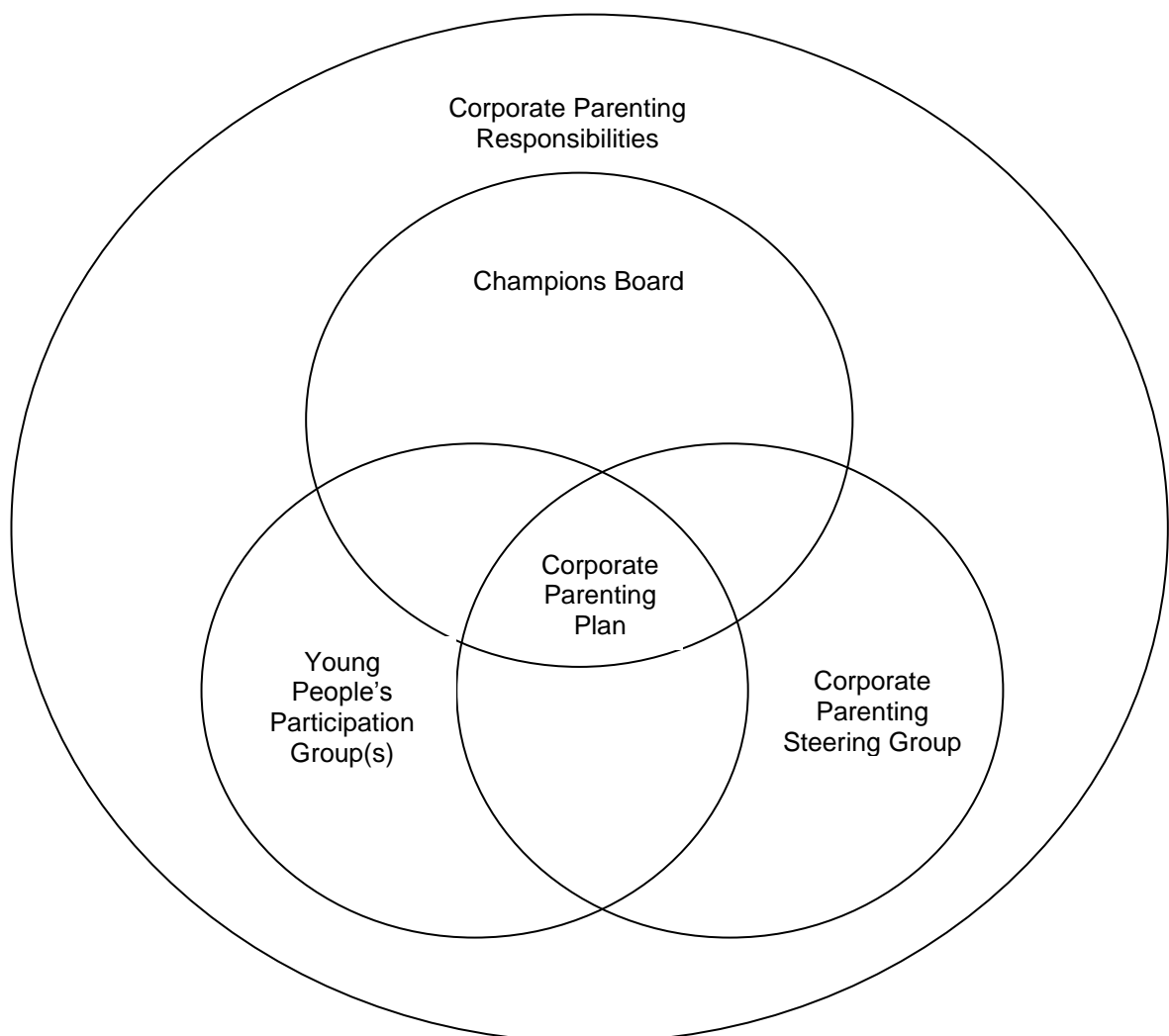
3. Background

- 3.1 Corporate Parenting is defined in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 as "the formal and local partnerships between all services responsible for working together to meet the needs of Looked After children, young people and care leavers".
- 3.2 Corporate Parenting is a statutory duty for 24 listed public bodies and requires them to collaborate in helping Looked After children and young people and care leavers to achieve the best outcomes.

What this means in practice is that all 24 agencies, along with Elected Members, have specific responsibilities for particular groups of vulnerable young people.
- 3.3 Professionals are required to assess the needs of these young people. Elected Members, along with professionals, then need to ensure that children and young people:-

- have their interests promoted;
 - have opportunities provided for them;
 - have their rights upheld and their wellbeing safeguarded.
- 3.4 Elected Members and Officers also need to be alert to matters which might adversely affect the child/young person's wellbeing and act to improve outcomes for these young people.
- 3.5 The Local Authority has responsibility for preparing a corporate parenting plan which can either stand alone or be incorporated into the Integrated Children's Services Plan. This Plan will include reporting on how partners are fulfilling their corporate parenting duties.
- 3.6 The proposed model, shown below in Figure 1, was agreed by the Executive in December.

Figure 1



- 3.7 The Corporate Parenting Steering Group reports to the Children's Commission.
- 3.8 The Council has included Corporate Parenting in the Integrated Children's Services Plan, and agreed priorities which will be developed into a detailed Corporate Parenting Plan:-

- development of flexible support and accommodation for young people leaving care;
- development of an approach to the “Family Firm”;
- working with Looked After children and young people to establish a Champions Board to allow young people for whom the Council is corporate parent to be involved in identifying future priority areas for service improvement;
- awareness raising across the Council and partners about their role as corporate parents.

3.9 The role of the Champions Board is crucial and a funding partnership package including Life Changes Trust; Quarriers; “Who Cares?” Scotland and the Council has allowed us to recruit the following staff to work with the young people:-

Co-ordinator (20 hours per week)
 Senior Participation Worker (35 hours per week)
 Participation Worker (25 hours per week)
 Care experienced young person trainee (25 hours per week)

Care experienced young people have participated fully in the recruitment of all of the above members of staff.

4. Considerations

- 4.1 Many Looked After young people experience difficulties during their school years which can lead to challenges in making an effective transition from school to new opportunities. They are much less likely than their peers to go on to further or higher education, training or to find employment.
- 4.2 The “Family Firm” concept aims to encourage and enable Local Authorities and their partners to offer Looked After young people and care leavers a broad range of support to help them progress to a positive economic destination. This might include work experience, employment and training or building capacity and skills individually or in groups by preparing job applications or interview skills. It also may be through reserving a number of apprenticeships and jobs for which only Looked After young people and care leavers can apply.
- 4.3 Local Authorities can offer a wide range of employment in a local area, with everything from joiners to care assistants, administrators to sports assistants, accountants, surveyors, and even specialists roles like ski instructors and harbour masters. Other community planning partners extend the range even wider, bringing in, for example, opportunities within health care and the emergency services. This, combined with both local and national employers, provides a significant employer base, essentially the **corporate family**, from which to build the **Family Firm**.
- 4.4 We have a number of programmes in place already but we need to bring these together and consolidate them.

We will seek to integrate the Family Firm agenda with 16+; Developing the Young Workforce; Routes to Employment and CORP, and form one forum working together under the SOLD/ICSP priority “Maximising Job Creation and Employability”.

- 4.5 A vocational pilot programme for Looked After children was run by Falkirk Council and Barnardo’s between July 2015 and June 2016 as a test of change. The purpose of the programme was to support 6-8 young people to achieve and maintain a positive destination.
- 4.6 In total, 11 young people participated in the programme (5 were Summer 2016 school leavers and 6 were Christmas 2016 school leavers).

Of the above 11,

- 3 young people have college places
- 1 young person is on a waiting list for an apprenticeship
- 4 young people remained within their Education placement
- 1 young person has engaged with Activity agreements
- 2 young people did not engage with the programme.

Although the numbers were quite small nevertheless the pilot has provided useful learning.

- 4.7 The learning from the LAC vocational programme will be reflected in taking the Family Firm work forward:-
- specialist processes will be mapped for vulnerable young people;
 - staff will be signposted to earlier and specialist resources;
 - each school co-ordinator for developing the young workforce/16+ will meet as a group;
 - we will develop a consistent approach to the use of data and measures across Falkirk to report on positive destinations;
 - earlier intervention will take place to engage with young people to work on soft skills and building relationships.
- 4.8 We currently have one care experienced young person in a Modern Apprentice post. Additionally, the young person who has been appointed as the trainee (referenced at Section 3.9) was previously Looked After.
- There is a second vacant trainee post and efforts will be made to employ another care experienced young person against this post.
- 4.9 Negotiations have begun with partners and local businesses to actively explore traineeships/modern apprentice posts for care experienced young people.
- 4.10 We will explore the potential for staff to volunteer to become mentors.
- 4.11 The Corporate Parenting Steering Group will oversee the development of the Family Firm approach. It is recognised that this will be challenging for Council services not familiar with the needs of Looked After young people, and the approach is likely to be taken forward using the National Improvement Model and small test of change.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Young people are at the heart of the Family Firm and will have a voice in both developing and reviewing the Family Firm approach, particularly through the engagements events which are part of the Champions Board work.
- 5.2 Since November 2016, a number of participation groups have commenced, involving care experienced young people from a range of settings, ages, common interest groups, etc. From these groups, a smaller group of interested young people will be supported and trained by the dedicated Champions Board staff to talk about their experiences and identify key issues for themselves and others.

While the number of young people involved is currently still small, numbers are incrementally increasing at each session. These young people will set the agenda for the Champions Board and some of them will become Champions Board members.

- 5.3 Participation groups will continue to run and to feed into the Champions Board on an ongoing basis. They involve young people in foster and residential care, young people Looked After At Home and those who have left care. The groups are facilitated by the dedicated Champions Board staff who also work in the range of care settings to get to know the young people and encourage their involvement. The young people are already beginning to identify key issues for themselves and others.

6. Implications

6.1 Financial

In 2016, Falkirk Council secured 3 year funding from Life Changes Trust to work with partners to establish a Champions Board which will take forward the corporate parenting agenda. Funding of £201,160 is available over 3 years. However, the Council, "Who Cares?" Scotland, Quarriers and the Silver Trust have all also contributed funding and/or resources. This partnership approach provides the funding/resources for the posts outlined in paragraph 3.9.

6.2 Resources

Resources are outlined in paragraph 3.9.

6.3 Legal

Moving forward with the corporate parenting agenda will meet our statutory obligations outlined in the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

6.4 Risk

There are no risk implications arising from the report recommendations.

6.5 Equalities

No EPIA has been carried out. The legislation requires us to positively discriminate for Looked After children and care experienced young people.

6.6 Sustainability/Environmental Impact

A sustainability assessment has not been completed.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The Corporate Parenting Steering Group membership has now been agreed with the first meeting scheduled for early March 2017. The Family Firm approach will be a priority area to progress.

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Appendices

None.

List of Background Papers:

None.