

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet Member for Children and Families** held on Tuesday, 18th July, 2017 in Room F9 Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillors G Hayes

Officers in attendance:

Nigel Moorhouse – Director of Childrens Social Care and Deputy DCS

Cherry Foreman – Democratic Services Officer

5 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

7 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

No members of the public were present.

8 CARED FOR CHILDREN CHARGING POLICY

The legal power to claim costs from parents is contained in Section 29 and Section 2 of the Children Act 1989. This policy aims to promote children remaining within their families and to deter families from abdicating their parental responsibilities, and to reduce the numbers of cared for children where parents are able to care for their own children.

It was recognised however that careful management and oversight would be needed to ensure the charging policy does not become a barrier to children coming into care where there was a need to safeguard their welfare. The Head of Service for Cared for Children, together with the management team, will provide oversight via the Permanence Tracking Panel which will review the appropriateness of the charging policy to individual children as they enter care and the Head of Service has the discretion to set aside a charge if required.

The policy reflects the sharing of responsibility between parents and the local authority to ensure best outcomes for children; it supports the objectives of the Children Act 1989 that the welfare of the child is paramount and promotes social responsibility; it should not result in parents being charged more than they can reasonably be expected to pay; it should not result in parents refusing to agree to voluntary accommodation arrangements if to do so would place a child at risk of continued harm; it assesses all families ability to contribute irrespective of income or employment status; and uses the income generated to support current services.

The Portfolio Holder received reassurance that children in care for safeguarding reasons would not be affected and that the administration of the policy would be

by a separate team to those involved in overseeing the care of the child. It was confirmed that similar such schemes were operated by other Councils.

RESOLVED

1. That approval be given to the adoption of the policy, shown as Appendix 1 of the report, from 1 August 2017 for all new entrants to care subject to Section 20 of the Children Act where care proceedings are not the agreed care plan.
2. That a review of the effectiveness of the policy be carried out in one year's time.

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 9.40 am