

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Children and Families Committee**
held on Wednesday, 6th October, 2021 at The Ballroom, Sandbach Town
Hall, High Street, Sandbach, CW11 1AX

PRESENT

Councillor K Flavell (Chair)
Councillor C Bulman (Vice-Chair)

Councillors M Addison, M Beanland, J Buckley, D Edwardes, S Handley,
G Hayes, I Macfarlane, M Simon (substitute) and L Smetham

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ali Stathers-Tracey, Director of Prevention and Early Help
Jacky Forster, Director of Education and 14 – 19 Skills
Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care
Shelley Brough, Head of Integrated Commissioning
Mark Bayley, Head of Achievement and Attainment
Deborah Nickson, Legal Team Manager (People) and Deputy Monitoring
Officer
Joanne Wilcox, Head of Financial Management
Josie Lloyd, Democratic Services Officer

15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Anderson, J
Saunders and L Smith. Councillor M Simon attended as a substitute.

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

17 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A typographical error was noted in the list of Members present. It was
agreed that 'C Clowes' would be corrected to 'J Clowes'.

Jacky Forster provided an update on the current Covid situation in schools
and the challenges arising from the high infection rates in school age
children, as well as giving assurances on the work being done to address
these challenges. The committee thanked the schools and all teams
involved.

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2021 be approved as a
correct record, subject to the above amendment.

18 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

Heidi Thurland, Head Teacher of Middlewich High School, and Kerry Kirkwood, CEO of the Sir John Brunner Foundation, attended the meeting and spoke in respect of item 8 School Organisation: Academisation of Schools: Middlewich High School to provide their support for the academisation of this school.

19 ALL AGE CARERS HUB AND STRATEGY

The committee considered the report which provided details of the journey so far for carers services in Cheshire East, the initial results of consultation and engagement, and the plans for further engagement and consultation for the Carers Strategy.

RESOLVED –

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Approve the draft carers strategy as outlined in Appendix 2 for the basis of consultation.
2. Following consultation of the strategy, note that the final version of the All Age Carers Strategy will be presented for approval to the Adults and Health Committee, and Children and Families Committee.
3. Approve the recommission of the All Age Carers Hub contract which ends in December 2022, with Cheshire West and Chester Local Authority, and Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group.
4. Delegates authority to the Director of Commissioning to award the jointly commissioned All Age Carers Hub contract.

20 SCHOOL ORGANISATION: ACADEMISATION OF SCHOOLS: MIDDLEWICH HIGH SCHOOL

The committee considered the report on the academisation of Middlewich High School which, due to the third-party interests in land which formed the school's site and the resulting land transactions, fell outside the officer delegations and required a Committee decision.

Concerns were raised about the length of the Underlease of Middlewich Leisure Centre and the risks this may present to both parties. It was agreed that further discussions regarding the Underlease would take place post-conversion with the Director, colleagues from the Place directorate and any other relevant parties.

RESOLVED –

That the committee:

1. Notes that Middlewich High School, King Edward Street, Middlewich CW10 9BU, will be converting to Academy status on or after 1 November 2021 as per the Department for Education (DfE) Academy Order (see Appendix 1).
2. Notes that Middlewich High School will become part of the Multi Academy Trust (MAT), The Sir John Brunner Foundation.
3. Authorises the completion of a Commercial Transfer Agreement to the Sir John Brunner Foundation relating to the transfer of all staff under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006, and assets to the Foundation.
4. Authorises the Executive Director of Children's Services in consultation with Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer to take all steps necessary to agree and execute the Commercial Transfer Agreement.
5. Authorises the grant and completion of all transactions in relation to land, facilities or shared use agreements as are necessary in order to facilitate the conversion, including (but not limited to) the grant and completion of a lease to the Sir John Brunner Foundation for 125 years substantially in the form of the model lease produced by DfE at a peppercorn rent. The school site is identifiable as shown on the accompanying redline plan (see Appendix 2).
6. Authorise the Executive Director of Place and Chief Finance Officer to take the steps necessary to agree the required transactions in relation to land, facilities or shared use agreements to enable the Transfer, in line with the agreed heads of terms.
7. Notes that the Chief Finance Officer has authority to take all steps necessary to agree, transfer and adjust relevant budgets and allocate balances in accordance with Department for Education Guidance.

21 UPDATE REPORT ON THE 2021/2022 ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS THE ILACS RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee received the report which provided an update on progress against the recommendations from the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) in November 2019. The report focused on the progress made since the action plan was updated in April 2021 under the leadership of the newly appointed Director of Children's Social Care.

RESOLVED –

That the report be received and noted.

22 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1 2021-22

Councillor Addison left the meeting.

The committee received the report which set out the impact of COVID-19 on performance, the arrangements that were in place during this time and an overview of performance across the Children and Families service for quarter 1 of 2020-21.

RESOLVED –

That the Children and Families Committee notes the performance of Children's Services for quarter 1.

The committee adjourned for a short break.

Councillor Bulman thanked Jacky Forster and her team on the transformation of the Educational Psychology service.

23 SCHOOL ORGANISATION: ACADEMISATION OF SCHOOLS: FORWARD PLAN

The committee received the report which summarised recently converted schools and those in process to ensure Committee Members were fully briefed on the status of ongoing conversions.

RESOLVED –

That the report be received and noted.

24 CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

The committee received the report which detailed the progress and achievements over 2020-21 against the five pledges the Council made to cared for children and care leavers in the Corporate Parenting Strategy. The report also set out the Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Committee and the priorities for 2021-22.

RESOLVED –

That the report be received and noted.

25 UPDATE ON AFGHAN FAMILIES RESETTLEMENT SCHEME

The committee received a presentation which provided an update on the Afghan Families Resettlement Scheme. It was noted that the Home Office had requested that the location of the accommodation being used was not disclosed.

The committee thanked the teams involved for their work on this scheme.

RESOLVED –

That the update be received and noted.

26 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the committee's work programme.

RESOLVED –

That the work programme be received and noted.

The meeting commenced at 14:00 and concluded at 16:50

Councillor K Flavell (Chair)