

Meeting Name:	Corporate Parenting Committee
Date:	22 April 2026
Report title:	Corporate Parenting Strategy 2026-2030 – update
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	N/a
From:	Helen Woolgar, Deputy Director of Children’s Services – Safeguarding and Care

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the contents of this report and timeline for delivery of the new Corporate Parenting Strategy 2026-2030

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Southwark’s Council’s Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2025 was published in July 2021 following approval by the Corporate Parenting Committee. The strategy set a renewed vision for every child and young person in the care of the council, or who had left care, which was:

“We want all children and young people in Southwark to grow up in a safe, healthy and happy environment where they have the opportunity to reach their potential”

3. The strategy was further supported by six strategic priorities:
 - **Supporting More Families to Safely Stay Together** – Ensuring all our children & families get the right help at the right time, and at the earliest possible opportunity. To make sure that every child is supported to safely thrive at home.
 - **Growing Up Safe and Independent in Society** - Giving all of our children the tools, skills, resources and support that they need to grow towards independence, and be protected from the threats and risks to them from an increasingly complex world.
 - **Health, Wellbeing, Education & Opportunity** - Marshalling the unique resources of the borough to ensure that every one of our children and young adults gets the support and advocacy they deserve and expect from an excellent parent.
 - **Happy, Safe and Stable** – Making sure that everyone of our children has a say in where they live and who they live with. That they are safe and in permanent homes earlier, closer to home, and supported to remain there as long as they need to.

- **Identity & Belonging** - Giving all our children and young people the chance to learn about themselves, their history and identity, and to live with carers who understand and reflect their cultural identity. Providing every chance for our children to appropriately engage with their own families and personal history.
 - **A Whole Borough That 'Cares to Care'** - Placing delivering for our children and young adults at the heart of everything the Council and its partners do. Broadening the voice and experience of our children across all decision making, and making Southwark a truly Corporate Parenting Borough.
4. Building on the foundations of the existing vision and priorities, we are working to develop the next iteration of the Corporate Parenting Strategy. We are looking to be bold and ambitious in our plans to develop services for children in care and care leavers for our 2026 to 2030 strategy.
 5. The development of the new strategy follows the council's **Southwark 2030 Strategy**, launched in September 2024. We have begun work with our care-experienced children and young people to design the new **Corporate Parenting Strategy 2026 – 2030**. This will be developed in full collaboration with our children and young people ensuring their voice, lived experience and ambitions are at the heart of the next phase of our whole partnership corporate parenting delivery.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

6. Progress towards the development of the new strategy has included delivery of the **Bright Spots Survey** for children and young people in our care and those who have left our care.
 - Since 2013, Coram Voice has supported local authorities to deliver the Bright Spots survey to hear directly from the children and young people in their care and those who have left their care to gain a holistic insight into their views and experiences.
 - The survey was delivered in Southwark from August to December 2025, with 246 children in care (aged 4-17) and care leavers (aged 16-25) sharing their views.
 - Independent analysis of survey findings was completed at the end of March 2026 and has directly informed development of the strategy.
7. **Speakerbox** have developed eight pillars which set out the priorities for care-experienced children and young people. These will be integral to the development of the new strategy:
 - Education and Employment
 - Non-discrimination
 - Safety and Support Services
 - Freedom of Expression
 - Standards and Treatment in Care
 - Voice of the Child
 - Knowledge of Rights

- Health Services.
8. Building on the results of the Bright Spots survey and Speakerbox’s pillars, further detailed and meaningful co-production will take place with our children and young people, as well as cross-council leadership and key partners, to develop our refreshed strategy.

Delivery Timeline

9. The following delivery plan sets out the timescale for completion of the draft strategy by July 2026:

Action	Key dates
Update on strategy development at Corporate Parenting Committee	22 April 2026
Bright Spots feedback and action planning workshop with young people and cross-council leadership	W/C 27 April 2026
Further engagement with young people to test and refine priorities	May 2026
Corporate Parenting Roadshow to secure commitments from across the council, including Director’s Forum	May 2026
Draft strategy presented at relevant governance boards	June 2026
Submission of draft strategy to Corporate Parenting Committee	1 July 2026

Policy framework implications

10. An updated and ambitious Corporate Parenting Strategy that recognises the shift in national policy context and builds capacity across the local public sector system to deliver outcomes for our children in care and care leavers, will increasingly serve the delivery of our Southwark 2030 Strategy.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

11. Successful delivery of a strategy to improve outcomes for children in care and care leavers will have a significantly positive impact on the outcomes of one of the most vulnerable groups.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

12. In the development of the strategy, all care-experienced children and young people have an opportunity to share their views and contribute to the strategy. This will be done by working closely with colleagues across the system to monitor participation in consultation and engagement.

Health impact statement

13. The health and wellbeing of our care-experienced children and young people will be integral to the development of the strategy and the strategy itself.
14. The Bright Spots survey asks directly about the mental and physical health and wellbeing of children and young people. Each young person aged 4-17 will have the support of a trusted adult to complete the survey.
15. Clinical service, commissioning and health colleagues will be integral to developing the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2026-2030 - particularly the Virtual Mental Health Lead for Looked After Children, Designated Doctor for Children Looked After and Care Leavers, and Designated Nurse for Children Looked After.

Climate change implications

16. There are no climate change implications associated with the development of the strategy.

Resource implications

17. There are no resource implications associated with the development of the strategy.

Legal/Financial implications

18. There are no legal or financial implications associated with the development of the strategy.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-2025 Corporate Parenting Committee 22 July 2025 https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s99637/Appendix%201%20Draft%20Corporate%20Parenting%20Strategy%202021-2024.pdf	Constitutional Team 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Paula Thornton Paula.Thornton@SOUTHWARK.GOV.UK

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Helen Woolgar, Deputy Director of Children's Services – Safeguarding and Care	
Report Author	Poppy Laurens, Service Development Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	7 April 2026	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	No	No
Strategic Director of Resources	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	7 April 2026	