

Meeting: Cabinet

Date: 16th September 2025

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Corporate Parenting Strategy

When does the decision need to be implemented? Immediately

Cabinet Member Contact Details: [Cllr Nick Bye, Lead Cabinet Member Children's Services – \[nick.bye@torbay.gov.uk\]\(mailto:nick.bye@torbay.gov.uk\)](#)

Director Contact Details: Nancy Meehan, Director of Children's Services – Nancy.meehan@torbay.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. Torbay Council's existing 'Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022 – 2025' is due to expire this year and as such, a new strategy is being developed by the Chief Executive, Anne-Marie Bond, and the Children's Independent Consultant, Steve Hart.
- 1.2. The Corporate Parenting Strategy defines the Council's aspirations to become a supportive, responsive, considerate and sensitive corporate parent on behalf of Torbay Council. It sets out how the Council will work with cared for and care experienced children and young people and alongside its partners, including education, police and health services, and the community and voluntary sector, to achieve this ambition.
- 1.3. To ensure the development of a comprehensive and inclusive Corporate Parenting Strategy, we will undertake a thorough consultation process. This consultation must happen at the same time as the development of the Strategy itself, as the voice of cared for and care experienced children and young people must influence the creation of the draft Strategy. As such, the consultation outlined within this report will take place within the period of other planned activity to ensure that it informs and influences the Strategy which will then be placed before Cabinet in November 2025 and subsequently full Council in December 2025. Therefore, permission is sought from Cabinet to allow the Director of Children's Services delegated authority through a Record of Decision to initiate this consultation, in line with the strategy development.
- 1.4. The consultation process will involve engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, including cared for and care experienced children and young people, as well as our partners in education, police, health services, and the voluntary and community sector.
- 1.5. We will use a variety of methods to gather input, such as surveys, focus groups, and public meetings and events, to ensure that we capture diverse perspectives and insights. This

collaborative approach will help us to develop a strategy that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of all those children and young people affected, and one that reflects our commitment to being truly aspirational corporate parents.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1. As previously mentioned, the purpose of this report is to inform members about the necessity of developing a new Corporate Parenting Strategy and in particular outline the consultation process we will undertake to inform the strategy.
- 2.2. Under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the legislative responsibility for local authorities in respect of their corporate parenting duties is outlined. In February 2019, the Department for Education published Statutory Guidance for local authorities and outlined the key principles of Corporate Parenting. In addition, under the Children Act 2004, it was highlighted that local authorities have a duty to promote co-operation between their relevant partners and the Act also highlights that corporate parenting is a task which should be shared Council-wide and across the partnership.
- 2.3. This includes ensuring that these children and young people have access to the necessary support and services to help them achieve positive outcomes. The strategy must also reflect the Council's commitment to being a supportive, responsive, considerate, and sensitive corporate parent, working in collaboration with partners in education, police, health services, and the community and voluntary sector.
- 2.4. We want to ensure that across the Council, including elected members, senior officers and all staff, there is a shared vision, collective responsibility and commitment to our cared for children and care experienced young people, including the provision of quality services for them.
- 2.5. As such this report has been drafted to inform members of the consultation exercise that we will undertake to inform the updating of this critical strategy.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 3.1. That authority be delegated to the Director of Children's Services to launch the 6 week public consultation when appropriate to inform the development of the new Corporate Parenting Strategy.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1: Corporate Parenting Survey
Appendix 2: Guidance Sheet for Feedback

5. Background Documents

- None

Supporting Information

6. Introduction

- 6.1. Torbay Council's existing Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022 – 2025 is due to expire this year and as such a new strategy needs to be developed – as part of the new strategy we aim to improve the experience and outcomes for children and young people in care by involving them meaningfully in its development and evaluation. This includes a review of the Corporate Parenting Action Plan aligned to the Strategy in terms of delivery of principles in action, consideration of previous pledges of cared for and care experienced children and young people, how the voice of children and young people is influencing service development priorities and the evidence of impact in terms of strategy implementation over the last five years.
- 6.2. As part of this process, we will emphasise collaboration with young people, practitioners, and other stakeholders to ensure the Strategy is a living document focused on trust and actionable commitments.
- 6.3. This is a serious effort to enhance care experiences, not merely a procedural exercise, and the final Strategy will be the foundation used to support young people in evaluating progress and holding us/the system accountable.
- 6.4. To aid this, a feedback survey has been developed which includes several questions designed to gather feedback from young people. These questions cover topics such as views on the name 'corporate parents', what a corporate parent should do, awareness of the 'Promise to you' pledge, and the suggested 'priorities' of the strategy. Each question is accompanied by prompts and examples to help young people articulate their thoughts and feelings – this can be found at appendix one.
- 6.5. In addition to the survey outlined above, we have developed supplementary tools to support our consultation efforts, including conversational tools and a professional's guide for use in one to one conversations. For further details, please refer to appendix two.
- 6.6. Given the significance of the strategy, it is classified as a 'Policy Framework' document, and therefore, the final strategy will require approval from Full Council. To ensure that we have a new strategy in place for 2026, this is scheduled for Full Council consideration in December 2025. To meet the governance deadlines and to allow for a meaningful six-week consultation period, we need to commence the consultation process immediately and seek delegated authority to the Director of Children's Services, to enable this to happen at pace.

7. Options under consideration

- 7.1. No other options have been considered.

8. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 8.1. N/A

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1. As stated above Local authorities must adhere to the corporate parenting principles set out in section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. These principles require local authorities to consider the needs and best interests of cared for children and care experienced young people when exercising their functions.
- 9.2. This includes ensuring that these children and young people have access to the necessary support and services to help them achieve positive outcomes. The strategy must also reflect the Council's commitment to being a supportive, responsive, considerate, and sensitive corporate parent, working in collaboration with partners in education, police, health services, and the community and voluntary sector.

10. Engagement and Consultation

- 10.1. To ensure the development of a comprehensive and inclusive Corporate Parenting Strategy, we will undertake a thorough consultation process. This will involve engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, including cared for and care experienced children and young people, as well as our partners in education, police, health services, and the community and voluntary sector.
- 10.2. We will use a variety of methods to gather input, such as surveys, focus groups, and public meetings, to ensure that we capture diverse perspectives and insights. This collaborative approach will help us to develop a strategy that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of all those involved, and that reflects our commitment to being a supportive and considerate corporate parent.

11. Procurement Implications

- 11.1. N/A

12. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

- 12.1. N/A

13. Associated Risks

- 13.1. Non-compliance with statutory requirements: Local authorities must adhere to the corporate parenting principles set out in section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Failure to update the strategy could result in non-compliance with these statutory requirements, leading to legal and reputational risks for the Council.
- 13.2. Lack of stakeholder engagement: Without consultation, there is a risk that the voices of cared for and care experienced children and young people, as well as partners in education, police, health services, and the community and voluntary sector, may not be adequately captured. This could result in a strategy that does not fully reflect the needs and aspirations of all those involved.

13.3. Implementation challenges: The successful implementation of the strategy requires collaboration between various departments and partners. Without an updated strategy and proper consultation, coordination and communication challenges among these stakeholders could hinder the effective execution of the strategy.

14. Equality Impact Assessment

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Age	<p>18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old.</p> <p>55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old.</p> <p>27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.</p>	<p>The development and implementation of the Corporate Parenting Strategy will consider the diverse needs and characteristics of all stakeholders involved, including cared for and care experienced children and young people, as well as our partners in education, police, health services, and the community and voluntary sector. The strategy aims to ensure that all children and young people, regardless of their background or circumstances, have access to the necessary support and services to help them achieve positive outcomes.</p>	<p>To mitigate any potential adverse impacts, we will implement targeted actions and interventions. These may include providing additional support services, ensuring accessible communication, and promoting inclusive practices across all areas of the strategy.</p>	<p>The Children's Services department will be responsible for implementing the mitigation activities outlined. The timeframe for implementation will align with the overall timeline for the development and execution of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.</p>

Carers	At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care.	Foster carers, parents and kinship carers are of great significance in achieving our corporate parenting aspirations. It will be of critical importance to involve them in the consultation process, and ensure that their voice is reflected in the final Strategy. The principles within the Strategy are reflected in our Fostering Family Charter, and how Torbay as corporate parents interact with our fostering families, parents and carers and work with them to meet our cared for children and care experienced young people's needs.	As above	As above
Disability	In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by a physical or mental health condition or illness.	Cared for and care experienced children and young people can experience SEND in their own right, as can their parents, carers or fostering families. It is important that the consultation process is as representative as possible, and captures the lived experience of those who experience SEND, both in terms of effective support and barriers they may face.	As above	As above
Gender reassignment	In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender	There are a number of cared for and care experienced children and young people who identify as a	As above	As above

	<p>identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England.</p>	<p>gender other than the sex registered at their birth. Considering the stigma that can be associated with being cared for or care experienced, and the impact of gender reassignment discrimination, it is vital that any such experience is understood, and that as corporate parents, the right support is available for children and young people.</p>		
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.</p>	<p>No differential impact</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>As above</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South West (58.4). There has been a notable fall in the numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas.</p>	<p>No differential impact</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>As above</p>

Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the South West and England. Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.	The heritage, ethnicity and cultural identity of our care for and care experienced young people is one of the most important things to assess, consider and support. Increasingly, Torbay is welcoming a number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, for whom this is particularly important. Considering the stigma that can be associated with being cared for or care experienced, and the impact of racism and racial discrimination, it is vital that any such experience is understood, and that as corporate parents, the right support is available for children and young people.	As above	As above
Religion and belief	64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.	Our cared for and care experienced young people	As above	As above
Sex	51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male	No differential impact	As above	As above
Sexual orientation	In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to	Considering the stigma that can be associated with being cared for or care experienced, and the impact of discrimination due to sexual orientation, it is vital that any such	As above	As above

	describe their sexual orientation.	experience is understood, and that as corporate parents, the right support is available for children and young people.		
Armed Forces Community	In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay, 5.9 per cent of the population have previously served in the UK armed forces.	No differential impact	As above	As above
Additional considerations				
Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation)		The Corporate Parenting Strategy aims to address the socio-economic challenges faced by cared for and care experienced children and young people in Torbay. By providing targeted support and services, the strategy seeks to mitigate the effects of child poverty and deprivation, ensuring that all children and young people have the opportunity to achieve positive outcomes. This includes access to education, healthcare, and other essential services that contribute to their overall well-being and development.	To mitigate the socio-economic impacts related to the Corporate Parenting Strategy, several targeted actions and interventions can be implemented. These activities aim to address the challenges faced by cared for and care experienced children and young people in Torbay, ensuring they have the opportunity to achieve positive outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting inclusive practices across all areas of the strategy is essential. This involves 	The Children's Services department will be responsible for implementing the mitigation activities outlined. The timeframe for implementation will align with the overall timeline for the development and execution of the

		<p>The strategy will also focus on improving the socio-economic conditions of families and communities, recognising that a supportive environment is crucial for the success of children and young people. By working collaboratively with partners in education, police, health services, and the community and voluntary sector, the strategy aims to create a holistic approach to addressing socio-economic disparities and promoting social inclusion.</p> <p>Furthermore, the strategy will include measures to monitor and evaluate the impact of these initiatives, ensuring that they are effective in reducing child poverty and deprivation. This will involve collecting and analysing data on key indicators, such as educational attainment, health outcomes, and access to services, to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments.</p>	<p>working collaboratively with partners in education, police, health services, and the community and voluntary sector to create a holistic approach to addressing socio-economic disparities and promoting social inclusion. By fostering a supportive environment, we can improve the socio-economic conditions of families and communities, which is crucial for the success of children and young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the initiatives within the final strategy will be vital. This will include collecting and analysing data on key indicators such as educational attainment, health outcomes, and 	Corporate Parenting Strategy.
--	--	---	---	-------------------------------

			access to services. By identifying areas for improvement and making necessary adjustments, we can ensure that the initiatives are effective in reducing child poverty and deprivation.	
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)		By committing to this Strategy, Torbay will be committing to the supporting all of our cared for children and care experienced young people in order to meet their needs, and to achieve their best outcomes; by doing this, we will have a significant, positive impact on the longer term health outcomes for cared for children and care experienced young people.	As above	As above
Human Rights impacts		Links to the Convention on the Rights of the Child: This consultation honour the rights of cared for and care experienced children and young people in terms of participation and non-discrimination.	As above	As above

Child Friendly	Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council, and all staff and Councillors are Corporate Parents and have a responsibility towards cared for and care experienced children and young people.	This consultation and resulting Strategy is a fundamental part of Torbay's Child Friendly commitment.	As above	As above
----------------	---	---	----------	----------

15. Cumulative Council Impact

- 15.1. The cumulative impact on the Council for implementing the Corporate Parenting Strategy is multifaceted and significant. This strategy aims to enhance the Council's role as a supportive, responsive, considerate, and sensitive corporate parent. By doing so, it will positively influence the lives of cared for and care experienced children and young people in Torbay.

16. Cumulative Community Impacts

- 16.1. The cumulative community impact of the Corporate Parenting Strategy will be far-reaching - the strategy will foster a supportive environment by working collaboratively with partners in education, police, health services, and the community and voluntary sector. This holistic approach will help to promote social inclusion, reduce socio-economic disparities, and ensure that all children and young people have the opportunity to achieve positive outcomes.