

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

Date: Monday, 22nd March, 2021

Time: 1.30 pm

Venue: Virtual Meeting

How to Watch the Meeting

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The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the foot of each report.

It should be noted that Part 1 items of Cheshire East Council decision making and Overview and Scrutiny meetings are audio recorded and the recordings will be uploaded to the Council's website

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Minutes of Previous meeting** (Pages 5 - 8)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2021.

For requests for further information

Contact Joel Hammond-Gant

Tel: 01270 686468

E-Mail: joel.hammond-gant@cheshireeast.gov.uk with any apologies

3. **Declarations of Interest**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in any item on the agenda.

4. **Whipping Declarations**

To provide an opportunity for Members to declare the existence of a party whip in relation to any item on the agenda

5. **Public Speaking/Open Session**

A total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to make a statement(s) on any matter that falls within the remit of the Committee.

Individual members of the public may speak for up to 5 minutes, but the Chairman will decide how the period of time allocated for public speaking will be apportioned, where there are a number of speakers.

Note: In order for officers to undertake any background research, it would be helpful if members of the public contacted the Scrutiny officer listed at the foot of the agenda, at least one working day before the meeting to provide brief details of the matter to be covered.

6. **Child/Young Person's Story**

To receive a short verbal update on a child/young person's story.

7. **Covid-19 Update** (Pages 9 - 14)

To consider the standing Covid-19 update.

8. **Children and Families Performance Scorecard - Quarter 3, 2020/21** (Pages 15 - 24)

To consider the performance data relating to Children and Families Services from quarter 3 of 2020/21.

9. **Update on Progress Against the SEND Written Statement of Action** (Pages 25 - 50)

To consider a six-month update on progress made against the SEND Written Statement of Action.

10. **Update on School Organisation and School Capital** (Pages 51 - 60)

To consider a report highlighting the schemes targeted at ensuring sufficiency of school places across all planning areas in the borough, including the work to support the increasing demand for specialist SEN school places, and the ongoing work undertaken to support the overall condition of maintained school buildings in Cheshire East.

11. **Update on Member Frontline Visits** (Pages 61 - 86)

To consider a six-month update on Member frontline visits.

12. **Forward Plan** (Pages 87 - 100)

To give consideration to the areas of the forward plan which fall within the remit of the Committee.

13. **Work Programme** (Pages 101 - 106)

To review the work programme.

Membership: Councillors M Addison, J Barber, M Beanland, D Brown, J Buckley, C Bulman (Vice-Chairman), P Butterill, S Handley, A Moran, J Saunders (Chairman), L Smith and N Wylie

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the **Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on Friday, 26th February, 2021

PRESENT

Councillor J Saunders (Chairman)
Councillor C Bulman (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors M Addison, J Barber, M Beanland, J Buckley, P Butterill, S Handley, A Moran, L Smith and N Wylie

PORTFOLIO HOLDERS IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor K Flavell, Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mark Bayley, Head of Service: Education Infrastructure and Outcomes*
Jacky Forster, Director of Education and 14-19 Skills
Steve Reading, Principal Accountant*
Ged Rowney, Interim Director of Children's Services
Jo Williams, Head of Service: SEND Quality Development and Specialist Services*
Claire Williamson, Head of Service: Education Participation and Support*

* Attended for Minute No. 68 only

62 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

63 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**RESOLVED –**

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 January 2021, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

64 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

65 WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of a party whip.

66 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present who wished to speak.

67 COVID-19 UPDATE

The committee gave consideration to a verbal update on the current position in respect of Covid-19 and the work undertaken by the council to respond and recover from it, as well as what preparatory work had taken place following the Prime Minister's 22 February announcement that schoolchildren would return to classroom learning from 8 March.

Members asked questions and put comments in relation to;

- what guidance had been issued by government on the requirement for pupils to wear face coverings in classrooms and/or on school grounds;
- whether or how schools may enforce the government guidance on pupils wearing face coverings;
- how the council and its schools planned to try and encourage children and young people to follow social distancing guidance when commuting to and from school;
- how the in-school Covid-19 testing would be carried out;
- whether entire classes or year groups would be required to self-isolate for a certain period of time following the report of a pupil receiving a positive Covid-19 test result; and
- how the council had engaged with schools about adhering to and enforcing government guidance that parents should not enter school premises unless invited to do so.

The committee was also updated on the current national position in respect of vaccinations of foster carers, and noted that teachers of special schools had begun to be vaccinated.

RESOLVED –

That the update be received and noted.

68 CHESHIRE EAST DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT

Consideration was given to the council's Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan 2021/22 to 2024/25, which was due to be presented to Cabinet for decision on 9 March 2021.

Members asked questions and put comments in relation to;

- whether any work had been undertaken by the council and partners to understand why the number of Early Help and Care Plans (EHCPs) had increased;
- how Early Years services could be supported to combat the growing number of EHCPs in the borough and ensure longer-term sustainability within Children's Services;

- how engaged academy schools had been with the council to support its Access to Send Services Strategy;
- how the council had managed, or put in place provisions to manage, projected increases in demand on services; and
- whether service provision was equitable across the borough and what planned work had been put in place to address any inequalities identified.

RESOLVED –

- 1 That the update be noted.
- 2 That the documentation presented to committee, as well as the forthcoming Cabinet (9 March) papers, be circulated to committee members outside of the meeting.

69 FORWARD PLAN

Consideration was given to the council's Forward Plan of key decisions.

RESOLVED –

That the Forward Plan be noted.

70 WORK PROGRAMME

The committee reviewed its work programme.

RESOLVED –

That the work programme be agreed.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 12.04 pm

Councillor J Saunders (Chairman)

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Key Decision N

Date First
Published: N/A

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 22 March 2021

Report Title: Children's Services' Response to COVID-19

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Kathryn Flavell, Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

Senior Officer: Ged Rowney, Director of Children's Services

1. Report summary

- 1.1. This report provides a summary of the work of Children's Services in response to the current national and international public health emergency on Covid-19.
- 1.2. These are unprecedented times for the Council, and for our children, young people and families. We have many challenges ahead. Covid-19 is, and will continue to have, a significant impact on our children, young people and families.

2. Recommendation/s

- 2.1 Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note:
 - The progress to date,
 - The issues outlined in this report,
 - The impact of the pandemic on children and young people.

3. Reasons for Recommendation/s

- 3.1. To enable members to scrutinise arrangements for children and young people to ensure we have the right support in place to help children

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achieve the best outcomes. To put on public record a summary of our response to date and to explain the ongoing pressures due to Covid-19.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1. Not applicable.

5. Children's Services' Response to COVID-19

Children's Services

5.1 We know that for some vulnerable children and young people, attending education or an early years setting increases their safety. At the start of school closedown to all pupils in January, we assessed all the children and young people known to our services and determined which would be safer by attending education or a setting. We developed an individual plan for each child who was not attending to mitigate this risk and to encourage them to attend. We are continuing to monitor the children who are not attending to ensure effective support is in place. Bi-weekly safeguarding partnership meetings continue to take place, and vulnerable children who are not in education continue to be a priority for the partnership. There is a shared partnership response to safeguarding all children, especially as some vulnerable children and young people may be less visible at this time.

5.2 Cheshire East has been asked to speak at an LGA conference on how we have mitigated the risk to babies and children under two throughout the pandemic, which is recognition of our work in this area.

Children's Social Care

5.3 *Children's Social Care* – We are continuing to see increased complexity in demand to domestic abuse services. Frontline workers have received vaccinations, and foster carers are now eligible to receive a vaccine and we are currently contacting them to make them aware of their eligibility.

5.4 Rapid progress has been made in permanency planning for children, and our cohort of cared for children is reducing. We have now achieved 23 adoptions this year.

Prevention and Early Help

- 5.5 Child Health Hubs – a joint venture with the NHS to enable families to access medical clinics and support in a community setting rather than needing to attend a hospital – are now running from two of our Children's Centres. The Jaundice Baby Clinic and Unsettled Infant Clinic are running from Monks Coppenhall, the Child Phlebotomy Clinic is running from Broken Cross. We have had positive feedback from parents on these clinics, and we put in a proposal bid to Nesta to be a centre of excellence for early years provision based on our work around Child Health Hubs and integration with the NHS.
- 5.6 A new mental health training pilot is taking place for Prevention staff to support practitioners working with children, young people and parents and carers who are experiencing mental health issues, particularly as the challenges of the pandemic have had an impact on residents' mental health and wellbeing.
- 5.7 Joint youth patrols between the Youth Support Service and PCSOs have been taking place during lockdown to disrupt young people from mixing in groups.
- 5.8 Over 21,500 vouchers have been distributed to families and young adults in need through the Winter Grant Scheme since the beginning of December. The grant is to offer practical support in the form of food and utilities payments. This has included provision of food vouchers for families eligible for free school meals over the Christmas period and February half term. In January, the scheme was extended to include support for vulnerable families to replace or access white goods. The scheme will continue until the end of March. A referral process is in place for professionals to refer families who need this support which is working well.

Education and Skills

- 5.9 Attendance at Cheshire East schools has now stabilised (over 7,800 pupils were attending as at 8 February), and we are confident that the right children are in school, however we continue to monitor attendance on a daily basis.
- 5.10 The Prime Minister set out the 'roadmap' for the easing of restrictions on Monday 22 February, and confirmed during this announcement that all students would return to schools and colleges on 8 March. Planning is taking place to ensure we are ready to support schools with reopening.

- 5.11 Schools and colleges across Cheshire East are continuing to carry out Lateral Flow Tests on their staff twice a week. Staff within our Special Schools and those working on a one to one basis with clinically vulnerable children have had Covid vaccines as a significant number of children and young people they work with are at increased risk from the virus. Positive Covid cases within schools had reduced before half term. Media messages were shared over half term to encourage people to stay safe and stick to the rules to support schools to open safely after half term to vulnerable pupils and children of keyworkers and to enable Cheshire East schools to open safely from 8 March.
- 5.12 The Department for Education (DfE) have asked us to share our training package for schools on supporting children's mental health and wellbeing on return to education as an example of good practice.
- 5.13 We are piloting a programme of support for parents to support children with phonics and reading at home and this has been well received to date.

6.0 Implications of the Recommendations

6.1 Legal Implications

- 6.1.1 New legislation has been enacted and guidance has been released in relation to coronavirus.
- 6.1.2 We have liaised with our Legal Services colleagues throughout the pandemic, to assist with and support our understanding and implementation of all legislation and guidance that affects our services to children and families, and will continue to do so as we progress.

6.2 Financial Implications

- 6.2.1 We are seeing the expected rise in demand to Children's Services as a result of Covid-19 which will increase costs to the Council.

6.3 Equality Implications

- 6.3.1 Care leavers are especially vulnerable and may be disproportionately disadvantaged in terms of housing and employment options as a result of Covid-19. They are also more likely to be living alone so have been at risk of being socially isolated during increased restrictions.

- 6.3.2 We have seen an increase in mental health issues, both for children and young people and parents and carers.
- 6.3.3 Some people we work with are at higher risk from Covid-19, for example pregnant women, people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, and those with underlying health conditions such as some of our children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 6.3.4 Some children with additional needs, for example those with autism, could find the change in routine at school and at home particularly challenging and may need additional support to help them through the changes.

6.4 Human Resources Implications

- 6.4.1 There have been HR implications to staff working in different ways. HR and Public Health have been supportive of officers in ensuring that robust risk assessments are in place and available to staff in undertaking their duties, for example in carrying out face to face visits to families.
- 6.4.2 Staff have shown enormous flexibility and resilience. Families have been very positive about our new offer and virtual contact with them, and there will some ways of working we will continue with in the long term.
- 6.4.3 We are conscious of the sustained emergency response that has been required by our staff, and the impact this has, and we are continuing to remind staff that they need to prioritise their wellbeing in order to maintain their resilience.

6.5 Risk Management Implications

- 6.5.1 We have developed a Children and Families Covid-19 risk register. The Children and Families Leadership team are continuing to meet on a regular basis to share information and ensure there is a joint approach to our response and risks are anticipated and mitigated.

6.6 Rural Communities Implications

- 6.6.1 There are no direct rural communities' implications of this report.

6.7 Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

6.7.1 The contents of this report have outlined the implications for our children and young people.

6.8 Public Health Implications

6.8.1 Covid-19 is a global pandemic and public health emergency. Public Health advice has been sought to ensure Children's Services are complying with Public Health guidelines and are providing safe services for families and our staff.

6.9 Climate Change Implications

6.9.1 The increase in people working from home, and reduced travel, has had a positive impact on climate change.

7 Ward Members Affected

7.1 All members.

8 Consultation & Engagement

8.1 Our Youth Council has continued to meet (virtually), and we continue to consult with the Parent Carer Forum and other groups. Feedback from families and partners on our support during Covid-19 has overall been very positive.

9 Access to Information

9.1 None.

10 Contact Information

10.1 Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Ged Rowney
Job Title: Director of Children's Services
Email: Ged.Rowney@cheshireeast.gov.uk



Working for a brighter future together

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 22 March 2021

Report Title: Performance Update – Quarter 3 2020-21

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Kathryn Flavell – Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

Senior Officer: Ged Rowney – Interim Director of Children's Services

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report sets out the impact of Covid-19 on performance, and the arrangements that have been in place during this time, and gives an overview of performance across the Children and Families service for quarter 3 of 2020-21.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:
 - 2.1.1. Note the performance of Children's Services for quarter 3 2020-21.
 - 2.1.2. Provide support and challenge in relation to performance for children and young people.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. One of the key areas of focus for the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to highlight areas of poor performance and to scrutinise the effectiveness of plans in place to improve services. Overview and Scrutiny has an important role to play in the performance management systems of the local authority.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. Not applicable.

5. Background

- 5.1. This quarterly report provides the Committee with an overview of performance across Children's Services. This report relates to quarter 3 (Q3) of 2020-21 (1 October 2020 – 31 December 2020).
- 5.2. It also sets out the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on performance and the arrangements that have been in place during this time. As a result of the pandemic, the ability to deliver the standard Children and Families scorecard and indicators has been heavily impacted for a number of reasons including:
- Contacts and referrals to the front door have shown some unusual trends due to school closures which makes quarter on quarter analysis more complex.
 - Delivery of frontline services, especially in terms of face to face visiting and routine reviews, have been adapted to reflect the various isolation requirements to protect both workers and the families we work with.
 - School attendance data in the previous reportable format was suspended due to school closures and continues to be collected in a different way following re-opening in September.
 - Attendance at Children's Centres and Youth Support work has been severely impacted in the previously reportable format.
 - Work around Education and Health Care (EHC) Plans – especially when assessing children in their "school environment" and "routine" has been increasingly complex and difficult.
- 5.3 Senior leaders and managers have remained sighted on service performance and impact on children and young people through the following:
- A weekly core data set provided to CEMART which includes key measures for Children's Services.
 - A weekly social care and safeguarding data set from the beginning of February 2020 comparing core data sets with the same week in 2019/20.
 - Weekly attendance at early years settings Department for Education (DfE) dashboard.
 - Northwest regional core social care data set submitted on a weekly basis on a Monday with a dashboard available for summary. This reduced to a monthly return from December 2020 onwards.
 - National local authority data set submitted to the DfE on a fortnightly basis commencing in May 2020.

- Daily dashboard data around school attendance with weekly national comparator data and summary.
- EHCP Power BI reporting platform that enables the service to have timely information on assessment timescales and reviews due enabling the service to prioritise case loads and requirements.
- More recently a National SEND local authority data set submitted to the DfE.

5.4 This report contains the indicator set and summary commentary around any areas of concern together with highlighting any different provision/ support that has been put in place during this time.

Children's Social Care

Measure	Year end 2019/20	Quarter 1 2020/21	Quarter 2 2020/21	Quarter 3 2020/21	Quarter 3 2019/20
Number of referrals	2546	539	677	610	618
Percentage of repeat referrals	16%	18%	14%	13%	18%
Percentage of assessments completed within 45 days	86%	77%	67%	73%	88%
Percentage of children with a second or subsequent child protection (CP) plan (rolling yr)	21.7%	21%	25%	28%	20%
Number of children in need	1689	1830	1935	1830	1825
Number of children with a child protection plan	253	274	259	271	262
% of children on CP plans reviewed within timescales	89.6%	100%	99%	97%	98%
Number of cared for children	534	544	537	539	521
% of cared for children reviewed within timescales	88%	99%	98%	96%	94%
% of cared for children in internal foster care (including friends and family placements)	37%	30%	30%	33%	36%
% of children living in external foster homes	28%	28%	27%	26%	27%
% of children living in residential homes	8%	7%	7%	7%	8%
% of cared for children placed over 20 miles from home address (Cheshire East and out of borough)	29%	29%	28%	29%	28%
% of care leavers who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	55%	48%	45%	45%	46%
% of care leavers who are in suitable accommodation	95%	97%	96%	96%	96%
Total number of children with a court endorsed plan of adoption (snapshot figure)	38	53	54	50	36
Number of children adopted (YTD)	17	0	2	6	13
Average caseload of social workers	25	24	25	22	21

5.5 Compared to quarter 3 (Q3) 2019-20 there has been a similar number of referrals to social care this year. This is possibly due to the fact for the early part of Q3 more children were being seen at schools however we have also seen a notable rise throughout the year in referrals being received from midwives and a rise in unborn and babies where there are concerns. In the latter quarter we have also seen a return to similar levels of cases where domestic violence is a feature compared to last year.

- 5.6 The re-referral rate continues to remain at lower levels which, potentially, is a positive indication that the families we have previously worked with are managing sustained positive change throughout this period.
- 5.7 Despite the tighter restrictions coming in part way through Q3, where possible, visits and child protection conferences were undertaken face to face with the appropriate social distancing protocol being undertaken. The flexibility to operate virtually and undertake virtual visits with the aid of a range of technologies has however continued to be beneficial and in some cases enabled more engagement and keeping in touch with families.
- 5.8 Although there has been increasing pressure on services the percentage of CP conferences reviewed in timescales remains high and for Q3 performance was slightly better than the same quarter in 2019/20.
- 5.9 There has been a positive move with an increasing percentage of cared for children being supported in internal foster care placements and approved family and friends placements. The Mockingbird project has now commenced within the fostering service with the first families engaged and it is hoped the success of this will continue to see this percentage improve.
- 5.10 Quarter 3 has seen some positive movements within the court arena and care proceedings and as such we had six further individuals adopted. This is extremely positive for those individuals involved in terms of security and stability for their future and and we are confident of more in quarter 4.
- 5.11 The average caseloads for social workers has seen a drop which will support workers in improved workload capacity which has been a concern especially during the pandemic. This is due to increased FTE capacity and successful closure of cases as work has yielded positive outcomes. This continues to be closely monitored especially where newly qualified workers are concerned.

Education and Skills

Measure	Year end 2019/20	Quarter 1 2020/21	Quarter 2 2020/21	Quarter 3 2020/21	Quarter 3 2019/20
Percentage good or outstanding primary schools	92%	Not available	Not available	Not available	93%
Percentage good or outstanding secondary schools	80%	Not available	Not available	Not available	80%
Percentage good or outstanding special schools	80%	Not available	Not available	Not available	80%
Percentage attendance for primary pupils year to date	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	96%
Percentage attendance for secondary pupils year to date	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	94%
Percentage attendance for special school pupils year to date	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	91%
Number of permanent exclusions from Cheshire East Schools (latest half term available)	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	10
Current Number of pupils educated at home	392	345	351	446	354
Current number of children missing from education.	45	25	98	82	49
Percentage of Good/ Outstanding PEPs	87%	76%	Not available	Not available	87% reported Jan 20)
Total number with an education, health and care plan (EHCP)	2533	2722	2827	2932	2468
% of requests for Educational Psychologists (EP) advice completed within 6 weeks	43%	27%	42%	94%	39%
Special Educational Needs – Education, Health and Care Plans completion within 20 weeks including exceptions (cumulative yr)	42%	38%	34%	42%	51%
Average number of weeks for EHC Plans to be issued (snap shot at quarter end to which it relates)	21.6	23.5	24.4	21.3	19.6
% EHCP annual review completed in timescales	72%	65%	63%	76%	75%

- 5.13 At the start of lockdown the DfE announced the cessation of all inspections and as such there is no updated data available. During quarter 3, Ofsted recommenced interim visits to schools and as at 4 December 2020 (the latest published Ofsted data) Cheshire East had received 8 visits to state funded schools (7 primaries and 1 secondary). Letters outlining these visits have been published to the Ofsted website however no judgements are provided for these visits.
- 5.14 Likewise, comparable percentage attendance data sets will not be available as a differing mechanism for reporting attendance at school has been in place since the end of March 2020. Daily information is available to the directorate monitoring placements requested in schools for vulnerable pupils and key worker children.

- 5.15 Prior to closure for December the vast majority of schools were fully open with overall attendance exceeding the national average.
- 5.16 There are a small number of schools that are unable to report currently to the DfE and the Education service remains in close contact with them to ensure that pupils are attending and any additional support required is identified.
- 5.17 Whilst the number has reduced from quarter 2, work is ongoing with regards to understanding the numbers of individuals missing from education. Most of these are where, due to delays in schools opening or being partially opened, it has taken longer to establish where pupils have moved to, specifically around the reception and year 7 cohort. The team is working closely with the families and schools concerned to establish where individuals have enrolled.
- 5.18 At the end of December overall 84% of children and young people with an EHC plan were reported to be attending school. Crucially at the primary school age this was 90%. For those not attending, the teams understood the reasons why and additional support was being provided.
- 5.19 Likewise overall there was around 85% of children with a social worker reported as attending the schools in Cheshire East during the last week of the December half term. At the primary school level this consistently exceeded 90%. This provides additional reassurance that our most vulnerable children and young people are being regularly seen by a range of professionals.
- 5.20 Despite significant issues due to the difficulty in being able to observe pupils in a classroom setting in Q3, we have seen improvement in the timeliness of EHC plans which is a testament to the work of staff and partners to ensure children are being effectively supported. The cumulative year to date figure doesn't highlight the progress made in recent months with the completion rate in November of 59% with a further improvement of 71% for the month of December.
- 5.21 The work to increase the availability of Educational Psychologists (EP) has clearly shown significant progress and in Q3 the percentage of requests for advice being completed in 6 weeks is hugely impressive and speaks for itself.

Prevention and Early Help

Measure	Year end 2019/20	Quarter 1 2020/21	Quarter 2 2020/21	Quarter 3 2020/21	Quarter 3 2019/20
Current number of open Early Help Assessments/ plans	1100	1070	1142	1210	1005
% of all open Early Help Assessments led by Cheshire East Prevention service staff	61%	61%	64%	63%	61%
% 0-2 yrs engaged at children centres (most vulnerable i.e. CIN/CP/LAC that have attended 3 or more times in the last 12 months)	28%	Not available	24%	23%	29%
% eligible children taking up 2 year old offer (termly figure only)	79%	Not available	75%	77%	78%
% children taking up 3 and 4 year old offer (termly figure only)	97%-98%	Not available	95%	94%	97%-99%
Number of Families meeting the family focus criteria where outcomes have been successfully concluded (quarterly fig)	1900 target achieved	80	81	83	Not comparable as new targets set
Number of young people accessing the youth support service	1,228	Not available	1,266	736	1,299
Number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) individuals [yr. 12-13]	199	210	90	158	169
% of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) individuals [yr. 12-13]	2.8%	2.9%	1.2%	2.1%	2.4%

- 5.22 Once again a number of the core indicators normally provided are unavailable due to schools and settings closing, and with some regular activities being provided by Children's Centres and Youth Support required to cancel.
- 5.23 Despite the difficulties services are facing, compared to the same point last year we are supporting more families and young people with an early help assessment. This means that individuals are getting support as soon as possible and we can target help and equip individuals with tools and techniques before issues escalate. Longer term this will hopefully contribute to reduced numbers of individuals requiring specialist interventions and services
- 5.24 The take up of the 2, 3 and 4 year old offer remains consistently high ensuring that children are receiving support at the earliest opportunity and crucially enabling their individual progress despite the Covid-19 restrictions. Enabling social interaction and group learning at a young age

is crucial to development and ensuring that this being supported and provided by our teams and partners has remained a priority.

- 5.25 The number of assessments being led by Cheshire East Council's Prevention Service remains at a similar level to last year which means that our partners continue to take the lead when they are the most appropriate agency. Given the pressures that all the agencies are facing currently the importance of this should not be underestimated.
- 5.26 The Family Focus work has continued following a further 12 month extension to the programme with a 2020/21 target of 318 payment by results. As at Q3 we are still on target with successful outcomes for 244 families achieved.
- 5.27 Despite the difficulties in available employment opportunities, the not in education, employment or training (NEET) figures remain low and actually showing an improved position compared to last year.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

- 6.1.1. There are no direct legal implications.

6.2. Finance Implications

- 6.2.1. Although there are no direct financial implications related to this report, performance measures may be used as an indicator of where more or less funding is needed at a service level.

6.3. Policy Implications

- 6.3.1. There are no direct policy implications.

6.4. Equality Implications

- 6.4.1. Members may want to use the information from the performance indicators to ensure that services are targeted at more vulnerable children and young people.

6.5. Human Resources Implications

- 6.5.1. There are no direct human resource implications.

6.6. Risk Management Implications

6.6.1. There are risks associated with some performance measures, e.g. increases in demand and timeliness of services.

6.7. Rural Communities Implications

6.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

6.8. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

6.8.1. Performance reports enable members to identify areas of good performance and areas for improvement in relation to children and young people, including cared for children.

6.9. Public Health Implications

6.9.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

6.10. Climate Change Implications

6.10.1. This report does not impact on climate change.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1. The performance measures relate to all ward areas.

8. Consultation & Engagement

8.1. Not applicable.

9. Access to Information

9.1. There is no additional information.

10. Contact Information

10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Ged Rowney

Job Title: Director of Children's Services

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Working for a brighter future together

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 22 March 2021

Report Title: SEND Progress Update

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Kathryn Flavell, Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

Senior Officer: Ged Rowney, Director of Children's Services

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. Following the Ofsted and CQC Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Local Area Inspection in March 2018, Cheshire East was asked to produce a Written Statement of Action which described the actions the area would take to improve identified significant weaknesses relating to Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans and Autism pathways. Regular updates on SEND improvements have been considered by both the Health and Wellbeing Board, and Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, throughout 2019 and 2020. This report provides the latest update, and in particular, shares our SEND Self-evaluation and the latest information on our local preparations for the SEND Re-visit.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Members of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:
 - a) Note the provided updates relating to preparations for the SEND Re-visit; and
 - b) Note and endorse the contents of the SEND Self-evaluation in Appendix 1.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. This report ensures that members of Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee are updated on SEND improvement work and have the opportunity to provide relevant support and challenge to the 0-25 SEND Partnership around improvements relating to SEND, in line with the SEND Written Statement of Action.

- 3.2. The Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board is the overarching governance board for the 0-25 SEND Partnership, and a similar report has also been shared with Health and Wellbeing Board members this month for their overview and scrutiny.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. Not applicable – delivery of SEND Improvements in line with our SEND Written Statement of Action was a requirement of the local area following the previous Ofsted and CQC SEND Local Area Inspection in March 2018. This progress update ensures that there is appropriate scrutiny of improvements.

5. Background

5.1. Introduction and background

5.1.1. In March 2018, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) carried out a joint local area inspection of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Cheshire East. The inspection looked at how effectively partners in Cheshire East work together to identify, assess and meet the needs of children and young people aged 0-25 with SEND to improve their outcomes.

5.1.2. As a result of two areas of significant weakness, Cheshire East was required to produce and submit a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) to Ofsted that explains what the local area is doing to address the identified areas:

- Area 1 - the timeliness, process and quality of education, health and care (EHC) plans
- Area 2 - the lack of an effective autism spectrum disorder (ASD) pathway and unreasonable waiting times

5.1.3. Our WSOA was considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board in July 2018 and was subsequently deemed fit for purpose by Ofsted in October 2018. Since then, significant progress has been made in improving SEND services. Whether or not we have made sufficient progress will be considered in detail as part of the Ofsted/CQC SEND re-visit.

5.2. The impact of COVID-19 on Ofsted/CQC SEND Inspections and Re-visits

5.2.1. In previous updates, we advised that Ofsted and the CQC were due to carry out a SEND re-visit in Cheshire East before the end of April 2020 (in line with re-visits being carried out within 18 months of an area's WSOA being approved by Ofsted). The sole purpose of the re-visit is to determine whether sufficient progress has been made in addressing the areas of

significant weakness detailed in the WSOA (including an evaluation of the impact of the actions taken).

- 5.2.2. On 17th March 2020, all Ofsted inspections (including Local area SEND inspections and SEND re-visits) were suspended as a result of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.
- 5.2.3. From autumn 2020, Ofsted and CQC have been carrying out joint interim visits to local areas regarding their SEND arrangements, in lieu of SEND inspections or re-visits. These visits are intended to support improvements and to understand the impact of the pandemic on children and young people with SEND and their families. The visits do not result in a published letter or graded judgement.
- 5.2.4. Latest intelligence indicates that Ofsted and the CQC are likely to re-commence routine local area SEND Inspections and SEND re-visits from 1st April 2021. However, this will most likely be contingent on any further nationally-imposed restrictions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.3. Arrangements for SEND monitoring and inspection preparation in Cheshire East

- 5.3.1. Our most recent SEND monitoring visit with representatives from the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England and Improvement (NHSE/I) took place on 20th January 2021.
- 5.3.2. In their notes from the last monitoring meeting, the DfE and NHSE/I representatives noted that *'Cheshire East have clearly made significant progress since the inspection'*.
- 5.3.3. Following the Ofsted/CQC SEND re-visit, if Cheshire East is considered to have made sufficient progress, the formal quarterly support and challenge visits that we currently have with the DfE and NHSE/I will cease. Our next SEND monitoring visit with the DfE and NHSE/I is scheduled to take place in June 2021; however this will be dependent upon the outcome of the Ofsted/CQC SEND re-visit should this have taken place by then.
- 5.3.4. We are continuing with preparations for our Ofsted/CQC SEND re-visit. This includes preparing key documents to evidence progress, carrying out communication and engagement with all stakeholders and ensuring arrangements are in place to respond quickly upon notification of the re-visit.

5.4. SEND Self-evaluation

- 5.4.1. As part of our preparations for the latest North West Peer Review and Annual Conversation with Ofsted, we have updated our SEND Self-Evaluation. This has been attached in Appendix 1 and provides a detailed update for Committee Members on improvements, strengths, areas for developments and key priorities for the next 12 months across various aspects of SEND.

5.5. Additional developments since the SEND Self-Evaluation

- 5.5.1. Since the Self-evaluation was finalised, further significant developments have taken place across a number of SEND areas.
- 5.5.2. Timeliness of EHC needs assessments has remained high since the start of 2021 with 100% of EHC Plans issued within the statutory 20-week timescale in January 2021 (excluding exceptions), with an average time of 16.4 weeks for completion. As at 19th February 2021, there are no requests awaiting advice from our Educational Psychology for over 6 weeks, and timeliness of health advice remains high (with 93.5% of health advice being submitted within 6 weeks in January 2021). The numbers of complaints, and number of appeals registered with the First-Tier Tribunal, have both also shown a further fall since December 2020 (with a reduction from 81 complaints in the 12 months prior to 1st December 2020 to 70 complaints in the 12 months prior to 1st January 2021).
- 5.5.3. A multi-agency Preparing for Adulthood strategy was approved by the SEND Partnership Board on 29th January 2021, and work on an implementation plan is underway. In addition, we have also started to carry out a specific programme of work with the National Development Team for inclusion (NDTi) around Preparing for Adulthood (PfA), which includes targeted PfA audits of 48 cases, along with the next phase of SEND ignition events and Person Centred Planning training to support transition of some of our young people with the most complex needs.
- 5.5.4. The Cheshire East Autism Team (CEAT) has recently been accredited as an Autism Education Trust (AET) Training Hub. The AET is a not-for-profit organisation established by the Department of Education and is led by two autism charities: The National Autistic Society and Ambitious about Autism. Cheshire East have acquired an all phases licence which will allow us to deliver accredited training modules to early years settings, schools and post-16 colleges. This will ensure a consistent, early intervention approach to support our children and young people with autism through all stages of their education at the earliest opportunity. Training to early years settings will be delivered jointly by the Cheshire East Early Start Team and CEAT.

Training for schools and post-16 settings will be delivered by CEAT. Rollout of this training will begin towards the end of this half term.

- 5.5.5. Since 2017, we have planned investment into additional SEN places in specialist provision through the use of our SEND Sufficiency Statement and Three Year Provision Plan. An updated Sufficiency Statement and refreshed Provision Plan were approved by the SEND Partnership Board on 27th November 2020. Following this, we sought expressions of interest to operate new provisions, with a deadline for submissions of 22nd January 2021. These are currently being considered by the relevant multi-agency workstream, and we will share details of the proposals to further expand local provision in a future update to the Committee. If we deliver all the places outlined within the updated SEN Provision Plan, we will have achieved a 48% increase in local provision through 9 additional specialist SEN Provisions.
- 5.5.6. Our Access to SEND Services Framework was also approved by the SEND Partnership Board in November 2020; this sets out our approach to managing demand for Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments and Plans. A key aspect of this focuses on further strengthening support at the SEN Support level to ensure that we have the right input and strategies in place early in order to meet needs without the need for a EHC Plan, where this is appropriate.
- 5.5.7. Our new multi-agency SEND Induction and Training Programme is well underway. Each phase will have a specific theme to connect and maximise learning. For Spring 2021 the focus is on 'Understanding SEND' and 'Positive Communication and Relationships' and 14 new training sessions are being delivered from January – March 2021. This supports us in ensuring that there is effective CPD for staff across services within the LA and our partners.
- 5.5.8. Our annual survey of parent carers around the two WSOA areas has recently closed and we will share the feedback once this is analysed. We had a record number of responses, with almost double the number of responses from the previous year (345 compared to 181 in 2020). We are currently finalising a children and young people's survey.

5.6. SEND Strategy and future improvements

- 5.6.1. The 0-25 SEND Partnership Board has continued to meet virtually to oversee our SEND improvements. We are currently in the process of reviewing all workstream action plans and targets for 2021 and beyond. At the last meeting of the SEND Partnership Board on 29th January 2021, we held an extended workshop session to discuss and agree our future shared

priorities across the themes of education, health, care and working TOGETHER (linking in with our shared definition of co-production).

- 5.6.2. Information from this workshop session and our SEND Self-evaluation will now be used to update our shared SEND Strategy. We will be engaging and consulting with partners during the development of this shared Strategy and will share the updated document with the Committee in a future update.

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. Legal Implications

- 6.1.1. Delivery of SEND improvements in line with our Written Statement of Action was a requirement of the local area following the previous Ofsted and CQC SEND Local Area Inspection in March 2018.

6.2. Finance Implications

- 6.2.1. The Council has invested in the SEND service in response to the increased demand on the service over the last two years and keeps this under review to ensure the service can meet its legal requirements.

6.3. Policy Implications

- 6.3.1. There are no policy implications for this report.

6.4. Equality Implications

- 6.4.1. All improvements relating to SEND are focused on improving experiences and outcomes for Cheshire East children and young people with SEND, and their families.

6.5. Human Resources Implications

- 6.5.1. The changes to the SEND service and increase in management capacity to support improvements are detailed within the Self-evaluation.
- 6.5.2. A further consultation with the Council's SEND services has recently closed following a high level of engagement from staff.

6.6. Risk Management Implications

- 6.6.1. There is a reputational risk to the Council and local partners if the SEND re-visit finds that insufficient progress has been made against our Written Statement of Action areas.

6.7. Rural Communities Implications

- 6.7.1. There are no rural implications for this report.

6.8. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

- 6.8.1. All improvements relating to SEND are focused on improving experiences and outcomes for Cheshire East children and young people with SEND, and their families.

6.9. Public Health Implications

- 6.9.1. There are no public health implications for this report.

6.10. Climate Change Implications

- 6.10.1. There are no climate change implications for this report.

7. Ward Members Affected

- 7.1. The improvement actions described in our WSOA, and those detailed in our Self-Evaluation, apply equally to all children and young people with SEND in Cheshire East, and their families, and therefore any impact is borough wide.

8. Consultation & Engagement

- 8.1. Feedback from a wide range of professionals across education, health and care and members of the public (including parent carers) contributed to the development of the SEND Written Statement of Action and the Action Plan within it.
- 8.2. We are continuing to use both data and feedback as a measure of the impact of our improvement actions.
- 8.3. There are numerous consultation and engagement activities with parent carers, young people and professionals throughout the year in relation to SEND improvements, and the SEND Partnership's Communication and Engagement Working Group manages a calendar of all ongoing consultation and engagement events and activities.
- 8.4. Multi-agency engagement and input into our refreshed SEND strategy began at the last meeting of our multi-agency SEND Partnership Board, and we are currently planning further multi-agency engagement sessions to take place during the development of this document.

9. Access to Information

- 9.1. The latest version of our SEND Self-Evaluation, which provides detailed information on recent improvements within SEND, has been included alongside this report.
- 9.2. The Local Area Inspection Report from March 2018, along with our WSOA, is published on the Council's website at:

<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/local-offer-for-children-with-sen-and-disabilities/send-developments/cheshire-east-local-area-send-inspection.aspx>

- 9.3. Updates on SEND developments arising from the 0-25 SEND Partnership are regularly provided through our 'SENDing you the news' webpage:

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/sendingyouthenews

10. Contact Information

- 10.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Jacky Forster

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Cheshire East

**TOGETHER for Children
and Young People**

Together we will make Cheshire East a great place to be young

Cheshire East Self Evaluation Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

January 2021



Summary

Our strengths, areas for development and key priorities for the next 12 months as outlined in this self-evaluation are summarised below:

Strengths:

- Visible and well-established strategic leadership and governance.
- Experienced permanent staffing structure for SEND.
- Significant improvements against our two Written Statement of Action (WSOA) areas – the timeliness and quality of Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessments and Autism Pathways.
- Robust data and intelligence relating to EHC needs assessments and advice
- Good examples of working TOGETHER with children and young people, parents and carers.
- Flexible support during Covid-19.
- Innovative Preparing for Adulthood developments.

Areas of focus:

- Timeliness and quality of Annual Reviews of EHC Plans, including transitions.
- Improving communication and processes around transport for children and young people with SEND to improve transparency.
- Ensuring we have addressed the wider recommendations from our SEND inspection and that improvements are fully embedded across the partnership.

Key priorities for the next 12 months:

- Sustaining our improvements in the two WSOA areas. Implementing our new SEND Induction and Training Programme.
- Reviewing and updating the SEND Strategy with the priorities for the next 3 years to continue our development of integrated SEND Services and embed consistently good practice.
- Managing increasing demand and reinforcing SEN Support in settings through our 'Access to SEND Services' strategy.
- Fully embedding our Quality Assurance Framework and processes to embed consistently good quality practice.
- Implementing the revised SEN Sufficiency and Provision Plan.
- Further strengthening transitions.



Impact of Leaders on Outcomes for Children

Strategic Leadership and Partnership Working

Strategic leadership and management in Cheshire East is visible and well established. Strong leadership across all agencies has delivered improvements against the two areas in our Written Statement of Action (WSOA). Children and young people with SEND now have their needs met earlier;

- we have significantly decreased the number of ongoing Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessments over 20 weeks - there was only one assessment over 20 weeks as at 8 January 2021 compared to 180 assessments on 17 December 2018.
- no children and young people in the Eastern Cheshire area wait more than 12 weeks for an autism assessment.

We have ensured service developments have been co-produced, and these improvements would not have been possible without the continued commitment of our parent carers.

The Council's Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee has received updates on the progress of the WSoA and provide scrutiny and challenge around key SEND performance measures, which are included in a quarterly scorecard to the Committee. Six-monthly reports relating to SEND improvements and progress against our WSoA have also been provided to the Health and Wellbeing Board for oversight, challenge and scrutiny.

The Council has invested an additional £380k in SEND Services next year to increase capacity in order to meet demand.

Since its establishment, Cheshire East's 0-25 SEND Partnership has been committed to improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The partnership has parent carers at the heart of decision making and at all levels of governance. It has very good representation and engagement from all key stakeholders and continues to focus on making a difference for children and young people with SEND.

Our practice and procedures are becoming increasingly integrated across agencies and we now jointly commission a number of services, including a Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy provision. A Children's Joint Commissioning Strategy and Commissioners meeting ensures that partners work together across the range of children's services, and clear action plans are in place to ensure we commission seamless services.

As a partnership, we have worked tirelessly over the past two years following our inspection against a backdrop of significant increased demand and budget pressures, and now the challenges of a global pandemic. However, we are confident that the energy and enthusiasm of leaders at a strategic level to improve provision, observed in our inspection, is now resulting in positive change for children, young people and their families. We are not complacent, and we know that there is much more we need to do in Cheshire East. However, we are confident that



we have the right culture, staff and resources to develop and sustain quality services that children and young people with SEND in the borough need and deserve.

Key Priorities for the next 12 months:

- Sustaining our improvements in the two WSoA areas.
- Ensuring we have addressed the wider recommendations from our SEND inspection and that improvements are fully embedded across the partnership.
- Reviewing and updating the SEND Strategy with the priorities for the next 3 years to continue our development of integrated SEND Services and embed consistently good practice.
- Celebrating success, building on good practice identified through compliments and feedback and audits, and ensure learning from complaints is used effectively to further improve practice.
- Further embedding the culture of co-production with a focus on further improving communication across the SEND Partnership
- Improving the timeliness and quality of Annual Reviews of EHC Plans, including transitions.
- Further strengthening transitions.
- Fully embedding our Quality Assurance Framework and processes to embed consistently good quality practice.
- Exploring creating a Designated Social Care Officer.

"A quick note to...pass on the sense that the improvements related to SEND are palpable. [School] had noticed a transformation in the effectiveness of the service provided by the SEND Team over the last 6+ months. There appears to be better join up between officers, greater resource becoming available to support the frontline and some very motivated team members who appear [to] be making things happen. For example, [SEND Keyworker] had been excellent and [SEND Locality Manager] has quickly impressed. Similarly, EP reports have been more useful, helping to lead to improved provision."

Feedback from a Headteacher, February 2020

Co-production

Building our relationships with children, young people, and parent carers, is a key priority as part of our drive to continually improve services. As a SEND Partnership we developed and signed up to working [TOGETHER](#) in Cheshire East as our shared definition of co-production, and we are committed to working TOGETHER with children, young people, and parent carers to understand their experiences and develop solutions jointly. Our Parent Carer Forum (CEPCF) and SEND Youth Forum are central to our service development work.

The Council for Disabled Children (CDC) supported us with a workshop on coproduction in November 2020 and were very impressed with TOGETHER and asked if they could use this as a national example of good practice.



We have good examples of working TOGETHER strategically, such as the development of our Quality Assurance Framework, our multi-agency Preparing for Adulthood Strategy and our revised Annual Review processes and paperwork.

Following a suggestion from our Parent Carer Forum, we have introduced virtual locality-based Coffee Mornings for parents and carers with local authority SEND staff to improve communication and ensure that parents can 'drop-in' and ask questions to SEND Keyworkers, Locality Managers and Heads of Service. We have received very positive feedback from parents on these sessions to date. 'Themed' Coffee Mornings will also be arranged across localities going forward on topics identified by parents.

Key Priorities for the next 12 months:

- Further embedding TOGETHER, ensuring strategic co-production priorities agreed with children, young people and parent carers lead to further improvements.
- Improving the timeliness and quality of Annual Reviews of EHC Plans, including transitions.
- Fully embedding our Quality Assurance Framework and processes to embed consistently good quality practice.
- Managing increasing demand and reinforcing SEN Support in settings through our 'Access to SEND Services' strategy.
- Improving communication and processes around transport for children and young people with SEND to improve transparency.

"Learnt so much more about coproduction and working together. Really helpful to have all the discussions and comments in the chat and the PCF reps perspectives and views. Really enjoyed it, particularly the real time ratings which I thought were a great tool."

Anonymous Feedback for the CDC session on 'Working TOGETHER', November 2020

"The feedback from the parents was really positive, parents who attended found them very informative. I feel that parents are relieved that they have an avenue such as the coffee mornings for open communication. In this current climate parents are feeling isolated and having the chance to be able to speak with other parents and members of their SEN locality team has given the parents a voice and reassurance that they have a listening ear... I would like to thank the locality teams and [Head of Service: SEND Quality] for offering their time and for answering so many questions in a professional and knowledgeable manner."

Feedback from PCF Co-chair on the virtual coffee mornings, November 2020

Our Response to Covid-19

We have maintained regular contact with the Parent Carer Forum throughout the pandemic and have worked with them to develop our approach. We have provided lots of support remotely and services have been creative and adapted their offer to ensure that families have continued to be supported during this time. During school closure to most pupils, we provided learning



resources tailored to different types of needs to support children, along with a helpline for parents with children with Autism, and support via video conferencing for children with sensory impairments. Support and equipment were provided for families where needed to enable them to support remote education.

Following government announcements regarding temporary amendments to Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans, we worked in co-production with health and social care partners, educational partners and parent carers to design temporary changes to the provision plan template document to ensure children and young people's provision during this current time could be discussed, recorded and reviewed.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on our planned improvement journey creating some delays on our pace of improvement. However, we can demonstrate that we have remained focused on the aim to ensure a quality service with good timeliness.

Our Short Breaks Team continued to support children and young people with SEND during the first lockdown in March by enabling continued access to direct payments and allowing for funding to be used in more flexible, alternative ways – some examples of this include:

- Allowing direct payments to older siblings in the same home that have returned from university to support care
- Live online ballet classes for children to access teachers/classes directly into their living rooms
- Purchasing of items such as trampolines and climbing frames to ensure children have access to safe play outdoors
- Support from PAs through weekly FaceTime contact with children and families.

During Covid-19, the CCG and partners have supported families and young people to access ASD assessments and pre and post diagnostic support online. Space 4 Autism and ChAPS increased access to support the waiting list. Where required, face-to-face assessments have been booked dependant on Covid-19 guidance. We are continuing to use a mix of video, telephone clinics and face-to-face support as deemed appropriate by the clinician. Additional hours were worked over the summer to undertake more Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) assessments within the Central Cheshire Integrated Care Partnership.

In general, the feedback received from parents during the lockdown period has been positive. Teams have continued to keep in contact with families who have understood that face-to-face visits/assessments could not be completed during this time and that virtual appointments would not necessarily be appropriate to complete a more formal assessment.

Key Priorities for the next 12 months:

- Continuing to support children, young people, families and schools/settings to respond to Covid-19, including with remote education and return to education following national lockdowns.
- Working with schools/ settings to ensure robust arrangements are in place for catch-up and remote learning which addresses the needs of children and young people with SEND.
- Providing support to encourage children's attendance.



"I wish to commend the East Cheshire Authority for their proactive, up to date emails and communications with myself as Interim-Headteacher of the school, by far the best authority during these unprecedented times."

Feedback from a Headteacher, August 2020

"Everybody we have had contact with has been extremely supportive throughout the process. In addition, even though we have all faced some challenges with the current circumstances we have not felt that has in anyway hindered the process at all. [SEND Keyworker] has kept us constantly updated and we could not have asked for any more."

Feedback from a Parent/Carer, June 2020

Workforce Development

The workforce development programme for SEND comprises both the recruitment of new staff to increase capacity, as well as a newly developed comprehensive Induction and Training Programme to improve the knowledge, skills and effectiveness of individuals and teams within the SEND Partnership.

The training programme is a five-phase approach (launched in September 2020 and to be completed by the end of 2022) which responds to staff feedback, as part of an anonymised survey, as well learning from the Quality Assurance process for EHC Plans, a review of complaints, and informal feedback from parents and carers.

Key Priorities for the next 12 months:

- Implementing and evaluating the SEND Induction and Training Programme.
- Implementing the SEND Handbook for all new and existing staff.
- Developing a multi-disciplinary approach across specialist services to respond to changing and increasing needs.

Identifying and Meeting Need

SEN Support

The Cheshire East Toolkit for SEND has been in place since November 2017. Evidence (from SEND Conferences) shows that it is in daily use in 92% of Cheshire East schools. Feedback has been provided about how it has positively impacted on improving SEN Support in mainstream settings. SENCOs have confirmed that the Toolkit has ensured all teachers understand how to support their pupils more effectively at SEN Support level and know that they are responsible for all pupils in their class, including those with SEND.

Bespoke training and specialist advice is provided for schools (including out of borough and independent settings) by the specialist SENCOs working in the Inclusion Quality Team to ensure that the SEND Toolkit is routinely used and embedded.



A review of SEND provision took place in the majority of school settings in 2018/19 and 2019/20 with schools agreeing a 12-month Action Plan. Support has then been provided by the Inclusion Quality Team to ensure that actions are met. One of the areas of improvement was the use of clear, consistent SEN Support plans containing SMART targets using the information from the graduated approach tables in the Toolkit.

Training on all aspects of SEND has been available at termly SEND Conferences. The Conferences have grown from 35 attendees in May 2018 to 295 in February 2020.

SEN Support documentation exemplars have also been developed and shared on the SENDAP (SEND Access Portal for SENCOs). This supports implementation of the graduated approach and provides a forum for questions and support. It has been utilised by SENCOs looking for additional advice, strategies and interventions for pupils on SEN Support to prevent escalation of needs.

There has also been a project taking place with 'Whole School SEND' regarding the data collection in schools and all school settings have been asked to complete a document about their SEN Support cohort, their strengths, areas for development and Quality First Teaching, along with specific data. This work continues and we are hoping to work with 'Whole School SEND' as part of a DfE project on data collection.

We have robust data and intelligence relating to EHC needs assessments and advice. The local authority is facing a rising trend of demand for SEND services at a time of rising financial pressures. Demand is predicted to both change and increase exponentially post Covid-19 against an existing rising trend of need. This will lead to a step-change increase in demand for services in 2020/21. The aim of our 'Access to SEND Services 2020/21' work is to strengthen our understanding and approach to increasing levels of demand on SEND services and to identify and implement practical strategies to ensure effective access to SEND services for those children and young people who will benefit most from them with improved support at SEN support level.

Key Priorities for the next 12 months:

- Managing increasing demand and reinforcing SEN Support in settings through our 'Access to SEND Services' strategy.
- Developing a strong multi-disciplinary team approach to establish criteria for possible de-escalation of needs.

"The Inclusion Quality Team are a dedicated Team determined to support the best outcomes for SEN pupils across Cheshire East during very challenging times. The workshops that I have attended during the conference led by Inclusion Team members have been inspiring and useful e.g. Provision Mapping, SMART targets, annual Review process"

Anonymous feedback, February 2020



Timeliness, Quality and impact of Education, Health and Care assessments and plans

As at 1 November 2020, 2,879 children and young people had an EHC Plan. The number of EHC Plans continues to rise; the number has risen by a third in just two years with 422 more EHCPs at the above date as compared to one year earlier. The number of new plans that we have issued each year has nearly doubled each year for the past three years (163 then 295 then 521). It is forecast to be over 600 for the current year. There continues to be a significant number of new cases for children aged under 5, meaning we are identifying and meeting children's needs at an earlier age, although there has been growth in requests for new plans from all age bands below 20 years old.

Since our SEND Inspection in 2018, we have continued to decrease the number of ongoing EHC needs assessments over 20 weeks, and to increase the timeliness of advice and the number of EHC needs assessments that were completed within the 20-week timescale. The number of EHC needs assessments over 20 weeks has decreased significantly, with only 1 assessment over 20 weeks as at 8 January 2021 compared to 180 assessments on 17 December 2018.

There has also been a significant decrease in the average time to complete an EHC needs assessment. Following our 2018 SEND inspection, our average time reduced from 35.8 weeks in our WSoA (May 2018) with our current performance at 20.4 weeks in December 2020. This represents a significant improvement in our performance from our WSoA levels.

Timeliness of advice has also continued to improve since our 2018 SEND Inspection. There has been a significant and sustained increase in the percentage of health advice submitted within 6 weeks, going from 37% in our WSoA (May 2018) to 95% in November 2020 and 94.4% in December 2020. This has remained above 83% throughout 2020, despite the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our health services. We have also successfully managed the impact of Covid-19 on our Educational Psychology (EP) service, and from October 2020, we had no current assessments awaiting advice from our EP service for over 6 weeks for the remainder of 2020.

Whilst we recognise that there is more work to do to further increase satisfaction rates, progress since the 2018 SEND Local Area Inspection is demonstrable when the January 2020 online parent carer survey results are compared with the results from the 2018 inspection webinar - where only 20% of parent carers felt that their child's needs had been identified, only 12% felt their child's needs were being met and only 34% of parent carers felt involved in the assessment.

In our parent carer survey carried out in January 2020:

- 57% of parent carers that took part said they felt involved in making decisions about the EHC Plan and about how best to support their child/young person.



- When asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were that their views and those of their child/young person were taken into account during the last review of their EHC Plan, 67% of parent carer participants said they were very or fairly satisfied.
- 56% of parents were very or fairly satisfied that their child/young person's EHC Plan accurately describes their needs and how their needs should be met. For more recent plans (where the EHC plan was finalised in 2019) this increased to 67%.

In February 2020, a telephone survey was carried out with a sample of parent carers whose child had recently had a new EHC Plan finalised:

- over half of respondents (65%) were satisfied with the EHC needs assessment process overall.
- 88% agreed that the EHC Plan included all the relevant information, including strengths and needs
- 88% agreed that the EHC Plan was easy to understand
- 82% agreed that they could see themselves and the child in the EHC Plan
- 76% agreed that we explained the needs assessment process clearly
- 76% agreed that the process was child centred
- 71% agreed that their views and opinions were considered.

The number of complaints received relating to EHC needs assessments and EHC Plans within 12 month periods has shown an overall reduction when compared to our performance at the time of our WSoA – with a reduction from 110 complaints in the 12 months prior to 1 May 2018 to 81 complaints in the 12 months prior to 1 December 2020. The number of appeals registered with the First-Tier Tribunal has declined since the start of 2020 – going from 38 appeals in the 12 months prior to 1 April 2020 to 18 in the 12 months prior to 1 December 2020.

The SEND Team is now receiving very constructive feedback from parents and carers in a positive way that shares their experiences and helps us to shape the service. We are also receiving more compliments relating to SEND services than we have previously.

Key Priorities for the next 12 months:

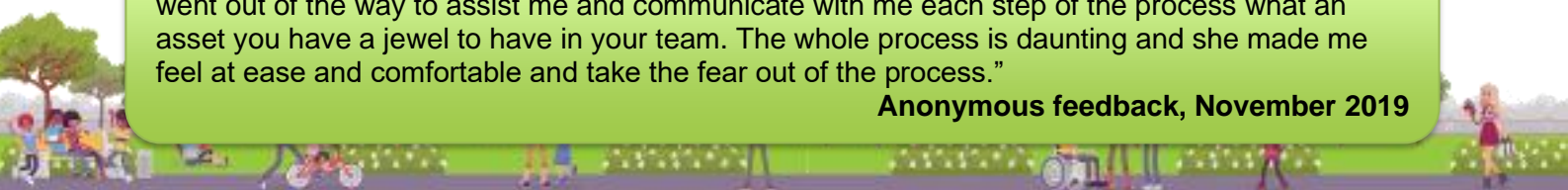
- Fully embedding our Quality Assurance Framework and processes to embed consistently good quality practice.
- Further embedding working TOGETHER and co-production as a continual way of working throughout the EHC needs assessment process and across the SEND Partnership.

"I felt [SEND Keyworker] had great understanding and took on board everything I raised with her, making suggestions or offering advice. I would not hesitate to contact her again, if needed, to ask advice now the plan is in place. I have had a positive experience with the SEND team so far and appreciate the help and support I have received.

Feedback from a Parent/Carer, August 2020

"It was only a pleasure to deal with such a wonderful keyworker [name] and her knowledge. She went out of the way to assist me and communicate with me each step of the process what an asset you have a jewel to have in your team. The whole process is daunting and she made me feel at ease and comfortable and take the fear out of the process."

Anonymous feedback, November 2019



"We were kept up to date about progress and the time frame we could expect. The Plan is clear and the changes that were made to the draft were an improvement and were also explained to us. We had the chance to comment before the text was finalised. All contact with the SEND team has been friendly and professional, with prompt responses and help available in case we needed it. Thank you!"

Feedback from a Parent/Carer, November 2020

"I would like to feedback that [SEND Keyworker] has been a breath of fresh air as our case officer. She is very personable and understanding as well as being good at prioritising and being efficient. It makes such a difference when we can work together so well and so it doesn't become a battle but a constructive professional relationship. It's so easy for schools to criticise the local authority and so I wanted to give this feedback at the start of what will be an interesting academic year.

Feedback from a SENCO, September 2020

Annual Reviews of EHC Plans

Processing annual reviews of EHC Plans was not taking place in a timely enough manner, and there was not a robust process for monitoring the timeliness of review meetings. To address this in processing new reviews, and to support processing of overdue reviews, we have carried out the following actions:

- An Annual Review Working Group was established, which included representatives from our parent carers, with a focus on developing and producing a standardised process, developing further guidance on the Annual Review Process and Meetings, producing web text for the Local Offer, and developing refreshed training.
- New Advice templates have been developed for Annual Reviews to ensure all information required is collated through the review process and information gathered from children, young people and parents, carers, or family members, is consistent between new EHC assessments and Annual Reviews.
- Throughout the last year we have sent updates to all settings, professionals, and families to ensure they are kept up to date with developments within the SEND Team.
- We have increased team capacity to process both annual reviews and new EHC needs assessments with the expansion of the SEND Team to include permanent Plan Writers and additional SEND Keyworkers.
- SENCOs have been supported with training on Annual Review processes, writing SMART outcomes, and use of our case management system and our Toolkit for SEND, which is helping to support improvements in quality.



Key Priorities for the next 12 months:

- Funding has been approved for another increase in capacity within the SEND Team to support improvements in annual review timescales and sustain timeliness of new needs assessments.
- Continuing the development of the Power BI recording and monitoring system.
- Continuing training to all schools in the use of LiquidLogic to reduce the number of paper-based review paperwork we receive.
- Annual Review training sessions will be built into the new induction training programme for new members of staff to retain consistent, high-quality practice.

“It’s great to be able to talk openly and with shared understanding with us parents, my son, teachers and professionals at the EHCP reviews to ensure my son is getting the help he needs.”
Feedback from a Parent/Carer, July 2019

“Communicating with the SEND EHCP Interim Annual Review team re updating the EHCPs for my sons following their Annual Reviews. [SEND Keyworker] and [SEND team admin] were very efficient in keeping me informed on progress. [SEND Keyworker]’s professional input and friendly manner were much appreciated, and we managed to sort out finalising the amended EHCPs in quick turnaround.”

Feedback from a Parent/Carer, June 2020

ASD timeliness and pathways

In April 2020, the four Cheshire CCGs merged to form NHS Cheshire CCG. Despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, work to implement and embed the single integrated and co-produced Autism assessment model/ pathway has continued.

Recurrent funding for the 0-4 multi-disciplinary team in the Eastern Cheshire area has continued, which means that, where required, Autism assessments are available to all children and young people aged 0-25 across Cheshire East. The CCG has invested in assessment services to bring waiting times in line with the three-month guideline recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

As a result, waiting times for diagnosis fell by 80% in one year despite a large rise in referrals. In October 2018 there were 478 children and young people waiting for an Autism assessment across Cheshire East with the longest wait being 104 weeks (almost 2 years). At the end of September 2020 there were only 15 children and young people waiting longer than 12-weeks in the Eastern Cheshire area.

Our All-Age Autism Strategy for Cheshire East (which was informed by a revised All-Age Autism Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)) is now in place and work to deliver on the priorities is ongoing.



The local Third Sector charities commissioned to provide additional pre and post diagnosis support and training for the parents or carers of children diagnosed with Autism, or on the Autism assessment pathway, continue to operate successfully.

We have recently evaluated, reviewed and widened the programme to ensure there are more courses available for children, young people and adults with Autism (including widening social groups where attendance has doubled since the programme began).

Training support for staff (health, education and social care sector) has also been reviewed. More work needs to be done to review and align the offers available across Cheshire, where it makes sense to do so. A two-day accredited training course was commissioned for 15 professionals from across Cheshire East in standardised Autism assessment (ADOS), including the 'toddler module', to ensure that we have enough staff trained to deliver the new assessment pathway both now and in the future.

The Autism Resource Provision in one of our High Schools (Wilmslow High) has won two national awards in the last 12 months, including 'Inspirational Educational Provision (secondary and further)' at the Autism Professional Awards run by the National Autistic Society (two staff members in the assessment team were also nominated by parents for these awards) and the Nasen Award for Secondary Provision.

Key Priorities for 2021:

- Ensuring timescales are maintained and improvements sustained, supporting the increase in virtual assessments as well as supporting young people and parents by ensuring safe clinic areas should a face to face assessment be required.
- Learning from the adapted ways of working and feedback from parents, carers, children and young people to utilise good ideas to take forward.
- Increasing speech and language support across providers and the coordination function across the whole of Cheshire East.
- Progressing with the prevention of crisis pathway and links with the Dynamic Support Database.
- Learning and embedding revised CETR process following a regional review.
- Continuing to deliver on the priorities and actions within our All-Age Autism Strategy.

Preparing for adulthood

Since our previous SEND inspection in March 2018 we have focused on improving the range and quality of our offer, and the information and advice available, for young people when preparing for adulthood. There are pockets of excellent Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) practice within services and examples of positive outcomes for young people - for example, two young people who have completed supported internships have gained paid employment.

There is strong multi-agency partnership working, commitment and excellent engagement from the Cheshire East Parent Carer Forum on PfA.



The Youth Support Service Participation Workers are supporting the proactive involvement of young people across children's services and increasing working TOGETHER with young people. There are three large Further Education colleges in the local footprint, along with special schools, a large training provider and a large range of community providers, which means that young people have a range of choices.

There are staff throughout the SEND Partnership with specialist knowledge in Preparing for Adulthood. To extend this and improve the knowledge, skills and confidence of staff across the SEND Partnership, we have developed a **PfA e-learning module** for Local Authority and health staff that work with children or young people with SEND. This was launched in November 2020, and by December 2020 78 staff had completed this training. The module covers involving young people in decision making, legislation, roles and responsibilities, and potential pathways. Initial feedback from professionals has been very positive. We are currently looking at access to this module for our foster carers, and are working with our Parent Carer Forum to consider how we could potentially adapt the module for parents and carers.

We have updated the post-16 section of our **Local Offer for SEND** in order to facilitate improved access by both families and professionals to information on available PfA options.

Our previous SEND inspection highlighted a lack of awareness around Supported Internships, and we have worked hard since then to increase the range and awareness of our **Supported Internship (SI) offer**. There were 37 SI places in 2019/2020 compared to 19 in 2018/19, giving a 94% increase on last year's cohort. In 2019/20, SI placements also increased from two providers to five providers all offering bespoke SI programmes - with one additional provider launching their SI provision in 2020/21, which will thereby give a total of 6 SI Providers. Outcomes for young people are good. Out of the 3 new SI Providers launched in 2019, 30% of interns have already secured paid work, with 4 months still remaining on their programme.

SEND Ignition explores a variety of different options for young people when they leave education and prepare for adulthood. We have delivered three sessions across the county and have trained facilitators from multi-agency services in order to roll out this approach over the coming 12 months. SEND Ignition is a person-centred approach with young people and parent carers undertaking live planning with a complete range of commissioners, providers and partners who all become invested in listening to the voice of the child and building a better offer for 16-25 year olds.

Impact of our changes

The following provides an example of the impact of our PfA improvements for one local young person. Due to the impact of Covid-19, one of our interns had not left his house for 6 months. He returned to his work placement at the beginning of September 2020. We completed a support plan and applied for additional job coach support through the DWP to support his transition back into the workplace. This intern has been fantastic and support has already significantly reduced. Conversations regarding paid work at the end of the SI have already started.



Key Priorities for the next 12 months:

- Implementing our multi-agency PfA strategy through the 0-25 SEND Partnership
- Developing and piloting an Outcomes Framework for PfA which reflects a wide range of indicators in addition to educational outcomes.
- Improving the range and breadth of local provision for our young people and increasing the number of providers for those who are NEET (not in education, employment or training) or at risk of being NEET.
- Working with the NDTi to deliver specific, targeted PfA programmes and improvements

"I just wanted to let you know that I completed your e-learning module on the Learning Lounge yesterday and found it extremely useful. The way it had been put together in sections in a concise way made it much easier to understand and 'get my head round it all'. I really liked the mix of reading and videos and especially the questions at the end of each section which ensured that my understanding was correct. Well done."

Feedback from a Sensory Inclusion Service Specialist, November 2020

Transitions

We wrote out to all parents and carers of children and young people in receipt of EHC Plans, in Year Groups Nursery 2 (N2), Year 6 (Y6) and Year 11 (Y11) asking them to ensure that they submitted their preferences of school for September 2021 by the end of October 2020. A review of the preferences took place to establish the demand for local mainstream, resourced and specialist provision. This will ensure that transition planning for children and young people, and their families, can take place in a timely manner.

SEND Managers have met with local maintained specialist provisions to identify the projected number of placements that will be available in Reception, Y7 and Y12 in September 2021.

SEND Managers have met with the Early Years Team to discuss the current N2 cohort and to establish workers' professional views around suitable provision. We have also been provided with information/data of children whose Nurseries are likely to submit EHC needs assessment requests for them during the Autumn Term (2020) and Spring Term (2021) so that these can be factored into the equation when decisions are made as appropriate.

We have liaised with colleagues in the Youth Support Service to ensure that Intended Destinations for all current Y11s are captured and recorded on our case management system. SEND Managers have also arranged meetings with local mainstream schools who have onsite resourced provisions, to discuss any preferences for resourced provision.

Key Priorities for the next 12 months:

- Further strengthening transitions.
- Increasing local school places for our children and young people.



Key Developments

Educational Psychology Service Development

A full-service appraisal of the Educational Psychology service has been undertaken and key areas for delivery and improvement have been identified and implemented. Remodelling of the team resulted in recruitment of an additional Senior Educational Psychologist to oversee supervision and support the team, plus the development of a new post has seen recruitment to 3 Assistant Educational Psychologists and an increase in locums in order to continue to support the improved and sustained timeliness of new EHC needs assessments.

The SEN Statutory Framework continues to be a core function of the Educational Psychology Service. A new allocation and case management tracking system has been implemented and has resulted in a positive impact on the timeliness for advice from the Educational Psychologist (EPs). Progress was seen in the reducing the number of requests awaiting advice for over 6 weeks from EPs at the beginning of 2020 (going from a peak of 50 assessments in October 2019 to only 7 assessments at the beginning of April 2020). On 16 October 2020, there were no advice requests over 6 weeks.

Work to develop a traded EP service to work preventatively, enhance teaching and learning, and build capacity within schools to support positive change and reduce the volume of EHC needs assessments received into the service has been a focus over the summer. The launch of the traded service will focus on Emotional Literacy Support Assistant training, Emotion Coaching and Restorative Approaches training and aims to launch in January 2021.

Key Priorities for the next 12 months:

- Continue to build on and sustain timeliness of EP advice.
- Work with schools to reduce the volume of EHC needs assessment requests.
- Embed a traded service to deliver focused training and early intervention to schools.
- Strengthen the consultation process to a multi-agency approach across SEND to support schools.

"The Education Psychologist's report was superb and a 'game change' in our house. We had not had one of these before and everything was documented so well."

Feedback from a Parent/Carer, February 2020

Attendance

SEND children missing out on education have been identified, and joint work across the SEND Team and Attendance Service has taken place to increase the attendance of children attending specialist provision.

We employed six tutors to support SEND students who are struggling to access education with a high rate suffering with high anxiety and mental health issues. The team has continued to



provide educational support for all children throughout the pandemic by utilising online platforms, telephone and the delivery of work packs and resources.

Elective Home Education (EHE) advisors continue to challenge off rolling if identified in their initial contact with children and families. This has resulted in children being put back on school rolls and support put in place to ensure the child is supported to transition back into school.

Targeted work with the children out of school team and SEND ensured the SEND children were well prepared to return to education in September 2020. This involved:

- Developing example letters for schools to send to all parents with a child with an EHC Plan to reassure them all measures have been taken to ensure school is safe and the main focus will be their welfare and supporting them to return to school. This resulted in good attendance with 87% pupils with an EHC Plan attending school in September 2020.
- In August 2020, we issued a Principles of Attendance document to all schools advising that support would be required for some children with EHC Plans to help them back into school after a long period away.
- The children out of school team liaised regularly with SEND locality leads to discuss attendance and support for children with EHC Plans.
- Education Family Support Workers have worked alongside SEND keyworkers to improve attendance and support transition to new school provision.
- SEND tutors have continued to educate and work with students at home over lockdown. Working remotely resulted in an increase in engagement, with over 50% of learners' engagement increasing. This learning will be taken forward into our future service development.

Key Priorities for the next 12 months:

- Continuing to target work to improve the percentage of Special School pupils with less than 90% attendance.
- Ensuring schools are notifying the children out of school team early if patterns of decreased attendance emerge so we can support early intervention.
- Building additional resources into the tuition team to support any SEND children out of education.

"SEND Tuition service provide an exemplary service and represent a high-quality provision which I think is one of the shining lights of Cheshire East Local Authority. The tutors that I've worked with are well organised, build excellent relationships with the students and their families, are passionate about education and reengaging students, they deliver varied and high-quality lessons but most of all they care about each student. This team is well led by a highly thought of manager who never gives up on the students in her care."

Feedback from a SENCO, November 2020



SEND Sufficiency and Capital

Since 2017, we have planned investment into additional SEN places in specialist provision through the use of our SEND Sufficiency Statement and Three-Year Provision Plan. Outcomes from this work to date has seen increases in SEN provisions in the following schools:

- Shavington Primary – new 12 place Resource Provision
- Park Lane Special School – agreed new building to increase capacity from 82 up to 126
- Springfield Special School – completed new building to increase capacity from 132 up to 170
- Axis Special School – successful Wave 12 bid developing new provision for up to 48 learners
- Puss Bank Primary – new Key Stage 2 Resource provision building for an additional 7 learners.

We continue to commission places other than our state funded schools. The recent opening of Lavender Fields School in Crewe has allowed for additional commissioning capacity at a local level thus reducing travel times for some learners.

There is real evidence of impact to increase localised SEN provision across our school's estate which is based upon robust trend analysis. More of our SEN learners now attend localised provisions with new Special schools and Resource Provisions coming online. Whilst demand for specialist places increases, travel times of 45 mins or more have not increased which is critical to minimise 'lost time' via transport. The development of new provisions called enhanced mainstream provisions has been monitored and seen to be effective through pilot schemes and this will now form part of our future planning provision. The careful planning of future needs has also helped to shape our future capital investment and shaping of specialist SEN teams.

Key Priorities for the next 12 months:

- Implementing the revised SEN Sufficiency and Provision Plan.
- Expanding the enhanced mainstream provision programme to more schools.
- Continuing to achieve best value for money in the use of independent schools through robust commissioning.





Working for a brighter future together

Version
Number: 1.0

Children & Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 22nd March 2021

Report Title: School Organisation & Capital Review

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Kathryn Flavell – Portfolio for Children & Families

Senior Officer: Ged Rowney – Interim Director of Children's Services

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview for Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the previous, current, and projected schemes which are primarily targeted at ensuring that we have sufficiency of school places across all our planning areas in the borough. This work includes supporting the increasing demand for specialist SEN places.
- 1.2. The report also summarises the ongoing work undertaken by the School Organisation team to support the overall condition of school building across the maintained sector.
- 1.3. The attached appendix provides the detail of proposed, agreed and completed schemes over recent years. It identifies where there are demands on school places and our intended works to address this demand. Please note that the appendix details schemes at our mainstream schools including both maintained and academies.
- 1.4. This report does not go into detail regarding the breakdown of how capital schemes are specifically funded. In summary, funding is through a range of routes with the main ones relating to the use of the Basic Need external grant along with agreed section 106 funding for education to mitigate the need for additional school places due to the impact of new housing. For some SEN schemes, the Directorate has been successful in gaining support for prudential borrowing where it can show that investment by the Council in providing additional places at existing settings or the setting up

of new Free Schools where this is a more cost effective solution in terms of per place costs. This will help reduce ongoing and rising SEN costs for independent or out of borough specialist placements.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To note the school organisation plans and feedback on the proposals as outlined for providing sufficiency of school places.

2.1.2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.2. The 2021 pupil forecasts, which include housing, indicate that there will be a shortfall of places across a number of planning areas. The role of the Authority is to ensure that sufficiency of places is achieved and therefore capital investment needs to take place in high priority planning areas to meet this statutory requirement.

3. Other Options Considered

- 3.1. The option to do nothing is not viable due to the forecast pupil yields resulting from new housing and the unsustainable impact on other schools in priority planning areas.
- 3.2. The option of not investing in new SEN provision is not an option as identified in the recently approved SEN Management Plan.

4. Background

- 4.1. Each year, the Authority is required to submit a return to the DfE which identifies our requirements for pupil place planning. This process did not take place due to the pandemic in 2020 but the work to maintain our response to ongoing need in this critical area was completed through the updating of pupil forecasts based upon the latest school census data. These latest forecasts provide the basis of our 2021 submission to the DfE and has utilised the September 2020 school census data and the housing forecasts which were provided by Planning late December 2020.
- 4.2. In terms of funding, the Authority receives differing amounts of Basic Need grant based upon our submitted return. We have recently been informed that for 2023-24, our grant allocation will be in the region of £5.3m. This information was published on the 25th February 2021 but was too late to be included within the MTFS report that was approved by Council on 17th February 2021. Finance will now make the necessary adjustments to the programme as part of the year end out turn updates.
- 4.1. Funding through Section 106 is secured through close liaison with planners and allows for additional funds to be made available for education purposes where new houses result in the risk of insufficient school places in a local area. These payments are released over the phasing of a development

which adds risk to the overall funding mechanisms in that approved schemes will need to be frontloaded to be completed on time in advance of receiving the actual contributions. Currently, we have secured £54.2m of Section 106 contributions and to date, have received approximately £16.7m from developers for use in school expansion programmes.

- 4.2. The table below captures the capital spend for sufficiency of school places and shows the level of investment in our schools over the last 5-year period as well as the committed and proposed schemes currently being progressed.

Capital Schemes	Level of funding
Schemes completed in last 5-year period	£22.98 Million
Current committed schemes	£27.4 Million
Further proposed schemes	£16.7 Million
Total	£67.08 Million

- 4.3. In addition to new places, the Authority is responsible for supporting the condition of school buildings for the maintained sector – this is again through the use of external Schools Condition Allocation Grant (SCA), which the authority receives on an annual basis. As schools convert to academies the level of funding allocated by the DfE is reduced. The receipt of the funding on an annual basis makes it difficult to plan condition works efficiently, especially larger schemes where phasing over 2/3 years is required but we are unable to commit until allocations are notified. The following table shows the breakdown of condition funding over the last 3 years as an indication of investment into our school infrastructure.

School Condition Allocation Grant (SCA) – by year	Level of funding
SCA Grant – 2018/19	£2.222 Million
SCA Grant – 2019/20	£1.816 Million
SCA Grant – 2020/21	£1.859 Million
Total	£5.897 Million

- 4.4. Outlined below is a breakdown of the above condition funding in terms of the main areas of spend, this is split between condition schemes which are mainly overseen by Facilities Management Team and the school managed schemes (SMS) which, following a school bidding round schemes have been approved where schools have identified priorities which meet the set DfE criteria.

Year	Total Value of Condition Schemes	Total Value of School Managed Schemes
2018/19	£500K	£1.362 Million
2019/20	£870K	£1.103 Million
2020/21	£558K	£1.149 Million
Total	£1.928 Million	£3.614 Million

- 4.5. The need to increase SEN provisions across the borough has been a critical piece of work which has been placed upon the SEN Sufficiency statement which analyses SEN types and demand for provisions across the three locality footprints. Summarised below are details of the budgets and spend against the Phase 1 and Phase 2 SEN placement expansions to date. In addition to this we were successful in a Wave 12 bid to the DfE for a new SEN Free School, The Axis School officially moved into their new school building in January 2021.

SEN Capital Investment	Level of funding
SEN Placement Expansions – Phase 1	£3.3 Million
SEN Placement Expansions – Phase 2	£2.86 Million
External Capital SEN (Wave 12 bid for new Axis school)	£4.2 Million
Total	£10.36 Million

- 4.6. The Authority has also received capital funding specifically for SEN provisions, this is in the region of £808K and is currently being targeted in schemes targeted at existing specialist Resource Provisions within mainstream schools.

- 4.7. **In total, as an estimate of expenditure completed or committed into schools for additional places or improving condition, the figure is in the region of £84 Million.**

(Please note this does NOT include investment of condition works for academy schools through the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) bidding process.)

5. Implications of the Recommendations

5.1. Legal Implications

The School Organisation works very closely with legal representatives to ensure full compliance of proposed schemes and to ensure necessary approvals are reached as per the Constitution.

5.2. Finance Implications

The School Organisation works very closely with finance representatives to ensure full compliance of proposed schemes and to ensure necessary approvals are reached as per the Constitution. Where needed, this includes attendance and approvals through the Capital Board.

5.3. Policy Implications

- 5.3.1. The provision of new school places will support the Council in meetings its duty to provide sufficient school places. School Organisation policies and the Capital programme is approved through DMT on an annual basis.

5.4. Equality Implications

- 5.4.1. The expansion of schools as required will provide the opportunity for more children to achieve a school place at their local school. The only factors that would then prevent a child getting a school place would be in line with the school's admissions arrangements.

5.5. Human Resources Implications

Staffing requirements will increase in certain schools as a result of extra places and this will require HR support.

5.6. Risk Management Implications

- 5.6.1. There are numerous risks associated with any school organisation scheme for example the need for planning approval, the need for agreement from the Secretary of State and RSC approval if an academy, the cost of the scheme, the S106 contribution not being

realised. All these risks will be managed throughout the project by way of a risk register and dealt with accordingly.

5.7. Rural Communities Implications

5.7.1. There are no specific implications for rural communities although transport to schools from rural areas is always a factor in pupil place planning.

5.8. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

5.8.1. The provision of new school places would provide opportunities for additional children to get a place at a school within their local community and within safe walking distance to their home. The only factors that would then prevent a child getting a school place would be in line with the school's admissions arrangements.

5.9. Public Health Implications

5.9.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

5.10. Climate Change Implications

5.10.1. Providing additional school places will enable Cheshire East children, resident within the development and locality, to secure a place at their local school thus reducing the need to travel. Thus, reducing energy consumption, reducing pollution, and encouraging pupils to walk or cycle to school promoting a healthy lifestyle.

5.10.2. CEC is very aware of their environmental education and stewardship role and are very interested in promoting sustainability in general.

5.10.3. As part of the design process, the design team will explore how the building could be designed to minimise future running costs and will be in line with CEC sustainability policy.

5.10.4. Systems that save on energy consumption will be considered for the whole development

6. Ward Members Affected

All wards will be impacted upon over time

7. Consultation & Engagement

7.1. The Service will initially consult with all Ward Members and local schools seek their views on any proposals.

- 7.2. In line with DfE guidance, the LA must follow the necessary school Organisation processes in line with Department for Education's statutory guidance.

8. Access to Information

- 8.1. <Any supporting documents that help to explain or evidence the report and its recommendation should be included here in accessible formats. Authors should take note of any confidentiality or cost of access issues in this section for reports that end up in the public domain.>

9. Contact Information

- 9.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Mark Bayley

Job Title: Head of Service

Email: Mark.bayley@cheshireeastcouncil.gov.uk

10. Version Control

<This table below must be completed to show the journey that the report has taken; and should include details on the officers consulted on each version of the report. It is expected that Finance, Legal, line manager and Executive Director are consulted on every version.

Each Directorate is to have a document library to store its reports and it is the responsibility of the author to ensure that all versions are retained and stored correctly. >

Draft versions are to be categorised by meeting type.

- Directorate management team: version to begin at 1.0
- CLT; version to begin at 2.0

This section must be deleted when the report is in its final state and is being submitted to Cabinet Briefing, Cabinet, Council, PH decision or Committee. Remember to also delete the version control box on the front sheet of the report on the top left-hand corner.

The version number should also be referenced on the front cover of the report

Remember to delete the guidance wording when the report is complete.

Date	Version	Author	Meeting report presented to	Consultees		Summary of amendments made
				Name of officers consulted	Date consulted	
11/03/21	1.0	Jo Prophet	DMT	Mark Bayley	11/03/21	
				Julie Gregory		
				Steve Reading		

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Version
Number:

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 22 March 2021

Report Title: Elected Member Frontline Visits – 6-Monthly Report

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Kathryn Flavell, Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

Senior Officer: Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an update to Committee on the themes and issues raised through member frontline visits to the Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS), Child in Need and Child Protection (CIN/CP) Teams and Children with Disabilities Team.
- 1.2. Members continue to be committed to frontline visits and their direct contact and discussions with social workers and managers within CIN/CP is highly appreciated. Staff value the opportunity to share their experiences, especially regarding their new ways of working due to the impact of COVID-19. The findings from frontline visits continue to inform planning and quality assurance within the service.

2. Recommendations

2.1. Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- 2.1.1. Note the contents of the report.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. It is important for members to have an overview of the issues affecting frontline Social Work Teams. COVID-19 is having a significant impact on our children and young people, practitioners, and demand to frontline services, so it is particularly important that members continue to be sighted on this as we move forward.

- 3.2. Members received training to undertake frontline visits in February 2020. Establishing visits was delayed due to COVID-19 and the national lockdown in March. Frontline visits were reinstated on a virtual basis following agreement at the Committee in August, with the first virtual visit taking place on 17 September 2020.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. There is the option for members not to visit the frontline, and instead to receive reports from officers and independent reports, e.g. peer reviews. However, this would not provide members with direct contact with frontline practitioners and managers to allow them to have an overview of the effectiveness of these services.

5. Background

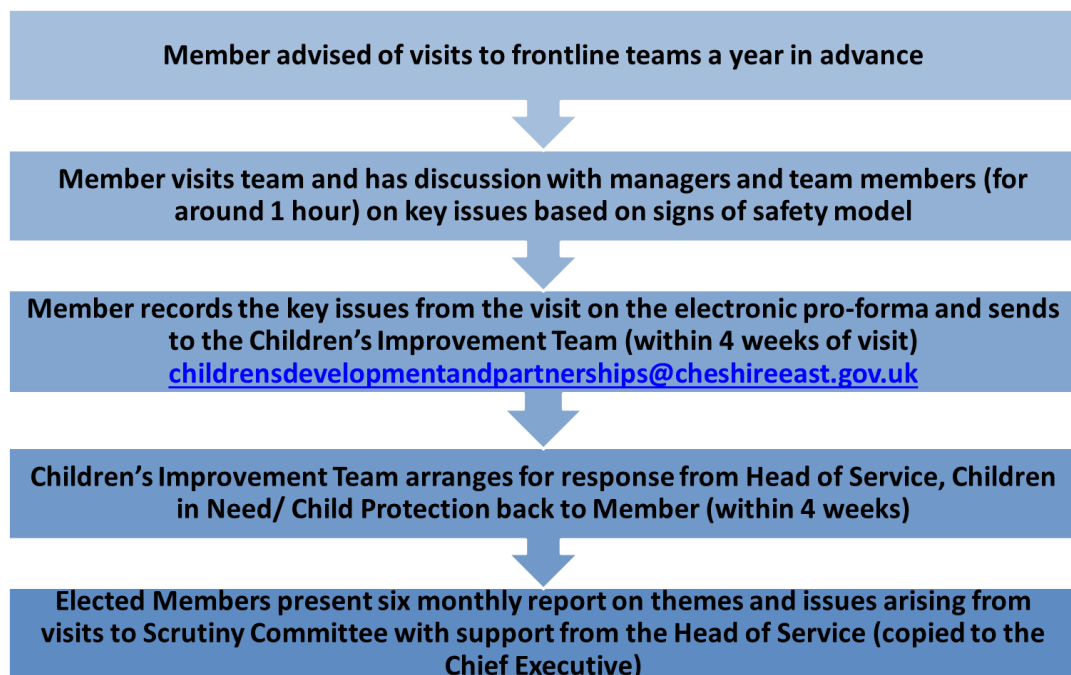
- 5.1. Lord Laming's Inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié resulted in a range of recommendations. One of these (Social Care Recommendation 41) states that:

"Arrangements must be made for senior managers and councillors to regularly visit intake teams in the Children's services department and to report their findings to the Chief Executive and Social Services Committee" (para 5. 193).

- 5.2. This recommendation remains 'best practice' and is still considered as part of any Ofsted Inspection. In Cheshire East, our 'intake teams' (the teams that deal with new referrals) are the:

- Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS)
- Child in Need and Child Protection Service in Crewe
- Child in Need and Child Protection Service in Macclesfield
- Children with Disabilities Team

- 5.3. Frontline visits to the Cared for and Care Leavers Service are being undertaken by the Corporate Parenting Committee, currently also on a virtual basis.
- 5.4. A number of elected members were trained to carry out visits to frontline teams in February 2020. These members were approached in August to see if they wished to be part of the rota for virtual visits and offered training on Microsoft Teams which they could take up if needed. The Children's Development and Partnerships Team set up a rota for visits for the year, liaising with members and the service. A summary of the procedure is set out overleaf:



- 5.5. During their virtual visits, members meet with managers and team members to discuss the following:
- Outcomes for children
 - Support for teams
 - How COVID-19 has impacted on their work (e.g. needs of families/ impact on relationships/ working as a virtual team.)
 - Any other areas
- 5.6. Members are sent the form (Appendix 1) to record the key headlines from the discussion, and the guidance (Appendix 2) before the meeting. As outlined in the procedure, members complete and return the form following their visit, and subsequently receive a response from the Head of Service.
- 5.7. Visits are carried out through a Microsoft Teams meeting. As before, members meet with the Service Manager initially, then with three or four practitioners. The Service Manager invites the practitioners to join the meeting once their section has finished, using the chat function.
- 5.8. The following visits have taken place during the last six months. At the time of writing, February's visit to Crewe CIN/CP is in the process of being rearranged.

2020-21			
September	17th	Macclesfield CIN/CP	Rachel Bailey & Carol Bulman
October	23rd	Crewe CIN/CP	Jill Rhodes & Hazel Faddes

November	9th	ChECS	Lesley Smetham & Mark Goldsmith
January	20th	Macclesfield CIN/CP	Jill Rhodes & Arthur Moran
January (rearranged Dec. visit)	26th	Children with Disabilities	Jos Saunders & David Jefferay

5.9. The rota for future meetings is attached at Appendix 3.

6. Issues and Head of Service Response

- 6.1. A summary of the issues raised by frontline teams from the initial virtual visit to each team are set out at Appendix 4, along with a response from the Head of Service.
- 6.2. The most recent visit to Macclesfield CIN/CP in January acknowledged support offered from peers and Managers during the pandemic so far and how positive this had been. There were also themes highlighted of complexity of caseloads for frontline practitioners and the importance of continued GOOD multi-agency working to support outcome for children.
- 6.3. The Head of Service responded: *Firstly, I wanted to thank you for your feedback. I know how much our frontline practitioners and Managers value the time taken to understand the challenges they have faced, especially during the pandemic.*
- 6.4. *The recruitment and retention of staff is a credit to the Service and support that workers provide to their peers, and the support provided by the organisation. Our staff have adapted to the new way of working remarkably well whilst also balancing their own challenges at home with 'home schooling', potential illness within families and the general anxiety that COVID has presented for people. I feel very proud of my service!*
- 6.5. *The potential hidden harm that children and families are experiencing has been a continuous and live discussion within Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP) since March of 2020. Acknowledging that there is a potential risk for some harm to go unnoticed. Given we have continued to deliver 'business as usual' and our Early Help support has continued throughout, I am confident that this will have been kept to an absolute minimum. The referral rate and re-referral rate to Children's Social Care would suggest we are getting the threshold right and the intervention offered to children and their families is being pitched at the right level, consistently.*
- 6.6. *In November we had a focus on ensuring that only children that required Social Care intervention were receiving it. It is a significant intervention in*

family life to have a Social Work assessment and should only be carried out when absolutely necessary. This focus allowed us to use our embedded 'Step up and Step Down' process to transition the right children into Early Help Services, thus reducing the average caseload of a Social Worker in the Macclesfield Service to 16 which is excellent! This allows for the space and time that practitioners need who are carrying complex case work as well as support require to ASYE Social Workers.

- 6.7. *Towards the end of 2020, we consulted on and took the decision to transfer children and families in Court Proceedings across to the Cared for Service at an earlier point in the process. This will allow the CIN/CP Service to really focus on children and families PRIOR to needing such intervention, and we are confident that this will not only have a positive impact on outcomes for children that need to remain in our care, but will also support our current and continued downward trajectory for children needing such intervention to be safe, as the quality of Social Work practice will have the capacity to improve and impact at an earlier point.*

7. Implications of the Recommendations

7.1. Legal Implications

- 7.1.1. We advise that all members who are undertaking the frontline visits also complete the member GDPR training.

7.2. Finance Implications

- 7.2.1. None.

7.3. Policy Implications

- 7.3.1. Elected members may raise issues from frontline visits that have policy implications. These would follow due process.

7.4. Equality Implications

- 7.4.1. There are no equality implications.

7.5. Human Resources Implications

- 7.5.1. Previous feedback from staff is that this process makes them feel valued.

7.6. Risk Management Implications

- 7.6.1. If frontline social work teams are not able to carry out their role effectively to assess and manage risk to children, and provide appropriate intervention, there is a risk to the outcomes for our children including a potential risk of serious harm. The ability to carry this out

effectively can often be linked to capacity and quality and therefore it is essential our members are cited and in touch with the work of our frontline practitioners.

7.7. Rural Communities Implications

7.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

7.8. Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

7.8.1. Frontline visits are part of our quality assurance framework, ensuring that services are equipped to meet the needs of children and young people.

7.9. Public Health Implications

7.9.1. Carrying out visits virtually helps us to manage the risk of infection from COVID-19.

7.10. Climate Change Implications

7.10.1. Carrying out visits virtually enables us to reduce our carbon footprint.

8. Ward Members Affected

8.1. There are no direct implications for individual wards.

9. Consultation & Engagement

9.1. Not applicable.

10. Access to Information

10.1. There is no additional information.

11. Contact Information

11.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Louise Hurst

Job Title: Head of Service: Children in Need and Child Protection

Email: louise.hurst@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Appendix 1:



ELECTED MEMBER FRONTLINE SAFEGUARDING TEAM VISITS FORM

Please read the document 'Elected member frontline safeguarding team visits guidance document' before completing this form.

Names of Elected Members	
Date of visit	
Service visited	
Names of staff involved in visit	

NB Only insert commentary where you have gathered information.

	What are we worried about/ barriers?	What is working well?	What needs to happen?
Outcomes for children How are you making a difference for children, and how do you know?			
Support for teams Management support, training			

opportunities, caseloads, equip/environment			
Any other areas			

How has COVID-19 impacted on your work (e.g. needs of families/ impact on relationships/ working as a virtual team)

Comments

Completed By:	
Date:	

Head of Service Feedback

Completed By:	
Date:	

Please forward this completed form to the Children's Development and Partnerships Team Inbox within 4 weeks of the visit:

childrensdevelopmentandpartnerships@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Any queries, please email childrensdevelopmentandpartnerships@cheshireeast.gov.uk.

Appendix 2:



Guidance to Member Frontline Safeguarding Team Visits 2020

Elected Members Frontline Safeguarding Team Visits

Lord Laming's Inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié resulted in a range of recommendations. One of these (Social Care Recommendation 41) states that:

"Arrangements must be made for senior managers and councillors to regularly visit intake teams in the children's services department and to report their findings to the Chief Executive and Social Services Committee" (para 5. 193)

Local Procedure

1. Within Cheshire East it has been agreed that the 'intake teams' for these purposes are the teams dealing with new referrals, ie:
 - **Cheshire East Consultation Team (ChECS)**
 - **Child in Need/Child Protection Team in Crewe**
 - **Child in Need/Child Protection Team in Macclesfield**
 - **Children with Disabilities Team**
2. Visits will be undertaken to each team **every four months**, with the Service Manager of the appropriate team. These visits will be arranged a year in advance.
3. Visits will last approximately **1 hour** and consist of:
 - Discussion with **Service Managers(s)/ Team Manager(s)**
 - Discussion with **team members** (as available)

4. The visits will be based on the **Signs of Safety model**, which poses the following three questions:

- What are we **worried about**?
- What is **working well**?
- What **needs to happen**?

5. Members are asked to consider these questions against the following areas (**always starting with what is working well**):

Outcomes for children

- ✓ How are you making a real difference for children?
- ✓ How do you know?
- ✓ How are you building and developing good relationships with families?
- ✓ How do you keep children at the centre of your work?
- ✓ How is multi-agency working supporting good outcomes?
- ✓ What are the barriers to achieving good outcomes for children (e.g. workloads, processes, etc.)
- ✓ What changes would help you to achieve better outcomes?

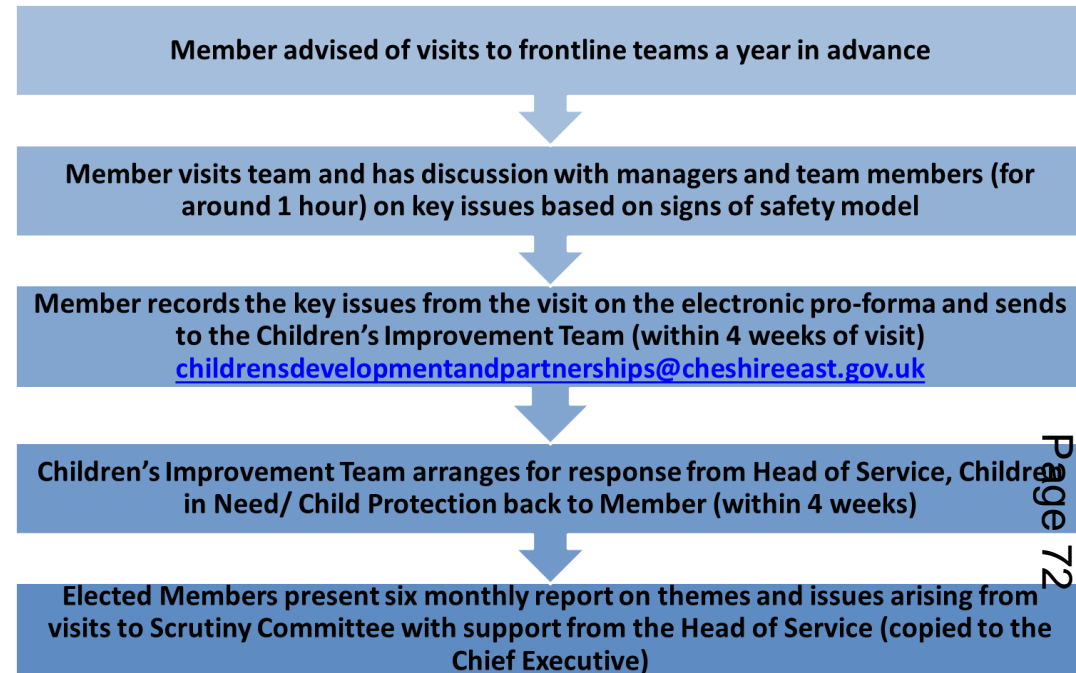
Support

- ✓ How are you supported to achieve good outcomes for children (e.g. management support, training opportunities, ICT equipment/ environment, communications).
- ✓ What's good about how we support you?
- ✓ How can we support you more effectively?
- ✓ What's it like to work in your team at the moment – what is morale like?

Other areas

- ✓ Are there any other areas the team wanted to raise, or that came up during the discussion that impact on providing effective services to safeguard children and young people?
- 7. Elected members will record the **key issues** from the visit on the electronic form and send to the childrensdevelopmentandpartnerships@cheshireeast.gov.uk who will arrange for the relevant **Head of Service** to provide a response to issues raised.
- 8. The **themes and issues** arising from visits and the service response to these will be **presented** to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee **six monthly** by the Head of Service (copied to the Chief Executive).

Summary of Procedure



Appendix 3:

Rota for Future Visits

2021		
February	Crewe CIN/CP	Rachel Bailey & Laura Crane
March	ChECS	Carol Bulman & Laura Smith
April	CWD	Hazel Faddes & Lesley Smetham
May	Macclesfield CIN/CP	Jos Saunders & Mark Goldsmith
June	Crewe CIN/CP	David Jefferay & Arthur Moran
July	ChECS	Laura Crane & Rachel Bailey
August	CWD	Laura Smith & Jill Rhodes

Appendix 4:

SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND HEAD OF SERVICE RESPONSE

Team	What staff said	Head of Service Response
Macc CiN/CP	<p>Outcomes for children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is working well? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A positive, strong team who support each other well. Manager has an excellent level of knowledge and personalises/exemplifies issues effectively. All the new managers are fantastic and they give good support to newly qualified staff. Example given of a strong relationship and trust built with a mother and family's attitudes and practices changed, ultimately receiving thanks from the mother. Reliable, timely visits were appreciated together with empathetic listening. Team Manager proud of team because of the speed with which they have adapted to home working, maintaining communications with each other and partners. Recruitment drive has been very successful. They still have some agency workers but they have conducted many interviews and have taken on good, well qualified permanent social workers. The situation is now stable having appointed 4 frontline workers. Contact Team alleviates some of the pressures by dealing with lower end casework. What are we worried about/barriers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some face to face meetings are now taking place where needed. Virtual meetings are still the main method and they have limitations as well as affordances. A major barrier is the delay caused by the courts. Workload 	<p>Mental Health - Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP) have been meeting more frequently during COVID to be able to understand the emerging and changing complexities that our children and families, and Services are experiencing.</p> <p><i>Mental Health for both adults and children has been a regular feature of our discussions as families have struggled in these isolating times, and some families that we may not have 'normally' worked with, have needed our support and intervention. CESCP has Children's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing as a priority over the next 2 years which will really help to develop our resources and our response to this vulnerable cohort of families.</i></p> <p>IT – We have all upgraded to Windows 10 since 'lockdown' and this has made a huge difference to our ability to work remotely. There have also been presentations from our IT department on how best to use the new systems we have to make the most use of the technology. Staff have found these sessions really useful.</p> <p>Student Social Worker – We have recently had a cohort of</p>

	<p>is increased because completed cases cannot be finalised and remain on the social worker's caseload.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Caseloads per social worker are higher than optimal; partners are not all working at full strength. - A team manager left in Summer '19 and another left at Christmas. This had a big impact on the morale of the team due to the reduction from 4 teams to 3. Although, new managers have been recruited and staff levels sustained. - As students have to live within 45 minutes of their placement, it has proved difficult to forge links with universities in order to 'grow your own' staff. Rather Macclesfield has sought to develop the Apprenticeship scheme with internal support workers. - There are concerns about lack of early help services especially re: mental health issues. Need to work with partnership to coordinate services as there are perceived gaps and anticipated increased demand plus 'hidden harm.' - Most referrals come from schools, but they have been closed. There is inconsistency in schools' approach: some make home visits/some do not. The DSL and Wellbeing Officers vary in quality of response. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What needs to happen? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The aim is to keep children with their families and to have fewer children in care. Social workers need to be creative in finding wider support for families but the main change needs to be faster discharge of cases from the courts. - Pursue the 'Grow your Own' links with universities as well as developing the apprenticeship scheme. - Councillors could help by communicating the need for schools to achieve a greater consistency of approach in reporting and dealing with mental health issues to the Corporate Parenting Committee. Refinement of policy is required. 	<p><i>Students join our Services across all of Children's Social Care and find that we have great success in developing their skills and knowledge and the ability to bring them into our workforce following their degree being completed. As a person who started in Cheshire East as a student in 2004, I certainly believe in growing our own and supporting progression of the skilled workforce we already have.</i></p> <p>Discharging Care Orders – <i>This is a large piece of work that we have been addressing as an Authority within the Court for some time and are now seeing the success of this. As Jen and her Services explained, we strive for children to remain safely at home with their own families and whilst Care Orders at home allow this, they do provide an increased level of scrutiny into family life that is not required long term.</i></p> <p><i>We have had a recent change in the Circuit Judge at Cheshire and Merseyside Family Court, and I am confident that this will also assist in a change of culture across the legal landscape. This coupled with our persistence to achieve the right plans for children will achieve the desired outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>I am very proud of how hard my Services have worked throughout COVID and I am pleased that you have been able to hear directly from them about how they have experienced this difficult time whilst still keeping our most vulnerable children and families safe.</i></p>
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	<p>Support for teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is working well? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whilst Covid had made taking time for training difficult, one social worker had managed to do some Advanced Practitioner training. Management support was felt to be good by both participating social workers. - IT equipment was now thought to be excellent; all had new laptops. - The team were happy with the office environment as well as their individual home working space. • What are we worried about/barriers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social workers themselves felt that they could have/should have booked the training that was on offer. It was a matter of making the time to do this. They sometimes had to cancel training because of emergencies or pressure of work. - IT support and equipment was felt to have been poor pre-Covid. • What needs to happen? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social workers should make the time to both book and complete training as it is always beneficial. - IT support & training to get the best out of the new equipment should be considered. 	
	<p>Any other areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was felt that some changes could be better communicated. The change in provision of adoption services needed further explanation. • The team would like clarification on the forward plan with regard to provision of mental health services such as CAMHS and Visyon. The multiplicity of providers was confusing and made it difficult to know what was on offer for them to recommend/use. 	

	<p>Impact of Covid-19 on work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team has experienced different phases through lockdown, but Service Manager pleased with their response at each stage. There had been increased pressure on them as, for instance, police response had reduced. • Front door capacity had been stretched as they received more referrals than usual during lockdown. • Covid had impacted negatively on family relationships. • Team worked well virtually, although it was felt that many issues would have been dealt with differently/better in previous times. • Team liked the flexibility of home working despite longer working hours. They kept in touch through virtual fortnightly meetings as well as less formally through WhatsApp. 	
Crewe CiN/CP	<p>Outcomes for children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is working well? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Despite Covid restrictions every child is now seen virtually and there is a WhatsApp tour of the home. - Red list cases are still reviewed daily. Cases are assessed within 24 hours at the front door - All cases are now regularly reviewed as it is important that progress is monitored. • What are we worried about/barriers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cases are RAG rated and initially during the first few months of lockdown only the red cases were looked at. - Mental health cases have escalated in number. - Noticeable increase in cases during September rather than July 	<p><i>Across the Child in Need and Children Protection Services we have been working hard to safely reduce caseloads for Social Workers by ensuring that we are only working with those children and families that require Social Care intervention.</i></p> <p><i>Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP) have been working closely together throughout COVID and have been fully cited on the challenges being presented to Children's Social Care regarding caseloads number, when other partners are not working in the same way due to covid. A report regarding case load trajectory planning was delivered to CESCP and we have all been working closely since to ensure that children are</i></p>

	<p>Support for teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is working well? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is now a good balance of home and office work. - We are fully staffed; there is only one agency worker – a family service member. - There is a drive to look at new cases - Virtual meetings are now found to save valuable time - Adequate supplies of PPE are available for staff - Staff find the newsletter helpful - A student praises the encouragement and support he has received from other staff members • What are we worried about/barriers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working from home was at first isolating and difficult, the mental health of our staff suffered - Caseloads are high. Students have the maximum 10 cases, experienced staff have 25-30. - Four newly qualified staff are awaiting registration, meaning extra caseloads for the experienced staff - New starters joined virtually, not ideal for work experience - Agency partners not involved with face to face visits and it is hard to carry all the risks when other services are closed, partner agencies take pressure off. • What needs to happen? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of cases per staff member should improve when the newly qualified staff are registered. 	<p><i>safely stepped down to a more appropriate agencies for any continued support needs.</i></p> <p><i>I am very proud of how hard my Services have continued to work during COVID to ensure that our most vulnerable children and families continue to receive the support they need. I am pleased that you have had the opportunity to meet with some of the staff yourselves to hear directly from them of their experiences.</i></p>
	<p>Any other areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot-desking is not popular with staff; IT equipment was removed, hindering and disrupting work. 	

	Impact of Covid-19 on work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams are working in 5 bubbles of around 7 staff and are in the office one day a week; keeping a close working relationship whilst maintaining safe working conditions. More stressful due to less partner agency contact with families and case loads increasing. Conference work is harder virtually. 	
ChECS	Outcomes for children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is working well? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrangements were made to improve the situation by 1/3rd of staff attending in the office on a rotating basis. Managers swap as necessary too. No update on dropped calls, assume this is ongoing. Relationship with families is important. If they are in need of a service that needs to be heard, taken into account, and their view recorded. Managers are arranging to swap as needed. Information, with timelines, is gathered from all agencies including anonymous calls. Performance data is produced within 24hrs for Safeguarding and within five days for Early Help. Audits and re-audits are every 2 weeks. Partners look at work over 18 months, to offer good insight. There are a lot of checks and balances to make the best decisions possible for the child. Also, audits are made on the number of repeated referrals regarding the same children, in order to check on differences. Chronology is central, with checking back to previous reports for neglect and domestic violence, as they go hand-in-hand. Ofsted were happy in Nov. and reported a safe Front Door. The peer review was helpful, slight changes were made and there is now one system. There has been a huge benefit with staff sharing information. They do not all have to be in the office at one 	<p><i>As you have identified, there is not a significant change based on COVID, and whilst we saw an initial decrease in contacts and referrals to the front door, we are now back to a fairly usual rate. As this rate increased, it became necessary to safely return our staff to the offices on a rota basis to ensure that business could still be managed in a timely way and children's needs were sufficiently met.</i></p> <p><i>We have been able to successfully recruit to 3 Early Help posts within our front door and this will significantly help any capacity challenges. As the majority of the work at the front door is 'early help' threshold, it is important that our early help posts are filled.</i></p> <p><i>We are looking to support the unexpected staff sickness of one Social Worker with an agency post. This again is not covid-related.</i></p> <p><i>Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP) continue to push on the need for agencies to take on their responsibility to support children and families at an earlier stage in their difficulties as oppose to referring to the front door. This is work in progress and we are seeing positive change in that we</i></p>

	<p>time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signs of Safety model is built at the first time of meeting. The positives not just the negatives are taken into account. - Children are completely at the centre of the service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are we worried about/barriers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due to the Coronavirus, all staff were working from home, it was impacting on work. - Dropped calls - Not recording the views of all involved/views of all are needed. • What needs to happen? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Call situation needs checking and fixing. - The views of practitioners and supports for domestic violence need to be heard. 	<p><i>have an increased number of Early Help Assessments open across the Partnership.</i></p> <p><i>Is it absolutely correct that Social Care should only be working with children and families who are experiencing significant safeguarding issues and that other families receive the right support at the right time. Our integrated front door continues to be a strength in challenging partners appropriately and ensuring that the safe and consistent threshold continues to be applied.</i></p>
	<p>Support for teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is working well? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multi-agency meetings are held weekly, regarding missing children and so on. These meetings also help bring people / services together. - Macclesfield has been able to fill their posts. Necessary to recruit agency staff due to long term sick and member of staff leaving otherwise it's a heavy load on those remaining. Approval for a temporary staff member to cover long-term sickness just received. - New systems are beneficial because it isn't necessary to be frequently on the telephone. They also allow for a wider experience and variety of work. - Support has been fantastic. Managers have a good system. There are however continual challenges due to sickness or unforeseen issues. Filters and screening is undertaken with results averaging out. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jams have improved, although there are lower caseloads this year, with Signs of Safety expect more. No difference perceived due to Covid-19. • What are we worried about/barriers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agency workers, permanent staff. It hasn't been necessary to employ agency staff for the last three years. However, one member of staff is on long-term sick leave and another leaving, therefore, interviews were to be held in the week of our visit for two agency posts. There has not been a great response to advertisements. - Access to ICT (at home?) is a consideration at present: issues such as speed of server; ICT connections; changes to systems. - Workloads can be unpredictable. - A school might be worried and it's necessary to ask what action taken so far and the transition creates more work. Working in partnerships more might be necessary too. • What needs to happen? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One more member of staff would make all the difference. - Increased partnership working 	
	<p>Any other areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on workload; caseloads are lower this year. • Schools are the eyes and ears, so closure affected that route in. Children will say what is going on, so judgement is needed. Signs of Safety leads to expectation of more. • Staffing is a challenge; another member of staff is leaving. That is difficult for those remaining with heavier work loads. • Managers are proud of the Front Door, all the team go over and above and most work over 37 hours a week. • Duty process was embedded while out of lockdown with a two week rota, sharepoint was utilised with emails between police 	

	<p>and NSPCC enabling triage and work passed on to relevant service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social workers were at home with health issues and so on. Work load improved quickly. Covid-19 impacted and schools were open the second time. MARAC meetings database has allowed the relevant people know what is going on. • Many phone calls interrupt work flow and delays work already in the in-tray. • There are good relationships with CIN and Child Protection. Conversations work really well and checking back is good for relationships. • Court reports are not liked, information for Local Authority on a lot of private law by legal department. Chronology is needed for private cases and accusation information for CAFCASS requested rather than looking at the files. There are also many requests for information for cases such as UK Citizenship, Settlement Schemes, safeguarding, exploitation, trafficking. The Home Office have a full process of speaking to all agencies and dozens of requests and follow-ups are required of the service. • Brexit has caused immigrants with children needing to regularise their position and this puts a large load on the service. The high cohort locally of parents from Poland don't understand the necessary requirements. Social services are called on to discover where relevant documentation is held. 	
	<p>Impact of Covid-19 on work</p> <p>Covid-19 does not seem to have impacted specifically, no difference identified, apart from what is noted above.</p>	

CWD	Outcomes for children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is working well? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The team are very resourceful and creative in working out how to get things done when constraints are put in the way The team feel as though they are doing a good job when they are able to get a support package together for a family but there are a lot of barriers in the way at the moment due to lack of other agency support (understandably – there was no blame expressed, it is just the situation we are in). What are we worried about/barriers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner agencies (OT's, Physiotherapists, etc) and other health professionals are not available to support due to COVID and there is a lack of availability of PA's. Accessing these services was cited as the biggest challenge the team are facing. Team morale is reduced ("exhausting" is a word that was used quite a bit during discussion) because of the need to keep apologising to the families. What needs to happen? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team needs support to remove barriers (although the barriers at the current time seem to be external rather than CEC policies or procedures). Frontline practitioners forum which flags issues to the Director of Childrens Services was praised in this respect as it has been helpful in getting things moving. 	<p><i>I am very pleased that the team were able to talk openly and honestly concerning the impact that the current pandemic is having on them, both personally and professionally, and the impact that it is having on the families that they are working with. This third lockdown does seem to have had greater impact across many aspects of both our personal and professional lives and as a senior management group we are constantly looking at how best to support our staff.</i></p> <p><i>I am grateful to the team for raising these issues with Councillor Jefferay, Councillor Saunders and through the Practitioner Forums, which I am glad to see are having a positive impact. It is worth highlighting some of the changes that are being brought about by this visit and the forums. We have received additional resources to enable us to recruit some temporary additional business support officers to work across the directorate to alleviate some of the additional administrative tasks that social workers are having to complete. The business support team manager is currently recruiting to these posts. We are currently recommissioning our Children's Management System, Liquid Logic and will be working directly with the delivery company and practitioners to iron out all of the systems issues that have been affecting social workers.</i></p>
	Support for teams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is working well? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New social worker starting next week. The speed at which the IT has been rolled out to address the COVID situation was welcomed. 	<p><i>The decrease in multi-agency partnership working, particularly by our colleagues in health, has been a significant issue on both a local and national level. The Chief Nurse for England recently wrote to all NHS Trusts advising that staff should not be</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are we worried about/barriers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team is right size for number of cases but the breadth of each case is increasing and there is an increase in admin. - There was concern raised that there is a low wave of mental health issues coming which will add pressure on the team. - IT can be a bit hit and miss in terms of connectivity – cause unknown, potentially home broadband connectivity. - Clear guidance on what the team's priorities are appears to be missing. What takes priority? Statutory visits? Finding school places? Health support? At the moment the team are trying to do everything rather than prioritising and delegating where possible. • What needs to happen? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The team believes that it would be extremely beneficial to have a family support worker within the team as some other councils do instead of going outside the team. - Admin support would relieve some of the additional admin burden on the social workers in taking minutes and uploading information onto the system. - SEN children are being managed using a spreadsheet. This could become quite cumbersome and may not be the most effective way to monitor. Investigation needed into what other councils use to manage (are there any proprietary software or databases?). - It was stated that some training on how to use teams and possibly dictation tools effectively for bigger meetings may be worthwhile and how minutes can be accurately recorded for meetings with a larger number of attendees (there seems to be permissions issues at the moment which prevent recording of the sessions (although it was recognised that some children may object to sessions being recorded)). - The team may benefit from sitting in one of the larger virtual planning meetings which are now well established or getting 	<p><i>redeployed outside of their current roles, for example occupational therapy and physiotherapists, unless it was essential to do so. We are therefore beginning to see a return to some face to face engagement from our health colleagues. This is an issue that we are and will continue to monitor through our senior management multi-agency forums and through our local Safeguarding Children's Board.</i></p> <p><i>I would just like to reiterate some of the findings made by Councillors Jefferay and Saunders. Throughout the entire pandemic, every single member of the service has worked above and beyond to ensure that they have continued to ensure the safety and stability of the families that they are working with. They are an absolute credit to social work as an entire profession, but especially to the residents of Cheshire East, who without their commitment would have experienced greater hardship than that that is already being experienced. I am proud of each and every one of them and once the pandemic is over would wish to advocate for some kind of recognition by way of thank you for the commitment that they have shown.</i></p>
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	<p>some lessons learned from Democratic Services who run those meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advice on priorities for the team members to allow them to prioritise their time. 	
	<p>Any other areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was also discussion about guilt felt by the social workers and other frontline staff not only because they cannot help the families as much as they would like, but also because it has a knock-on effect on their own families who may be being neglected. • Ensure that staff are getting the support and downtime needed to maintain their own relationships (and sanity). 	
	<p>Impact of Covid-19 on work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaccines starting to be delivered to team and PPE available. • Team have own bubbles and have bubble days to allow face-to-face time each week. • Families are experiencing significant uncertainty and it is affecting the wider family (parents and siblings) now, not just the child at the centre. • Many families lost peer group support when support groups shut down, although there are signs of them opening up again now. • This lockdown it seems that all SEN children who want to be in school are in school. • Video calling is working well for some children e.g. some autistic children who find face-to-face difficult. Useful tool to carry on using post-covid. • COVID impacted in that with everywhere being closed, there is nowhere for the PA's to take the children. In the summer it was more manageable as they could get some of the sensory stimulation they needed by going for a walk but in this lockdown it is very difficult due to the weather conditions. 	

	The social workers would suggest rooms (e.g. at doctors' surgeries) are made available for PA's to meet the children.	
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FORWARD PLAN FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 30TH JUNE 2021

This Plan sets out the key decisions which the Executive expects to take over the period indicated above. The Plan is rolled forward every month. A key decision is defined in the Council's Constitution as:

"an executive decision which is likely –

- (a) to result in the local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the local authority.

For the purpose of the above, savings or expenditure are "significant" if they are equal to or greater than £1M."

Reports relevant to key decisions, and any listed background documents, may be viewed at any of the Council's Offices/Information Centres 5 days before the decision is to be made. Copies of, or extracts from, these documents may be obtained on the payment of a reasonable fee from the following address:

Democratic Services Team
Cheshire East Council
c/o Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach Cheshire CW11 1HZ
Telephone: 01270 686472

However, it is not possible to make available for viewing or to supply copies of reports or documents the publication of which is restricted due to confidentiality of the information contained.

A record of each key decision is published within 6 days of it having been made. This is open for public inspection on the Council's Website, at Council Information Centres and at Council Offices.

This Forward Plan also provides notice that the Cabinet, or a Portfolio Holder, may decide to take a decision in private, that is, with the public and press excluded from the meeting. In accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, 28 clear days' notice must be given of any decision to be taken in private by the Cabinet or a Portfolio Holder, with provision for the public to make representations as to why the decision should be taken in public. In such cases, Members of the Council and the public may make representations in writing to the Democratic Services Team Manager using the contact details below. A further notice of intention to hold the meeting in private must then be published 5 clear days before the

meeting, setting out any representations received about why the meeting should be held in public, together with a response from the Leader and the Cabinet.

The list of decisions in this Forward Plan indicates whether a decision is to be taken in private, with the reason category for the decision being taken in private being drawn from the list overleaf:

1. Information relating to an individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including to authority holding that information)
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under the authority
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal and professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If you would like to make representations about any decision to be conducted in private at a meeting, please email:

Paul Mountford, Executive Democratic Services Officer
paul.mountford@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Such representations must be received at least 10 clear working days before the date of the Cabinet or Portfolio Holder meeting concerned.

Where it has not been possible to meet the 28 clear day rule for publication of notice of a key decision or intention to meet in private, the relevant notices will be published as soon as possible in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution.

The law and the Council's Constitution provide for urgent key decisions to be made. Any decision made in this way will be published in the same way.

Forward Plan

Key Decision and Private Non-Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
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Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 20/21-3 Flowerpot Junction Improvement Scheme	To approve procurement of works to improve Flowerpot Junction, utilising the NPIF allocation from DfT and local funding contributions from s106 contributions and council match funding. Authorise the preparation and making of a CPO relating to land required for the junction improvements where this cannot be acquired through negotiation, and delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure and Highways, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Transport to finalise the scheme details and enter into an agreement with the Council's appointed Highways Term Services to deliver the scheme.	Cabinet	9 Mar 2021			N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 20/21-7 Covid-19 - Update on Response and Recovery	<p>To receive an update report on the Council's response to Covid-19 and the Recovery Plan.</p> <p>To note the financial effects of Covid-19 on the Council, as regards additional expenditure and loss of income, and to consider the potential options for managing residual financial implications within the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy.</p> <p>An update report will be presented to each successive Cabinet meeting up to and including 4th May 2021.</p>	Cabinet	9 Mar 2021		Jane Burns, Executive Director of Corporate Services	N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 20/21-22 Housing Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Financial Assistance Policy	To approve the Housing Repairs and Adaptations for Vulnerable People Financial Assistance Policy 2021-2026, and to authorise Officers to take all necessary actions to implement the proposal.	Cabinet	9 Mar 2021		Karen Whitehead	N/A
CE 20/21-32 Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan 2021/22 to 2024/25	To approve the Council's Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan 2021/22 to 2024/25.	Cabinet	9 Mar 2021		Jacky Forster, Director of Education and 14-19 Skills	N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 20/21-35 Shareholder Committee Review of Council Owned Company Business Plans	The report provides endorsement from the ASDV Shareholder Committee for the 2021 Business Plans for Orbitas Bereavement Services Ltd, Transport Service Solutions Ltd and ANSA Environmental Services Ltd, and provides recommendation for the Portfolio Holder to consider alongside approving these business plans.	Deputy Leader of the Council	Not before 19th Mar 2021		Frank Jordan, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Place	

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 20/21-34 Article 4 Directions for Small Houses in Multiple Occupation	Decision to confirm three non-immediate Article 4 Directions, to come into effect on 1 November 2021, for the areas in Crewe around Nantwich Road, West Street and Hungerford Road, having considered the feedback from public consultation carried out between 19 October 2020 and 11 January 2021.	Portfolio Holder for Planning	Not before 31st Mar 2021		Claire Coombs	
CE 20/21-33 Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document	Approval is sought to publish the Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document and Consultation Statement for the purpose of seeking representations.	Portfolio Holder for Planning	Not before 31st Mar 2021		Claire Coombs	

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 20/21-26 Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD) Submission	To approve the submission of the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document to the Secretary of State for independent examination by an appointed Planning Inspector.	Cabinet	13 Apr 2021		Jeremy Owens	N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 20/21-28 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-25	To authorise Officers to consult formally on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-2025; and to delegate authority to the Director of Growth and Enterprise in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration to consider the results of the consultation and to approve the final version of the strategy.	Cabinet	13 Apr 2021		Karen Carsberg, Strategic Housing and Intelligence Manager	N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 20/21-29 Household Waste Recycling Centre New Contract Service Provision	The household waste recycling centre contract is due for renewal in 2023 and the open procurement process will start in 2021. This report will present the results of the public consultation carried out Nov 2020 – Jan 2021 to inform the procurement and will seek to authorise officers to take all necessary actions to implement the proposal.	Cabinet	13 Apr 2021		Ralph Kemp, Corporate Manager for Commissioning	N/A
CE 20/21-31 Updated Asset Transfer Policy	To approve a new Asset Transfer Policy and authorise the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration to vary the policy from time to time.	Cabinet	13 Apr 2021		Peter Skates	N/A

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 18/19-60 The Minerals and Waste Development Plan	To seek approval to consult on the first draft of the Minerals and Waste Development Plan.	Cabinet	4 May 2021		David Malcolm	N/A
CE 20/21-23 ASDV Review	To approve the recommendations within the report and authorise Officers to take all necessary actions to implement them.	Cabinet	4 May 2021		Richard Hibbert	Fully exempt - paras 3 and 4
CE 20/21-30 Update on the Beechmere Recovery Programme	To update Cabinet on progress relating to the reinstatement of Beechmere Extra Care Housing and the proposed remedial works for the remaining four 'Meres' and the impact this will have for the Council.	Cabinet	4 May 2021		Nichola Thompson, Director of Commissioning	Fully exempt - paras 3 & 5

Key Decision	Decisions to be Taken	Decision Maker	Expected Date of Decision	Proposed Consultation	How to make representation to the decision made	Private/ Confidential and paragraph number
CE 20/21-27 Crewe HS2 Hub Update	To approve preferred concept designs for the Crewe HS2 Hub Station scheme and supporting funding and financing strategy; and to authorise the progression of the work towards a planning application and to conclude funding and financing discussions with Government.	Highways and Transport Committee	July 2021		Hayley Kirkham	N/A

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Working for a brighter future together

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 22 March 2021

Report Title: Work Programme

Senior Officer: Ged Rowney, Interim Director of Children's Services

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. To review items in the work programme listed in the schedule attached, together with any other items suggested by committee members.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. To approve the work programme, subject to the agreement to add new items or delete items that no longer require any scrutiny activity.

3. Reason for Recommendation

- 3.1. It is good practice to regularly review the work programme and update it as required.

4. Background

- 4.1. The committee has responsibility for updating and approving its own work programme. Scrutiny liaison meetings – held between the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the committee, alongside the portfolio holders and key senior officers – ensure that there is continued awareness and discussion of upcoming policies, strategies and decisions within the committee's remit area.

5. Determining Which Items Should be Added to the Work Programme

- 5.1. When selecting potential topics, members should have regard to the Council's three year plan and to the criteria listed below, which should be considered to determine whether scrutiny activity is appropriate.

5.2. The following questions should be considered by the committee when determining whether to add new work programme items, or delete existing items:

- Does the issue fall within a corporate priority?
- Is the issue of key interest to the public?
- Does the matter relate to a poor or declining performing service for which there is no obvious explanation?
- Is there a pattern of budgetary overspends or underspends?
- Is it a matter raised by external audit management letters and or audit reports?
- Is there a high level of dissatisfaction with the service?

5.3. The committee should not add any items to its work programme (and should delete any existing items) that fall under any one of the following:

- The topic is already being addressed elsewhere by another body (i.e. this committee would be duplicating work)
- The matter is sub-judice
- Scrutiny would not add value to the matter
- The committee is unlikely to be able to conclude an investigation within a specified or required timescale

6. Implications of the Recommendations

6.1. There are no implications to legal or financial matters, equality, human resources, risk management, or for rural communities, children and young people or public health.

7. Ward Members Affected

7.1. All.

8. Access to Information

8.1. The background papers can be inspected by contacting the report author.

9. Contact Information

9.1. Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name: Joel Hammond-Gant

Job Title: Scrutiny Officer

Email: joel.hammond-gant@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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Date: **22.03.21**

Time: 1.30pm

Venue: Virtual
Meeting

The Committee considers a young persons story at the start of every meeting

<u>Item</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Portfolios</u>	<u>Suggested by</u>	<u>Scrutiny role</u>	<u>Corporate priorities</u>	<u>Date</u>
Update on Covid-19	To receive a standing update at the beginning of each committee meeting on Covid-19, it's impacts and how the council is responding to support children and young people in the borough.	Interim Director of Children's Services	Children and Families Public Health and Corporate Services	Committee	Scrutiny	People live well and for longer. A responsible effective and efficient organisation	Standing update until further notice
Children's Services Performance Scorecard – Quarter 3 (2020/21)	To give consideration to the Children & Families quarterly performance scorecard	Interim Director of Children's Services	Children and Families	Committee	Scrutiny	A responsible effective and efficient organisation.	22.03.21 (moved back from Jan 21)
Six-Monthly report of Member Frontline Visits	To review the Member Frontline Visits Report covering a six-month period.	Interim Director of Children's Services	Children and Families	Committee	Scrutiny	People have the life skills and education they need in order to thrive	22.03.21 (moved back from Jan 21)

<u>Item</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Lead Officer</u>	<u>Portfolios</u>	<u>Suggested by</u>	<u>Scrutiny role</u>	<u>Corporate priorities</u>	<u>Date</u>
Update on School Organisation and School Capital	To consider an update on School Organisation and School Capital in Cheshire East.	Interim Director of Children's Services	Children and Families	Committee	Scrutiny	A responsible effective and efficient organisation.	22.03.21
Update on SEND	To receive a six-monthly update on SEND.	Interim Director of Children's Services	Children and Families	Committee	Scrutiny	A responsible effective and efficient organisation.	22.03.21

Items to be passed on for consideration for the forthcoming service committee from May 2021:

- Children's Services Performance Scorecard – Quarter 4 (2020/21)
- Early Help Strategy (an update on the strategy post-Cabinet decision)
- Lifelong Learning (an overview of the impact of lifelong learning)
- Update on the Kickstart Programme (progress update)
- Integrated Front Door Update (progress update)