

Children and Families Committee

Agenda

Date: Monday, 11th July, 2022
Time: 2.00 pm
Venue: Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road,
Sandbach CW11 1HZ

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 top of each report.

It should be noted that Part 1 items of Cheshire East Council decision making 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**

To note any apologies for absence from Members.

2. **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.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 3 - 10)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 May 2022.

For requests for further information

Contact: Josie Lloyd

Tel: 01270 686 466

E-Mail: josie.lloyd@cheshireeast.gov.uk with any apologies

4. **Public Speaking/Open Session**

In accordance with paragraph 2.24 of the Council's Committee Procedure Rules and Appendix on Public Speaking, set out in the [Constitution](#), a total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to put questions to the committee on any matter relating to this agenda. Each member of the public will be allowed up to two minutes each to speak, and the Chair will have discretion to vary this where they consider it appropriate.

Members of the public wishing to speak are required to provide notice of this at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting.

5. **Allocation of Additional High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant Funding** (Pages 11 - 24)

To approve the use of the additional High Needs Grant provided by the department for Education.

6. **'Opportunity for All: Strong schools with great teachers for your child' The Education White Paper and Development of Local Authority-initiated Trusts** (Pages 25 - 38)

To consider if Cheshire East want to create local authority multi-academy trusts in response to the White Paper 'Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child'

7. **Development of Family Hubs in Cheshire East** (Pages 39 - 48)

To receive a report on the Family Hub Bid.

8. **Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2022-26** (Pages 49 - 92)

To receive the Cared for Children and Care Leaver Strategy.

9. **Children and Young People's Plan 2022-26** (Pages 93 - 130)

To approve the Children and Young People's Plan.

10. **Schools Catering Service: External Review** (Pages 131 - 148)

To receive the specification for the school catering review.

11. **School Organisation: Academisation of Schools: Forward Plan** (Pages 149 - 154)

To receive an update on the forward plan for academisation.

12. **Work Programme** (Pages 155 - 158)

To consider the work programme and determine any required amendments.

Membership: Councillors M Addison, L Anderson, M Beanland, J Buckley, C Bulman (Vice-Chair), D Edwardes, K Flavell (Chair), S Handley, G Hayes, I Macfarlane, J Saunders, L Smetham and L Smith

This page is intentionally left blank

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Children and Families Committee**
held on Monday, 23rd May, 2022 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

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

Councillors M Addison, L Anderson, M Beanland, J Buckley, S Handley,
G Hayes, J Saunders, L Smetham, J Nicholas, A Critchley and A Moran

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's Services
Jacky Forster, Director of Education and 14-19 Skills
Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care
Mandy Withington, Legal Team Manager
Steve Reading, Principal Accountant
Nichola Thompson, Director of Commissioning
Dave Leadbetter, Head of Children's Commissioning
Dan Coyne, Community Development Manager
Josie Lloyd, Democratic Services Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Edwardes,
Councillor Macfarlane and Councillor Smith. Councillor Nicholas,
Councillor Moran and Councillor Critchley attended as substitutes.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

A query was raised regarding a written response on the annual cost of spot purchasing for care at home services which had been provided following the previous meeting. It was agreed that a further response would be provided to clarify the figure of actual annual spend.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2022 be approved as a correct record.

4 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

Lisa Hodgkinson, Head Teacher of Springfield School, and Gemma Bailey, Head Teacher of Oakfield Lodge School attended the meeting and spoke at item 7 and item 8 respectively.

5 UKRAINIAN REFUGEE POSITION IN CHESHIRE EAST (VERBAL UPDATE)

The committee received a verbal update on the Ukrainian refugee position in Cheshire East including the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

It was agreed that a written response would be provided regarding the impact of the scheme on school places.

A suggestion was made for officers to look into whether current hosts for the Homes for Ukraine scheme could be approached at a later date as potential foster carers.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

6 COVID-19 SCHOOLS UPDATE (VERBAL UPDATE)

There had been a significant fall in reported case figures which reflected the current position of testing no longer being a requirement. Nationally, all statutory guidance for schools had been removed. From June, the additional Covid support from the Council would also be removed. Schools maintained their mechanism for reporting any critical incidents to the Council and enhanced guidance had been issued. The Education Recovery Group continued to meet every two weeks and were looking ahead to managing attendance, wellbeing, the curriculum, SEND and behaviour. The vaccination programme in children was progressing well.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

7 PROPOSED EXPANSION OF SPRINGFIELD SCHOOL, CREWE

Lisa Hodgkinson, Head Teacher of Springfield School, attended the meeting to speak in support of the proposed expansion.

The committee received the report which sought approval for the proposed expansion scheme to increase capacity at Springfield School. This was in line with the strategy to increase local specialist provisions as set out in the high needs management plan.

A query was raised regarding the Children and Families Committee having sight of the planning permission. It was noted that planning applications were not within the remit of the committee but that Members would be able to attend the Planning Committee and speak on this application if they wished. It was agreed that the committee would be notified when this application had been published in the public domain.

A written response was requested from Planning colleagues on current delays and any risks this may pose to this expansion.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Approve the proposed expansion of Springfield School from 170 to 250 places for implementation in September 2023 having given due consideration to the responses to the statutory public notice and consultation process without modification.
2. Provide authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services to procure and award a construction contract for the provision of additional places at Springfield School (Crewe), inclusive of any other agreements associated with or ancillary to the contract.

8 SCHOOL ORGANISATION: ACADEMISATION OF SCHOOLS: OAKFIELD LODGE SCHOOL (PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT)

Gemma Bailey, Head Teacher of Oakfield Lodge School, attended to speak in support of this item.

The committee received the report which set out the arrangements in place to support the intended academy conversion of Oakfield Lodge School to become part of the Manor Hall Academy Trust.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Supports that Oakfield Lodge School, Warmingham Road, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 4PP will convert to academy status on or after 1 September 2022 as per the Department for Education (DfE) Academy Order dated 16 September 2021 (see appendix 2).
2. Supports that Oakfield Lodge School joins the Manor Hall Academy Trust which currently consists of 12 schools.
3. Authorises the completion of a Commercial Transfer Agreement to the Manor Hall Academy Trust and the management committee of Oakfield Lodge School relating to the transfer of all staff under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006, and assets to the trust.
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 as are necessary in order to facilitate the conversion, including (but not limited to) the grant and completion of a lease to the Manor Hall Academy Trust for 125 years substantially in the form of the model lease produced by DfE at a peppercorn rent.
6. Authorises the Executive Director of Place and Director of Finance and Customer Services to take the steps necessary to agree the required transactions in relation to land 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.

The meeting adjourned for a short break at 15.50.

Councillor Addison left the meeting at this point and did not return.

9 SCHOOL ORGANISATION: ACADEMISATION OF SCHOOLS: FORWARD PLAN

The committee received the report which set out those schools across the borough who were seeking to move to academy status and join a multi-academy trust. The forward plan indicated where committee approval is required or where it will be progressed through delegated authority.

A query was raised regarding the Best4Business programme and issues for academy conversions. The committee were advised that general queries should be directed to the Corporate Policy Committee who had oversight of this programme but assurances were given that work was ongoing with payroll to ensure they were aware of future conversions to mitigate any issues with the transfer of staff.

A further query was raised in relation to the Best4Business programme in schools and questions that a Member had received recently regarding the transfer of contracts for long serving staff. It had been reported that there was an issue with locating original, paper contracts from when schools were part of the Cheshire East HR system. It was agreed that this would be looked into and a written response would be provided.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

10 PARTICIPATION IN DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION, DELIVERING BETTER VALUE PROGRAMME

The committee received the report which provided an overview of the Department for Education Delivering Better Value programme for which Cheshire East had received an invitation.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

11 REVIEW OF TRAVEL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The committee received the report which outlined the independent review being carried out to consider travel support for children and young people.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

12 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BUDGETS 2022/23

The committee received the report which determined the allocation of the approved budgets for 2022/23 to the Children and Families Committee.

A concern was raised that some schools appeared to be accessing the Educational Psychologist traded service while others were not and that the message needed to be publicised consistently. It was agreed that a written response would be provided.

RESOLVED (by majority):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Note the decision of the Finance Sub-Committee to allocate the approved capital and revenue budgets, related policy proposals and earmarked reserves to the Children and Families Committee, as set out in Appendix A.
2. Note the supplementary estimates already approved as set out in Appendix B, Tables A and B.
3. Approve the supplementary estimates set out in Appendix B, Table C and Table D.
4. Recommend to Council to approve the supplementary estimates set out in Appendix B, Table E.
5. Note the financial reporting timetable as set out in Appendix C.

13 CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONING

The committee received the report which provided an overview of the principles, approach and reach of Children's Commissioning activity.

A query was raised regarding the funding for Crewe nurseries, outlined on page 126 of the agenda, and what this funding provides in addition to standard early years funding and pupil premium, as well as the impact on these specific communities. It was agreed that a written response would be provided.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

14 OFSTED ACTION PLAN AND PROGRESS UPDATE

Councillor Nicholas left the meeting during this item and did not return.

The committee received the report which provided an update on progress on the recommendations from the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) in November 2019.

A request was made for the red, amber and green ratings against the progress updates to include further detail on how closely the targets are being met. It was agreed that the Director of Children's Social Care would look at strengthening this for future reports.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

15 APPOINTMENTS TO SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS, PANELS, BOARDS AND JOINT COMMITTEES

The committee received the report which sought approval to appoint members to the Corporate Parenting Committee, the Local Authority School Governor Nominations Sub-committee and to nominate a member to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Appoints members to the Corporate Parenting Committee as follows:
Con:4; Lab:4; Ind:3; Lib Dem:1; R. Ind:0; NGI:0
2. Appoints the Local Authority School Governor Appointments Sub-Committee with a membership of 5; the proportionalities being as follows:
Con:2; Lab:2; Ind:1; Lib Dem:0; R. Ind:0; NGI:0

3. Nominates one member to the Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board
4. Agrees that the names of Members appointed to them be submitted to the Head of Democratic Services and Governance.

16 WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor Buckley and Councillor Handley left the meeting during this item and did not return.

It was agreed that officers would give consideration to the September meeting, as this appeared to be a particularly busy agenda, and that this may involve extending the length of the meeting slightly.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

17 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Local Authority School Governor Nomination Sub-Committee meeting held on 24 November 2021 be noted.

The meeting commenced at 14.00 and concluded at 16.55

Councillor K Flavell (Chair)

This page is intentionally left blank



Working for a brighter future together

Date of Meeting:	11 July 2022
Report Title:	Allocation of additional High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant Funding
Report of:	Deborah Woodcock, Director of Childrens Services
Report Reference No:	CF/53/22- 23
Ward(s) Affected:	All wards

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1.** To approve the use of £1.8 million additional High Needs Grant provided by the Department for Education (DfE).

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1.** This paper sets out proposals for allocating the additional High Needs Grant of £1.8m.
- 2.2.** It is recommended that an element of the additional funding of £755,249 is centrally retained to contribute to the current overspend in year, £670,000 is invested in developing further mitigations to achieve sustainability in the future and £413,326 is allocated to settings.
- 2.3.** Details of the proposed use of the funding is provided in paragraphs 6.14 – 6.17.
- 2.4.** This enables committee to ensure that we have applied the DfE guidance to consider some increase in funding to settings but also recognises that we have already committed in year overspend on High Needs Budget by £16.3m as a result of the 2021/22 £25m overspend rolling forward and the pressures making that up continuing.
- 2.5.** Schools forum have been consulted on a draft set of proposals at their meeting of 16 June 2022 and made the following comments:
- 2.5.1.** They understood the high needs pressures being experienced and the reasons the council had been allocated additional high needs funding.

- 2.5.2.** There was support for the overall approach and in particular the invest to save proposals.
- 2.5.3.** However, they were concerned at plans for a 1% increase or one-off changes.
- 2.6.** The proposals being presented to committee have been updated to take account of their views.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1.** Committee to approve the allocation of the additional high needs funding as set out in 3.1.1 – 3.1.4 below.
 - 3.1.1.** Allocate £237,056 to maintained special schools, academy special schools, free special schools and the pupil referral unit (PRU).
 - 3.1.2.** Increase the budget for top up funding for education placements in independent special schools, non-maintained special schools, further education colleges and other local authority special schools by £176,270.
 - 3.1.3.** £670,000 to be used for additional support and invest to save proposals.
 - 3.1.4.** £755,249 to contribute to the current cost pressures of educational placements for our young people, both new and historic placements.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1.** Full Council has already been sighted on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations for 2022/23 on 24 February 2022, Item number 65: Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-2026, Appendix C (Page 76).
- 4.2.** The additional High Needs funding of £1.8m, which this report refers to is in addition to the DSG allocations previously reported.
- 4.3.** The council's overall High Needs DSG allocation for 2022/23 is made up of two elements:
 - 4.3.1.** The standard high needs block of £48.8m.
 - 4.3.2.** The additional high needs allocation of £1.8m.
- 4.4.** The autumn 2021 spending review confirmed an extra £1.6 billion of funding for schools and high needs, for the 2022/23 financial year, above the previous settlement for that year.
- 4.5.** This extra funding recognises the additional costs that local authorities and schools will face in the coming year, which were not foreseen when the

original high needs block allocations were calculated, including the Health and Social Care Levy, that will be applied through increased national insurance contributions from employers. The additional funding also takes into account that colleges and other providers offering extra hours of study for students with high needs may require extra high needs top – up funding to support those students.

- 4.6.** In the 2022/23 financial year, schools will be allocated £1.2 billion of this additional funding. This funding will be allocated through the schools supplementary grant 2022/23.
- 4.7.** School-level allocations will be published by the DfE in May 2022 and will show the total funding allocated for the 2022/23 financial year for each applicable phase of provision. Conditions of grant will be published alongside the school-level allocations.
- 4.8.** Funding to mainstream schools will be passported to these schools via the local authority for maintained and directly for academies and free schools. Cheshire East Council's allocation for the schools supplementary grant is £7.9 million.
- 4.9.** In addition to the schools supplementary grant, local authorities have been allocated £325 million additional high needs funding for 2022/23. This is on top of the dedicated schools grant high needs block allocations calculated under the national funding formula.
- 4.10.** Maintained special schools, special academies, pupil referral units and alternative provision academies are funded differently from mainstream schools, with the majority of their funding coming from the high needs block of the DSG.
- 4.11.** The differences in funding, and costs, for these schools mean that nationally setting supplementary per-pupil funding rates, as has been applied for the supplementary grant for mainstream schools, was not considered appropriate by the DfE.
- 4.12.** It is therefore for local authorities to decide how to allocate the additional funding to these schools, with the same flexibilities as they must deploy to the main DSG allocation of high needs funding.
- 4.13.** Paragraph 17 of the High needs funding: 2022 to 2023 operational guidance states that special schools should discuss with their local authority any increases as part of the top-up funding paid from authorities' high needs budgets.
- 4.14.** Nationally, the additional funding for high needs is an increase of 4% to the high needs' allocations announced in July 2021. It is expected, local authorities should be able to afford some increase to their top-up funding,

where that is required to meet the cost increases that schools and colleges are facing.

- 4.15. Cheshire East Council's additional high needs funding is £1,838,575.
- 4.16. Cheshire East Council is already committing approximately £16.3m more than the budget available from the DfE. When combined with the £25.7m brought forward deficit the pressure for 2022/23 is forecast at £42m.
- 4.17. This report details the recommendations for the use of the additional high needs funding.

5. Other Options Considered

- 5.1. Do nothing - centrally retain all the grant and offset against the current deficit position.
- 5.2. Increase all top up funding/rates to all providers by 4%.
- 5.3. The following tables sets out the impact and risks of each option

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing – centrally retain whole of the additional funding	£1.8 million will be offset against the deficit position	Relationships with schools and academies will weaken. Schools will not feel supported by the local authority. Schools will be at risk of reporting a deficit balance due to increased costs which they are facing Challenge from DfE as does not fulfil their guidance
Increase all top up funding / rates for all schools (local authority special schools (free, maintained, academy), Independent Special Schools, Non-maintained Special Schools and Colleges	Schools see an increase in their funding, which is helping towards their increased costs. Current top up rates across settings are based on historic allocations with some schools paid considerably more than others. This would not address the differences and would commit the local authority to these increased rates.	Increasing all schools top up funding rates is making a commitment for now and future years. This will not be sustainable going forward given the DSG deficit position of £25.7m (at 31 March 2022). The Delivering Better Value Programme will require us to reduce costs to balance our budget.

6. Background

- 6.1.** Many local authorities are experiencing financial pressures from expenditure on pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) significantly exceeding the funding provided via the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) high needs block.
- 6.2.** The high needs block is one strand of the dedicated schools grant (DSG). This element of the DSG is primarily spent on securing suitable school and post 16 provision for children and young people in line with the 2014 code of practice.
- 6.3.** The council has a legal duty to meet the needs of children with SEND under the Children and Families Act 2014.
- 6.4.** The council is facing increasing levels of pressure from expenditure on pupils with SEND. This exceeds the DfE's funding allocations and has led to the council's DSG reserve being in a deficit position of £25.7m as at 31 March 2022.
- 6.5.** Against the above context the local authority needs to make decisions on how to allocate and additional £1.8M High Needs Grant which has been allocated.
- 6.6.** It is important to recognise the additional costs schools are facing and to take note of Paragraph 17 of the High needs funding: 2022 to 2023 operational guidance issued by the Department for Education on how the additional funding may be used, which states "it is expected, local authorities should be able to afford some increase to their top-up funding, where that is required to meet the cost increases that schools and colleges are facing".
- 6.7.** The council already has a significant deficit and whilst a proactive approach has already been adopted through the high needs management plan which was approved by Cabinet in March 2021 this still forecasts a significant high Needs deficit.
- 6.8.** The DSG reserve is currently reporting a £25.7 million deficit position as at March 2022. Although there have been increases to the high needs element of the DSG, they have not been enough to keep up with the increase in demand.
- 6.9.** Cheshire East has been invited to be part of the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme that was announced by the DfE in February 2022. The DBV programme is designed to provide dedicated support and funding to help 55 local authorities with substantial deficit issues in their high needs block of the DSG to reform their high needs systems, with the aim to put more local authorities on a more sustainable footing so that they are better placed to respond to the forthcoming special educational needs and / or disabilities (SEND) reforms.

- 6.10.** Any increases in rates will be locked into future allocations and therefore the committee needs to be aware that any increase will create ongoing commitments and pressure to the already significant overspend. It is therefore recommended that an element of the additional funding of £755,249 is centrally retained to contribute to the current overspend in year, £670,000 is invested in developing further mitigations to achieve sustainability in the future and £413,326 is allocated to settings.
- 6.11.** The investment proposals are longer term mitigations which will be feed in to the DSG Management Plan. An update of the plan is scheduled for committee in September 2022. We need to gain pace on addressing the deficit, the additional funding enables us to invest now to reduce further pressures.
- 6.12.** The intended use of the additional high needs funding is as follows:
- 6.12.1.** £237,056 / 12.9% to be directly allocated to local special schools and the PRU.
 - 6.12.2.** £176,270 / 9.6% to be allocated to the current budget for independent placements, non-maintained special schools, further education colleges and other local authority special schools.
 - 6.12.3.** £670,000 / 36.4% to be invested in further mitigations within the DSG management plan.
 - 6.12.4.** £755,249 / 41.1% to help reduce the current pressures on the deficit position.
- 6.13.** The following paragraphs set out further information for each of the above proposed allocations.
- 6.14. Allocate £237,056 direct to maintained special schools, academy special schools and free special schools and PRU**
- 6.14.1.** £69,408 to be allocated to facilitate a permanent increase to the high needs top up rate by 2% for two of our lowest funded special schools, Park Lane Special School and Springfield Special School, resulting in an increase from £12,042 to £12,283 top up per pupil.

It should be noted that both schools are expanding, therefore the cost will increase year on year as the expansions are completed. The additional cost of increased places at both of the schools has been accounted for within the DSG Management Plan.
 - 6.14.2.** The table below details the current top up funding rates in Cheshire East special schools:

Name of School	Current Top Up Funding Rate	Proposed Top Up Funding Rate
Springfield Community Special School	£12,042	£12,283
Park Lane Special School	£12,042	£12,283
Adelaide Special School	£17,588	£17,588 remain the same
Adelaide Heath Special School	£17,588	£17,588 remain the same
Axis Academy – KS1/2	£14,250	£14,250 remain the same
Axis Academy – KS3	£14,500	£14,500 remain the same
Axis Academy – KS4	£15,000	£15,000 remain the same
NAS Church Lawton Special School – Standard Pre 16	£26,094	£26,094 remain the same
NAS Church Lawton Special School – Enhanced Pre 16	£40,813	£40,813 remain the same
NAS Church Lawton Special School – Standard Post 16	£39,350	£39,350 remain the same
NAS Church Lawton Special School – Enhanced Post 16	£53,855	£53,855 remain the same

6.14.3. The table below details the cost of the overall increase of top up funding for both Springfield Special School and Park Lane Special School.

Special school	Number on roll: Oct21 census data (CEC residents)	Current Top up funding rate	Proposed top up funding rate	Increase	Overall increase based on number on roll: Oct 21 census data
Springfield Special School	193	£12,042	£12,283	£241	£46,513
Park Lane Special School	95	£12,042	£12,283	£241	£22,895
Total					£69,408

6.14.4. £152,288 to facilitate a lump sum payment to all Cheshire East special schools. This is not a permanent increase to their current high needs top up funding rate. The lump sum represents 2% of their current total top up funding committed for 1 year only.

6.14.5. The table below details the lump sum payment to each school.

Special school	Payment will be based on number on roll at Oct21 census data (CEC residents)	2% increase on total top up funding based on number on roll: Oct 21 census data
Springfield Special School	193	£46,513
Park Lane Special School	95	£22,895
Adelaide Special School	77	£24,924
Adelaide Heath Special School	49	£17,248
Axis Academy	44	£12,820
NAS Church Lawton Special School	47	£27,888
Total		£152,288

6.14.6. £15,360 to facilitate a lump sum payment to Oakfield Lodge School (PRU). This is not a permanent increase to their current high needs top up funding rate. The lump sum represents 2% of their current top up funding rate for the total number of places commissioned.

6.14.7. The table below details the lump sum payment to the PRU.

Pupil Referral Unit	Number of Places	2% increase on total top up funding based on total number of places
Oakfield Lodge	60	£15,360

6.15. Increase the budget for top up funding for education placements in Independent Special Schools, Non-maintained Special Schools, Further Education Colleges and other Local Authority Special Schools by £176,270.

6.15.1. The budget currently stands at £22.6 million. To increase the budget to help to elevate in year pressures. This will not be an automatic increase to rates but enable the service to consider payments in line with the DfE guidance.

6.15.2. We have informed independent schools that fee increases are not being accepted, however there may be the need for some exceptions based on the needs of individual children and young people. For example, we do not have control over other local authority special school top up funding rates.

6.16. £670,000 to be used for Additional Support and Invest to Save Proposals

6.16.1. £60,000 support for increased demand in our children who are Electively Educated at Home (EHE) and Educated Other Than at School (EOTAS)

6.16.2. £110,000 support in Specialist Services to meet the needs of children and young people

6.16.3. £500,000 to support pupils who have a SEN Support Plan with early intervention as proposed in the SEND green paper.

6.17. £755,249 to contribute to the current cost pressures of educational placements for our young people both new and historic placements.

6.17.1. This recognises that this council has already committed funding above its DfE allocation. The proposals outlined above fulfil the DfE guidance to consider increases to top-up funding.

7. Consultation and Engagement

- 7.1.** Schools forum have been consulted on a draft set of proposals at their meeting on 16 June 2022, at this point we were only considering a 1% lump sum payment to special schools and based on there feedback changes were made to the proposals now presented to committee. The feedback from Schools Forum is summarised as:
- 7.1.1.** They understood the high needs pressures being experienced and the reasons the council had been allocated additional high needs funding.
 - 7.1.2.** There was support for the overall approach and in particular the invest to save proposals and the need to offset the deficit with a proportion of the budget.
 - 7.1.3.** There were some concerns at the proposed 1% increase one off lump sum to special schools. (This has subsequently been increased to 2% with less held back in the independent and out of borough allocation)
- 7.2.** The proposals being presented to committee have been updated to take account of their views.

8. Implications

8.1. Legal

- 8.1.1.** The Secretary of State has power to provide 'financial assistance' for educational purposes under sections 14-18 of the Education Act 2002.
- 8.1.2.** The local authority currently receives funding for schools through the dedicated schools grant. The DSG is in 'four blocks' for different purposes one of which is the High Needs Block. The local authority has the statutory responsibility under the Schools and Early Years Finance Regulations for allocating this funding to schools and must consult with the Schools Forum and must have regard to DfE guidance: The national funding formulae for schools and high needs 2022 -2023 and early years funding 2022/23 as well as all additional relevant guidance including Guidance Schools Supplementary grant 2022 to 2023 :methodology (updated 25 May 2022) , Guidance Dedicated schools grant (DSG); 2022 to 2023 and High needs funding: 2022 to 2023 operational guidance.

8.2. Finance

- 8.2.1.** The council's 2022/23 High Needs DSG allocation is made up of two elements:
- 8.2.2.** The standard high needs block of £48m.
- 8.2.3.** The supplementary high needs allocation of £1.8m.

- 8.2.4.** The council is able to determine how that funding is used to meet the needs of children with SEND and most of the allocation is used on providing placements for children with and EHCP in settings with the remainder used for associated support functions such as the autism service in line with DfE guidance.
- 8.2.5.** The £1.8m has been announced separately and local authorities allowed to determine its use.
- 8.2.6.** One key issue facing the council is the current and predicted DSG Reserve deficit arising from high needs demand exceeding funding. This is forecast at £25.7m deficit as at 31st March 2022. This is being managed on the council's balance sheet through a temporary override introduced by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- 8.2.7.** Given the uncertainty of the duration of the override and the potential implications of its removal the council needs to consider all options to reduce the deficit DSG reserve to manageable levels. This could be through invest to save type measures or direct use of any additional funding.
- 8.2.8.** The DfE have launched a Delivering Better Value Programme to help support local authorities to manage their high needs deficits and Cheshire East is expected to join that programme in 2022.

8.3. Policy

- 8.3.1.** The SEND Code of Practice sets out the statutory guidelines and policy for SEND. The SEND Review: Right support, right place, right time sets out proposed changes to policy which are open for consultation until 22 July 2022.
- 8.3.2.** This statutory code contains details of the legal requirements that the local authority, health bodies, schools and colleges must follow without exception to provide for those with special educational needs under part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

The statutory duties include:

- the need to undertake a needs assessment where a child may have additional needs,
- to issue an education, health and care plan within 20 weeks where assessment provides evidence this is required to meet the assessed needs.
- the local authority must then secure an appropriate school place and must consult with parental preference.

8.4. Equality

- 8.4.1.** The SEND Code of Practice looks to ensure the assessed additional needs of children with special education needs are provided for to

enable them to reach agreed outcomes and therefore address inequality in outcomes.

8.5. Human Resources

- 8.5.1. There are no direct implications for human resources.

8.6. Risk Management

- 8.6.1. Despite our comprehensive current DSG management plan we are still forecasting a significant deficit. External support and access to evidence-based practice may help us to reduce this forecast further through additional capacity and invest to save funding.
- 8.6.2. Committee needs to consider all options to reduce the deficit DSG reserve to manageable levels. This could be through invest to save type measures or direct use of any additional funding to off-set the deficit.
- 8.6.3. If the committee does not support some increase in funding to education settings there could be reputational risk and relationships with setting could be negatively impacted.

8.7. Rural Communities

- 8.7.1. There are no direct implications for rural communities.

8.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

- 8.8.1. It is essential that the council makes best use of resources to ensure that children and young people receive the services they need and must be provided.
- 8.8.2. The council has approved its Children's Vision which contains a priority to support children with additional needs to achieve their aspirations.

8.9. Public Health

- 8.9.1. There are no direct implications for public health.

8.10. Climate Change

- 8.10.1. The mitigations in our DSG management plans that will have the greatest impact on reducing the deficit is the creation of additional local provision, whether that be through enhanced provision in mainstream or additional specialist schools.

Mitigations include proposals to increase local provision and therefore reduce the transport commitments and therefore emissions.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Jacky Forster, Director of Education and Skills.
Background Papers:	<p>High Needs Funding: The following link should take you to the guidance for supplementary funding (paragraph 14)</p> <p>High needs funding: 2022 to 2023 operational guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>SEND Green Paper: The following link should take you to the full report and consultation response document</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/send-review-right-support-right-place-right-time</p> <p>SEND Green Paper: The following link should take you to the summary document</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-and-ap-green-paper-responding-to-the-consultation/summary-of-the-send-review-right-support-right-place-right-time</p> <p>DSG Management Plan Cabinet Report from March 2021: The following link should take you to the report</p> <p>The Council's DSG Management Plan that was approved by Cabinet in March 2021 as item 95.</p> <p>Participation in department for Education, Delivering Better Value Programme: The following link should take you to the report:</p> <p>Decision report template (cheshireeast.gov.uk)</p> <p>Schools Forum Papers from 16 June 2022 – please see page 37:</p>

	https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/schools/schools-forum/2022-docs/2022-06-16-sf-meeting-agenda-and-papers.pdf
--	---

This page is intentionally left blank



Working for a brighter future together

Children and Families Committee

Date of Meeting:	11 July 2022
Report Title:	'Opportunity for All: Strong schools with great teachers for your child', The Education White Paper and development of local authority-initiated trusts.
Report of:	Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's Services
Report Reference No:	CF/11/22- 23
Ward(s) Affected:	All Wards

Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report sets out the key aspects of the recent White Paper 'Opportunity for All: Strong schools with great teachers for your child'. The report seeks approval to register interest to be part of an initial 'test and learn' pilot programme.
- 1.2 Depending upon feedback on our registration of interest from the Regional Schools Commissioner, a full options appraisal would be generated including delivery models, benefits and risks which will then need to be considered by the committee. Such considerations will need to be taken ahead of any decision to progress and actually initiate a local authority multi academy trust.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report outlines the new policies announced in the white paper which are set out in four chapters as below:

Chapter 1 An excellent teacher for every child.

Chapter 2 Delivering high standards of curriculum, behaviour, and attendance.

Chapter 3 Target support for every child who needs it.

Chapter 4 A stronger and fairer system.

- 2.2 The Government has already set a target in its levelling up paper for 90 per cent of children by 2030 to leave primary school with the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, up from 65 per cent currently.

The white paper now sets out a new “ambition” to increase the national GCSE average grade in both English language and in maths from 4.5 in 2019, to 5 by 2030.

- 2.3 The key implications for councils are set out as follows

- 2.3.1 Councils will get “backstop powers” to force trusts to admit children, and to object to schools’ published admissions numbers. They will take responsibility for in-year admissions, while admissions faces a “new statutory framework” to put children’s needs first and reform over-subscription rules.
- 2.3.2 Councils will be able to launch multi academy trusts (MATs), but the focus will be “where too few strong trusts exist”. The minister will have powers to mass convert all council’s schools at their request.
- 2.3.3 A new system of proactive assurance with Local Safeguarding Partnerships commissioning safeguarding audits every three years. This will “help ensure that all schools’ policies are consistent with local safeguarding arrangements and the academy trust standards”.
- 2.4 An overview is provided on the current maintained infrastructure, initial informal discussions that have taken place and proposed arrangements for both an internal working group and collaborative working with clusters of maintained schools to develop proposals further.

3. Recommendations

That the committee:

- 3.1 Notes the new policies in the white paper and in particular the implications for councils.
- 3.2. Provides support to explore the option of local authority-initiated trusts as outlined in the white paper through discussions with the Regional Schools Commissioner and our maintained schools to shape the possible delivery model.
- 3.3 To agree to submitting a ‘Registration of Interest’ to establish a new trust(s) which needs to be submitted by 31 July 2022. Proposals developed on the

delivery model of local authority-initiated trusts will be brought back to a future committee for approval.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The white paper has stated that all schools should be part of a family of schools within a trust structure by 2030. As at Spring 2022 census, Cheshire East had 58 schools which are currently maintained (this equates to 37% of schools). The breakdown of this group of schools is shown below:

Primary Schools : 53

Secondary Schools : 3

Special Schools : 2

Of these schools, 17 are Voluntary Aided schools with 6 Voluntary Controlled

- 4.2 The decision as to which trust a school joins requires careful consideration and decision making by the leadership of the school including governors. Consultation with the local community is also required. Schools will have to carefully consider critical factors such as strategic alignment and ethos of the trust, governance models, schemes of delegation, standards across existing trust schools and financial implications as part of their decision making.
- 4.3 Maintained schools are keen to know if the local authority is going to consider initiating a trust/trusts as they need to know early if this is a realistic option for them to consider. As we develop the options appraisal this will determine the point at which we will need to make a decision about whether or not to progress.

5. Other Options Considered

- 5.1 To actively choose not to consider local authority-initiated trust/s and encourage all maintained schools to join existing trusts.
- 5.2 For the local authority not to register an interest at this early stage for a local authority initiated trust but to consider this option at a later stage.
- 5.3 To continue to support maintained schools on the basis that national policy has previously changed. All schools will now have to make individual decisions about future trust models.

6. Background Information

The White Paper - Opportunity for all: Strong schools with great teachers for your child'

- 6.1 The White Paper, 'Opportunity for all: Strong schools with great teachers for your child' sets out the government's vision for education.

6.2 There are two new ‘ambitions’:

6.2.1 Government has already set a target in its levelling up paper for 90 per cent of children by 2030 to leave primary school with the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, up from 65 per cent currently.

6.2.2 The White Paper now sets out a new “ambition” to increase the national GCSE average grade in both English language and in maths from 4.5 in 2019, to 5 by 2030.

6.2.3 These two ambitions will be the “measure of this white paper’s success”.

6.3 Many of the policies within the white paper are not new and have already been announced. This report highlights to committee the policies within each chapter of the white paper that are new and in particular the implications for councils.

6.4 **Chapter 1: An excellent teacher for every child**

6.4.1 Consultation on a new leadership level ‘National Professional Qualification’ (NPQ) for SENCOs, which would replace the National Award in SEN Coordination as the mandatory qualification for all new SENCOs.

6.4.2 New scholarship to attract the most talented language graduates and a new initial teacher training (ITT) course to support more engineers to teach physics.

6.5 **Chapter 2: Delivering high standards of curriculum, behaviour, and attendance**

6.5.1 A new literacy and numeracy test for a sample of year 9 pupils to “estimate performance at a national level. This will “consist of a short series of digital activities undertaken by a small number of children in school”.

6.5.2 Legislation to “modernise” rules on recording attendance, with a new “national data solution” which will provide a blueprint for other parts of the system.

6.5.3 Legislation to increase Ofsted’s powers to inspect schools that are operating illegally without registration.

6.5.4 An expectation that all mainstream schools run a 32.5-hour week by September 2023. Ofsted will check up on schools where it has concerns over education quality and their hours are below the minimum.

6.5.5 A new network of modern foreign language hubs from 2023, and more effective professional development for language teachers.

6.5.6 Updated plans to support sport and music education will be published this year, and a new cultural education plan will come out in 2023.

6.6 Chapter 3: Target support for every child who needs it

- 6.6.1 Ofsted will hold schools to account for a new “parent pledge” – that “any child that falls behind” in English and maths should receive “timely and evidence-based support to enable them to reach their full potential”
- 6.6.2 New guidance on providing catch-up “targeted support”, keeping parents updated and effective assessment for children who have fallen behind will be published in partnership with Ofsted.
- 6.6.3 Tutoring to become a “core academic option in the pupil premium menu” with a “vibrant tutoring market” from 2024. Schools will be expected to use their core budgets, including pupil premium, to pay for support.

6.7 Chapter 4: A stronger and fairer system

6.7.1 In relation to schools:

- 6.7.1.1 A target for all schools to be in strong multi-academy trusts or have “plans to join or form one”, by 2030.
- 6.7.1.2 The DfE will “expect” most trusts to work towards serving at least 10 schools or 7,500 pupils.
- 6.7.1.3 A review in May 2022 to consider new intervention powers over academy trusts if they fail to meet new statutory standards for being “strong” MATs.
- 6.7.1.4 Clearer expectations for trusts over providing high-quality, inclusive education, school improvement, financial management, parental engagement and workforce deployment, training and retention.
- 6.7.1.5 New statutory duties to work collaboratively with other trusts, councils and public bodies, and follow the admissions code.
- 6.7.1.6 Top-slicing will face new “transparency measures”.
- 6.7.1.7 In “exceptional circumstances”, good schools may be able to request moving trust.
- 6.7.1.8 A three-year £86 million pot is earmarked for trust capacity funding, with extra “financial support” for dioceses to launch trusts following a pilot.
- 6.7.1.9 A new CEO development scheme will be open to executive heads and senior trust staff.

- 6.7.1.10 A consultation, proposes new powers to force “coasting” maintained and academy schools (those with two consecutive Ofsted ratings below “good”) to convert or change trusts.
- 6.7.1.11 The title of Regional Schools Commissioner will change to that of Regional Director.
- 6.7.1.12 A £40 million fund is promised for 24 “priority” areas among the 55 disadvantaged “education investment areas” to address particular needs, such as literacy, numeracy or absence. These areas will also be targeted for establishing new “academically focused” 16-19 free schools. Cheshire East is not in such priority areas.
- 6.7.1.13 The white paper does build upon known themes which are already well utilised by our schools such as promoting the use of research informed interventions using the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). However, there are other new and important developments for school improvement including a national ‘Institute of Teaching’ which is being branded as the ‘flagship teacher development provider’ across the whole country. As yet, the roll out of such a national programme of support is unknown.
- 6.7.2 **In relation to councils:**
 - 6.7.2.1 Councils will get “backstop powers” to direct trusts to admit children, and to object to schools’ published admissions numbers. They will take responsibility for in-year admissions, while admissions faces a “new statutory framework” to put children’s needs first and reform over-subscription rules.
 - 6.7.2.2 Councils will be able to launch MATs, but the focus will be “where too few strong trusts exist”. The Secretary of State will have powers to mass convert all council’s schools at their request.
 - 6.7.2.3 A new system of proactive assurance with Local Safeguarding Partnerships commissioning safeguarding audits every three years. This will “help ensure that all schools’ policies are consistent with local safeguarding arrangements and the academy trust standards”.

6.8 Initiating a local authority trust

- 6.8.1 Guidance has recently been published on local authority established trusts (see Appendix 1). Careful consideration would need to be given to trust structures regarding the appointment of trustees and trust members as well as agreed schemes of delegation.

- 6.8.2 The white paper has stated that all schools should be part of a family of schools within a trust structure by 2030. Cheshire East currently has 58 schools which are maintained; therefore, the models of potential local authority established trusts would need careful consideration of size as it is very unlikely this number of schools would join one trust. Geographical factors are an obvious consideration for localised trusts.
- 6.8.3 As we have a number of voluntary controlled and aided schools, we would need to work with the Dioceses to agree the legal framework for any such trust.
- 6.8.4 The option of a local authority-initiated trust has been well received by current maintained schools but it requires significant preparatory work to fully understand the legal framework within which such a trust model could operate and its ongoing relationship with the wider requirements of the local authority.
- 6.8.5 An initial briefing has taken place with maintained schools to seek their initial response to the white paper including the option of a local authority-initiated trust. Expressions of interest have been sought from all maintained schools to understand better their current thinking; this will require early discussions with governing boards to seek their views at this early stage.
- 6.8.6 The option of further investigating local authority-initiated trusts does not restrict any school seeking to join an existing trust. Currently, Cheshire East has over 30 trusts operating across the borough each of differing size with some including schools from outside our boundaries. One of the national expectations is that smaller or single trusts move to join a larger family of schools and a notional 'expected' size is 10 schools or 7,500 learners.
- 6.8.7 The white paper states that the option of a local authority trust will be shaped by the availability and capacity of existing trusts across a local area. The recently published DfE guidance now provides a framework for local authorities to submit a registration of interest by the end of July as part of a test and learn exercise (see Appendix 1). Officers have commenced work to prepare documentation to submit a registration by this date with proposals being brought back to committee if this was considered a realistic option by the Regional Director.
- 6.7.8 This will be a complex process with numerous complex considerations needing to be made as part of a due diligence process before a final decision to progress can be made by committee. There will need to be council wide collaboration to explore this option, especially with input from legal, finance, HR and property. An internal working group will need to be established with resource identified from across the council to explore this option and consider the benefits and risks of initiating a trust.

- 6.7.9 In parallel, regular working groups with clusters of maintained schools interested in forming a local authority-initiated trust would take place to develop the local model.

7. Implications of the Recommendations

7.1 Legal

- 7.1.1 The white paper provides a basis for consultation and discussion with interested stakeholders which will inform the associated future draft legislation and supporting guidance before a bill is presented to Parliament.
- 7.1.2 As matters are progressed and more clarity is provided legal input can be sought as part of the collaborative working arrangements on a number of issues that may arise including but not limited to governance, property, employment, and contracts.

7.2 Finance

- 7.2.1 The conversion of schools to academy status brings challenges to the council in terms of the impact on income as an academy may purchase certain professional services from other commercial providers. This has happened on a gradual basis over recent years and that is expected to continue through to the point where all schools become an academy.
- 7.2.2 The introduction of local authority established MATs provides the opportunity for council services to consider the impact of further changes to the structure of schools and what requirements they may have.
- 7.2.3 The impact of the introduction of local authority established MATs in terms of additional costs to implement the change of status is not yet known but it is expected that as with academy conversions there will be costs such as legal, finance etc.

7.3 Policy

- 7.3.1 The implementation of academy conversion is undertaken in accordance with national legislation as per the various education acts.
- 7.3.2 This report sets out implications of the policies in the recent white paper, 'Opportunity for all: Strong schools with great teachers for your child'

7.4 Equality

- 7.4.1 The academies conversion programme is a central government policy. The local authority will continue to work with all its schools to ensure, wherever possible that there is equality of opportunity for every child and young person.

7.5 Human Resources (HR)

- 7.5.1 If a local authority trust was initiated employees in respect of the school would transfer from the council to the academy under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 to the trust under a Commercial Transfer Agreement (CTA).

7.6 Risk Management

- 7.6.1 The internal working group would develop a risk register.
- 7.6.2 If committee delay in supporting officers exploring a local authority established MAT and communicating this intention to our maintained schools then they will start to explore other options and the opportunity will not be available

7.7 Rural Communities

- 7.7.1 The delivery model will consider the impact on small and rural schools.

7.8 Children and Young People/Cared for Children

- 7.8.1 It is essential that any trust model has a clear focus on improving learner outcomes personally, socially, and academically and that the needs of all learners are best met by the structures operating within the trust. The promotion of the voice of the young person is vital and any structure needs to ensure that appropriate forums are available to constantly seek feedback from 'end users' to help shape future priorities.

7.9 Public Health

- 7.9.1 There are no direct implications for public health.

7.10 Climate Change

- 7.10.1 In developing plans geographical distance of schools with a MAT would be considered to reduce travel between schools where collaboration is identified in the delivery model.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Mark Bayley Head of Service – Infrastructure and Outcomes mark.bayley@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Appendices:	Appendix 1
Background Papers:	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/convert-to-an-academy-documents-for-schools Opportunity for all - Strong schools with great teachers for your child (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Appendix 1**Local authority established Multi Academy Trusts (MATs): Registration of interest**

The purpose of this DfE guidance document is to provide LAs to understand the process for registering their interest in establishing a MAT as part of a ‘test and learn’ exercise.

LAs that have proposals approved in principle will be invited to work with schools to submit applications to convert including securing school governing body resolutions to convert.

Critical dates: Registration of interest date: **31st July 2022**

Key points from guidance document

- The DfE expect to support a small number of projects and are looking for a broad mix of high performing LAs, geographical spread and a mix of school types and phases.
- This ‘test and learn’ approach is to assist the DfE in reviewing and refining their approach before any further decisions are taken to roll out this option further.
- **Principles of a LA initiated MAT include:**
 - a. Establishing proposed governance, leadership, and financial arrangements.
 - b. Identifying and appointing members of the academy trust
 - c. Identifying academy trustees for the trust board.
 - d. Working with the academy trustees to identify schools to join and securing governing body approval.
 - e. Evaluate each school within the trust in terms of strengths and areas of need and shape appropriate school improvement strategies.
 - f. Undertake due diligence on other schools which may want to join the trust.
- If approval received, the LA would work with academy trustees and schools to:
 - a. Complete the Memorandum of Understanding and Articles of Association and submit to the regional office.
- Once MAT is established, the board of trustees will oversee and be accountable for the strategic direction of the academy trust while the CEO and executive leadership will run the trust on a day-to-day basis.
- **Academy trust members** have the role to safeguard the governance arrangements and put in place an academy trust board that is the strategic decision-making body.
- **The DfE minimum requirement is that the academy trust board has at least THREE members but ideally FIVE. The DfE expect LAs to identify members who have capacity to oversee governance and bring a diverse range of perspectives.**
- **The DfE will remove the existing policy to restrict the proportion of academy trust members who can be associated with a LA** (this was previously 19.9%) although the DfE do require at least one member to be independent of any association with the LA.
- If more than 19.9%, a LA established MAT may need the legal threshold for being an LA influenced or controlled company. LAs should seek legal advice when developing their proposals.

- The 19.9% cap **will continue for academy trustees** for LAAP – Local Authority Associated Persons.
- The academy trust board is the strategic decision-making body. Member trustees are both charity trustees and company directors of the academy trust and trustees are obliged by charity law to run the academy trust solely for the best interests of its charitable purpose.
- New statutory intervention powers will underpin all trusts to provide a robust framework for ensuring the DfE tackle trusts which fail to achieve the expected outcomes.
- **Conflicts of Interest** will need to be identified in the academy trust proposal and carefully managed – in particular, party transactions will need to be declared including services the LA provides to the LA established trust.
- The starting position from the DfE will be that maintained schools should, where possible, join existing MATS rather than form new ones whether established by a LA or not.
- The DfE will manage the size of the new LA established MAT to ensure they are strong before considering growth. **The expectation is that LA established MATS will be small initially, with fewer than 10 schools/7,500 pupils.**
- An LA established MAT could apply to become a sponsor if there is a need in an area.
- It is the DfE expectation that the majority of schools with a religious character will continue to join MATS which are led by their diocese authority. **LA established MATS can include schools with a religious character but only where there is express consent of both the Academy trustees and relevant religious authority.**
- As with any application, schools joining a LA established MAT will be able to claim the £25,000 support grant. LA established Trusts may also be eligible for support from the Trust capacity Fund (TCaF).
- **Regional Directors will consider proposals**, assessing the need for new local capacity. **Consideration will be given to:**
 - a. how the proposal will demonstrate how it will meet the FIVE elements of the definition of a strong academy trust – see below.
 - b. The expertise of individuals being put forward as members and trustees.
 - c. The strength of the plan to support its schools.

Five principles:

1. **The vision** – why form a MAT, how will it fit with local landscape, expected benefits.
2. **The approach** – when established, how many schools initially, geographical area, exceptional costs.
3. **Strategic governance/leadership** – proposed structures, names of members/trustees.
4. **Finances** – proposed financial arrangements for the trust.
5. **School Improvement strategy** – where capacity to further improve outcomes.

- Before applying, LAs should contact the regional office to discuss ideas including whether there is a need for new trusts. **Submissions of registration of interest should be made by 31st July.**

Terminology: as taken from DfE guidance documentation

The **board/trust board** should be taken to mean the accountable body for the academies which is the board of Academy Trustees.

- The **organisation** means the academy or group of academies being governed.
- **Executive Leaders** should be taken to mean those held to account by the board for the performance of the organisation. This may be the CEO, executive Headteacher, Headteacher or principal, as well as other senior employees/staff, depending on the structure of the organisation.
- **Academy Trustees** means those who sit on the trust board.
- **Member(s)** refers to those who are the founder members and/or subsequent members of the academy trust.
- **Local Governing Body** (LGB) means a committee of a trust board with multiple academies that is established as such under the academy trust's articles of association.

This page is intentionally left blank



Working for a brighter future together

Children and Families Committee

Date of Meeting:	11 July 2022
Report Title:	Development of Family Hubs in Cheshire East
Report of:	Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's Services
Report Reference No:	CF/52/21-22
Ward(s) Affected:	All

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1.** The Children and Families Committee is asked to note the proposal to develop family hubs across Cheshire East and approve expenditure related to receipt of the Department for Education (DfE) Family Hubs Transformation Fund (TF1), as a result of a successful bid, submitted in December 2021.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1.** Cheshire East Council is one of 12 local authorities that has been successful in a bid for a share of the government's £12m Family Hubs Transformation Fund, announced on 23 May 2022.
- 2.2.** A supplementary estimate is required as the associated funding will lead to an increase in the council's approved budget for 2022/23.
- 2.3.** Cheshire East's allocation is £985,289 (£830,289 revenue and £95,000 capital) over two years and is expected to be spent by March 2024.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1.** The Children and Families Committee is recommended to note the approval of Cheshire East's Family Hubs Transformation Fund bid and the intention to provide an implementation plan update to a future meeting of the committee.
- 3.2.** The committee is also recommended to approve a supplementary estimate for £985,289 and delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services to incur expenditure in line with the conditions of the Family Hubs Transformation Fund.

4. **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4.1. The development of family hubs in Cheshire East provides the opportunity to bring council, health, and community services together to provide help to families ensuring they have access to the right support at the right time.
- 4.2. It is expected that Cheshire East will have approximately 18 months funding (over the financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24) to transition to a family hub model by March 2024. Approving receipt of the grant enables the council to progress plans as soon as possible.
- 4.3. The DfE will require Cheshire East Council to confirm acceptance of the Family Hubs Transformation Fund.

5. **Other Options Considered**

- 5.1. Cheshire East could choose not to accept the grant, but this would mean that some of our most vulnerable residents would miss out on the opportunity to access enhanced family help in their local area.

6. **Background**

- 6.1. Family hubs are a way of joining up locally and bringing existing family help services together to improve access to services, connections between families, professionals, services, and providers, and putting relationships at the heart of family help. Family hubs bring together services for families with children of all ages (0-19) or up to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), to provide a great start for life offer.
- 6.2. In summary, family hubs are a 'front door' to a range of early help, public health, and wider support services. They serve families with children of all ages to better facilitate whole family working. They can include hub buildings and virtual offers. How services are delivered varies from place to place, but the following principles are key to the family hub model:
- **More accessible** – through clearly branded and communicated hub buildings, virtual offers and outreach.
 - **Better connected** – family hubs drive progress on joining up professionals, services and providers (state, private, voluntary) – through co-location, data sharing, shared outcomes and governance. Moving from services organised for under-fives, to families with children of all ages, reduces fragmentation (even though an emphasis on early years and the 'Start for Life' offer will remain).
 - **Relationship-centred** – practice in a family hub builds on family strengths and looks to improve family relationships to address underlying issues.
- 6.3. In November 2021, the DfE sought applications for transformation funding from local authorities that do not currently have family hubs, and that wished to

transform to a family hub model of service delivery, with a commitment to open family hubs by March 2024. The funding aims to support at least 12 areas that currently provide the six core services for the conception to age 2 period that make up the Start for Life 'Universal Offer'.

- 6.4.** The government aims to use this first tranche of the fund to learn more about the process of local transformation, to build the evidence base, and to create valuable resources and learning for those local authorities moving to a family hub model in the future.
- 6.5.** Cheshire East Council, working with teams across the council and partner agencies, submitted a bid to the fund by the deadline in December 2021. In line with the grant conditions, this bid was approved by and had the full support of the following local stakeholders:
- Executive Director of Children's Services
 - Executive Director of Adult Services
 - Director of Public Health
 - Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board
- 6.6.** The transformation fund will pay for the change process only, supporting Cheshire East to move to a family hub model through programme and capital funding. Up to £1 million was available, with up to £833k available for programme expenditure and up to £167k available in capital expenditure per local area.
- 6.7.** Sustainability of family hubs beyond the two-year period will be through the integration of existing services into the family hub model. This may involve changes to the structure of local service provision and may also involve a shift in how support is offered to families.
- 6.8.** Cheshire East's funding bid was as follows:

	2022/23	2023/24	Total
Total revenue	382,431	447,859	830,289
Total capital	95,000	60,000	155,000
Total capital and revenue	477,431	507,859	985,289

- 6.9.** 84 upper-tier local authorities applied for the transformation fund. On 23 May 2022, the DfE announced that Cheshire East had been selected to receive funding. Feedback stated that Cheshire East's vision shows a clear commitment to developing the local service offer in line with the family hubs model framework, and they were very impressed with the quality of our bid.

- 6.10.** The other local authorities in the first wave of successful local authorities are:
- Brighton and Hove
 - Wirral
 - Stockport
 - Dorset
 - Solihull
 - York
- 6.11.** It is expected that an additional five local authorities will receive funding through the Family Hubs Transformation Fund in the coming months.
- 6.12.** Central to Cheshire East's bid was the use of our existing children and family centres and youth hubs to deliver physical hubs for families with children of all ages, to ensure that their needs are targeted and met locally. We plan to extend the reach and range to ensure an equity of access across the age range, geography, and population of the borough. Multi-disciplinary teams will work across shared buildings and communities to intervene early to reduce family breakdown and risk of harm and neglect, reducing the need for duplication of effort and onward referral. We have already started to align our services into three localities: north, mid, and south, co-terminus with our care communities.
- 6.13.** Some of the services that are planned to be delivered from family hubs include:
- Midwifery appointments, health checks, weaning and nutrition advice, early years play education and sensory development.
 - Intensive support to reduce family problems that result in family breakdown, working with the child and family to make positive changes.
 - Family help and support for children with disabilities or additional needs.
 - Practical support around finance, housing and supported learning.
 - Youth support services, including youth justice.
 - Mental health support for children, young people, families and new parents.
- 6.14.** We are working with the DfE to agree the terms of our grant. This involves discussing our proposals and clarifying plans, where necessary. The council will also be supported by the National Centre for Family Hubs (NCFH), led by the Anna Freud Centre, and funded by the Department for Education. We will seek peer support and learning from a number of local areas who have already progressed the family hub model.
- 6.15.** The development of family hubs will be overseen by the Early Help Together Board. The delivery plan and progress will be led by the Executive Director of Children's Services and championed by the lead member for children with scrutiny around impact and delivery of agreed plan and milestones undertaken annually by the Health and Wellbeing board and in public via the Children and

Families Committee. An update on the implementation plans for family hubs will be reported to a future meeting of the Children and Families Committee.

7. Implications

7.1. Legal

- 7.1.1.** The development of family hubs will be overseen by the Early Help Together Board. The delivery plan and progress will be led by the Executive Director of Children's Services and championed by the lead member for children with scrutiny around impact and delivery of agreed plan and milestones undertaken annually by the Health and Wellbeing board and in public via the Children and Families Committee. An update on the implementation plans for family hubs will be reported to a future meeting of the Children and Families Committee.
- 7.1.2.** The duty to promote multi-agency working and improving the wellbeing of children and families is covered in a range of legislation, including the Children Act 2004 and the Childcare Act 2006.
- 7.1.3.** The Children Act 2004 requires children's services councils to promote cooperation between local partners, including district councils, the police and health services to improve the wellbeing of children in relation to: physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing; protection from harm and neglect; education, training and recreation; the contribution made by them to society; and social and economic wellbeing.
- 7.1.4.** The Childcare Act 2006 requires councils to improve the wellbeing of young children in their area, and reduce inequalities in relation to issues, including physical and mental health, education and social and economic wellbeing. Approaches to this will vary according to need and will likely include high level policies to support all families, however there may also be a need for early help in particular localities or with individual children and families to support this.
- 7.1.5.** Cheshire East will be expected to comply with the grant terms and conditions. Failure to comply with the terms and conditions will affect payment of the grant. Grant conditions will include the (not exhaustive) requirements to:
- Deliver our proposal and open family hubs by March 2024.
 - Agree that if the project runs past March 2024, any additional costs for overruns will be at the expense of the council.
 - Report the progress of the proposal throughout its lifecycle by completing quarterly project monitoring reports.
 - Inform the DfE of any changes/delays to planned project milestones and of any project overspends/underspends.
 - Agree to engage and work with the DfE, other government departments and the National Centre for Family Hubs on monitoring and evaluation, to

provide local insight about the transformation process to feed into wider policy developments on family hubs and to develop resources on good practice.

- Agree to publish our Start for Life offer and set out what will be available through your family hub network by March 2024.

7.1.6. Approval of a supplementary revenue estimate requires adherence to the provisions of the Financial Procedure Rules as set out in the Constitution and specifically the provisions of Chapter 3 Part 3 at para 19 shall apply:

Funded from Additional Grants

Directors may make applications for grants, where the application does not create a financial or any other commitment, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer. However, if the application is for a grant in excess of £1m, or if any match funding will be required, then CLT must be consulted in advance.

Successful grant applications will require a supplementary estimate to incur spending, in line with the approval limits set out in the table below.

If grant application or receipt commits expenditure outside of the Control Totals then a Virement or Other Supplementary Estimate will also be required.

Amount of grant to be received	Approval Level
Up to and including £100,000	Officers
Between £100,000 and £500,000	Relevant Member of CLT in consultation with Chair of the relevant Committee and Chair of Finance Sub-Committee
£500k and up to £1m	Committee
£1m and above	Council

7.1.7. As the level of family hub funding is above £500k and below £1m, this requires approval from the Children and Families Committee.

7.2. Finance

7.2.1. The Family Hubs Local Transformation Fund is funded through HM Treasury's Shared Outcomes Fund, which aims to test innovative ways of working across the public sector to address complex policy challenges.

7.2.2. The DfE will make payments via a grant made under Section 31 with the intention to pay the year one allocation in full in September 2022.

7.2.3. Finance will be working with the service to establish a budget plan for use of the funds in the time available, the qualifying expenditure and ensuring that any further commitments are understood, and funding is available. That plan will be reported as part of the follow up paper on the use of the funds.

7.3. Policy

- 7.3.1.** Any policy implications that arise from development of family hubs will be dealt within an individual report to Members or Officer Decision Records.

7.4. Equality

- 7.4.1.** An equality impact assessment will be completed in relation to implementation of family hubs to ensure that people are not disadvantaged or treated unfairly, for example, that our processes are easy to access and to navigate.
- 7.4.2.** We expect that the implementation of the grant will have a positive impact in relation to the protective characteristic of age, particularly for children and young people. It will also support the need to ensure that we have fairer and more resilient communities.

7.5. Human Resources

- 7.5.1.** There will be a need for additional capacity to transform services in line with the family hub model. Cheshire East's bid included costs for these posts over the next two years. We will ensure that the costs of any additional staffing are offset against the fund.

7.6. Risk Management

- 7.6.1.** Cheshire East's bid for the family hub funding set out our approach to risk management. This includes adopting a structured and coherent approach to identifying, assessing, and managing risk to ensure an appropriate level of control in place, without stifling developments. We adopt recognised best practice in the identification and evaluation of risks and opportunities and ensure that these are managed to acceptable levels in a proportionate and cost-effective way.
- 7.6.2.** We will ensure that there is a clear escalation process to follow to ensure risks are proactively considered and managed.
- 7.6.3.** There is a risk that we will not have the capacity to change. However, there is funding in the bid for a transformation team, organisational change programmes and resources for communication, marketing and engagement.
- 7.6.4.** There is a risk that practitioners don't engage with the new approach. We aim to adopt an organisation change programme to provide a consistent and sustained approach to engaging practitioners to shape the new services.
- 7.6.5.** There is a risk that parent carers who have older children do not access services from the family hubs. We will use capital funding to rebrand and adapt our current buildings into family friendly spaces. Our coproduction approach

will engage parent carers in the transformation to ensure that they help to shape services that meet their needs.

- 7.6.6.** There is a risk that young people do not engage with the hubs as they do not identify with them. We expect to mitigate against this risk through rebranding and adapting our current buildings into youth friendly spaces. Our coproduction approach will engage young people in the transformation to ensure that they help to shape services that meet their needs.

7.7. Rural Communities

- 7.7.1.** We will ensure that family hub services are accessible to children and families in our rural areas. We will also look to implement digital strategies for families to have easy access to our services, including out of hours, website/catch app developments, videos, online forms and use of GovDelivery.

7.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

- 7.8.1.** Family Hubs can support all families, particularly in the first 1,001 days, but they are designed to be particularly accessible to families with additional vulnerabilities, families with children who have special education needs or a disability, or those from minoritised groups who are experiencing exclusion. Family hubs aim to provide the right support at the right at the right time in the right way to positively impact on the lives of children and young people.

7.9. Public Health

- 7.9.1.** Health inequalities poses a threat to the public health of our residents as they are less likely to be able to access the conditions that promote a healthy physical and mental lifestyle. The proposal for family hubs is to develop on child health hubs to offer health services for families from pre-birth to age 19 (or 25 for SEND children).

7.10. Climate Change

- 7.10.1.** There are not expected to be any climate change implications from the family hubs implementation. Providing services more locally can only benefit families who don't have to travel to access these.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Claire Williamson Interim Director of Early Help and Prevention Claire.williamson@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	https://www.nationalcentreforfamilyhubs.org.uk/

This page is intentionally left blank



Working for a brighter future together

Children and Families Committee

Date of Meeting:	11 July 2022
Report Title:	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy, 2022-26
Report of:	Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care
Report Reference No:	CF/51/21-22
Ward(s) Affected:	All wards

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report sets out the proposed new Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2022-26, previously known as the Corporate Parenting Strategy, for Cheshire East to improve outcomes for our cared for children and care leavers.
- 1.2. The Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy meets the strategic aims and objectives in the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25 as it contributes to 'A council which empowers and cares about people' and the priority to 'be the best Corporate Parents and improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people'.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. Our strategy has been developed with our cared for children and care leavers. They told us that some of the language used in our current Corporate Parenting Strategy is too clinical and not meaningful to them. We therefore worked together to rename our strategy the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy.
- 2.2. During the development of the strategy, we have conducted an online survey to give foster carers an opportunity to share their views and ideas.

- 2.3.** We have held discussions during our workstream groups and the Corporate Parenting Operational Group where managers, frontline staff, councillors, education, voluntary sector, and health colleagues were able to share their views on the priority areas and actions.
- 2.4.** Our current pledges have been refreshed in line with children and young people's wishes and we have added an additional pledge to focus on participation, i.e., listening to and involving our children and young people in decisions and services that affect them:
- We will care for our cared for children and care leavers as any good parent would.
 - We will improve education, employment, and training outcomes.
 - We will be truly aspirational to give all children and young people a forever home and to keep them safe.
 - We will improve health and wellbeing outcomes.
 - We will prepare children and young people for adulthood.
 - We will work TOGETHER with children and young people.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1.** The Children and Families Committee is recommended to endorse the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2022-26.
- 3.2.** The Children and Families Committee is recommended to endorse the decision to take the pledges in the strategy to full Council on 19 October 2022, where members can pledge their commitments to cared for children and care leavers.
- 3.3.** The Children and Families Committee is recommended to endorse the decision to change the name of our Corporate Parenting Committee, further recommendations regarding the change of name will be brought to a future committee following consultation with children and young people.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1.** Cheshire East Council needs to ensure that it has a current and relevant strategy in place to improve outcomes for our cared for children and care leavers. Other options to be considered are therefore not applicable.
- 4.2.** Changing the name of our Corporate Parenting Committee will promote a consistent change in the language used when talking about cared for children and care leavers, to reflect their wishes and align with the launch and delivery of this strategy.

5. Background

- 5.1.** The existing Corporate Parenting Strategy runs from 2018 to 2021 and was endorsed by the Corporate Parenting Committee in November 2018, along with the 'youth proofed' pledges to cared for children and care leavers.

- 5.2. The pledges were subsequently accepted and endorsed by the full Council in December 2018 in order to make the commitment to cared for children and care leavers by members and officers and to ensure that there is a clear and joint vision about Corporate Parenting in Cheshire East as being everyone's responsibility.
- 5.3. The council also decided that all key council decisions be considerate of the potential consequences and benefits to cared for children and care leavers, and that this be achieved by asking a mandatory question in each report about the impact of the decision upon cared for children and care leavers.
- 5.4. Good progress has been made in achieving the pledges set out in the 2018-20 Corporate Parenting Strategy. This progress has been reported to the Corporate Parenting Committee each year via the Corporate Parenting Annual Report.
- 5.5. The intention was to develop a new Corporate Parenting Strategy in 2020, ready to launch in 2021. However, due to the increased demands from the COVID-19 pandemic, this was put on hold and the current strategy was endorsed to run throughout 2021.

6. Consultation and Engagement

- 6.1. During the development of the strategy, in March 2022 we conducted an online survey to give foster carers an opportunity to share their views and ideas. Their responses around the relevance of the pledges echoed that of the children and young people we spoke to, with some feeling the use of 'being a good corporate parent' is vague and lacks context. 72% felt that a pledge around participation should be included in our new strategy. Some foster carers commented that they would like improved communication with them to be included as part of the new strategy and we have developed actions to support this in our action plan. The Fostering Service is also reviewing our foster carer charter alongside foster carers to ensure that we can further strengthen communication with them.

7. Implications

7.1. Legal

- 7.1.1. The proposed strategy meets the authority's statutory duties to cared for children and care leavers.

7.2. Finance

- 7.2.1. None.

7.3. Policy

- 7.3.1. As a corporate parent, all council policies should consider the impact on cared for children and care leavers.

7.4. Equality

- 7.4.1. All children and young people have a right to be treated equally and have their disability, gender, ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic needs met. As corporate parents for children and young people in care and care leavers, it is essential that the council is able to demonstrate that it considers equality implications in all decisions made in relation to cared for children and care leavers. Cared for children and care leavers can be a vulnerable group because of their experiences so we need to ensure they are supported to achieve the same outcomes as their peers as they can experience disadvantages and are at risk of poorer outcomes.
- 7.4.2. An equality impact assessment has been carried out and will be published along with the endorsed strategy.

7.5. Human Resources

- 7.5.1. The recruitment and retention of social workers and frontline colleagues is an essential component of the delivery of the strategy.

7.6. Risk Management

- 7.6.1. Cared for children and care leavers are a vulnerable group for whom there are a number of risks, including poor outcomes in education and training, health, safeguarding and transition into adulthood. The Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy outlines plans to mitigate these risks.

7.7. Rural Communities

- 7.7.1. All communities are affected by the contents of this report, and it is necessary to strategically plan the delivery of services to serve all communities.

7.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

- 7.8.1. The Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy sets out clearly our intentions to improve outcomes for cared for children and young people, along with our pledges and priorities for 2022-26.

7.9. Public Health

- 7.9.1. Cared for children and care leavers are more at risk of poor health outcomes. Health services need to be targeted to ensure that they meet the needs of this group of children and young people. A number of pledges within the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy addresses the health and wellbeing of this group of young people.

7.10. Climate Change

- 7.10.1. This strategy is aligned with the council's aim to be green to lead our communities to protect and enhance our environment, tackle the climate emergency and drive sustainable development. This includes our pledge to strive to ensure that every child and young person will have the opportunity to live in a good, safe home locally, either with their family or in another long-term home,

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Laura Hindhaugh Laura.Hindhaugh@cheshireeast.gov.uk 07442 963620
Appendices:	Appendix 1 - Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy, 2022-26 Appendix 2- Cared for Children and Care Leavers Equality Impact Assessment.
Background Papers:	The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2018-21 can be found at: corporate-parenting-strategy.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk)

This page is intentionally left blank

Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy

2022-26

DRAFT

Page 57

Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction.....	4
Glossary of terms for working with Care Experienced Children and Young People	5
Pledge One: We will care for our cared for children and care leavers as any good parent would	6
Pledge Two: We will improve education, employment, and training outcomes	9
Pledge Three: We will be truly aspirational to give all children and young people a forever home and to keep them safe.	12
Pledge Four: We will improve health and wellbeing outcomes.....	16
Pledge Five: We will prepare young people for adulthood	20
Pledge Six: We will work TOGETHER with children and young people	23
Governance.....	25

Foreword

In Cheshire East, we believe caring for our cared for children and care leavers is one of the most important responsibilities held by elected members, partner agencies, and individual staff working with children and young people in the care of the local authority. We are committed to cared for children and care leavers having the love, care, and opportunities we want for all our children.

It is important that we get this right. Early experiences in childhood and growing up shape future happiness and set the foundations for what can be achieved throughout their adult lives. This strategy sets out how we will work together to advocate and champion the needs of cared for children and care leavers in everything we do, having high aspirations for their future, keeping them safe, happy, and healthy and supporting them into adulthood. We will celebrate their successes and support them when things don't go so well. We will be here for our children and always consider 'would this be good enough for my child'.

This strategy has been developed TOGETHER with children and young people. The 'Pledges' that we make to them are based on the things that they have told us matter most to them. The commitment to improving the lives of our cared for

children and care leavers is more than a priority; it is the way in which we behave, think, and feel about our children and young people in every aspect of our work. Through the implementation of this strategy, we intend to improve the experiences and outcomes for all our Cheshire East cared for children and care leavers.



Deborah Woodcock
 Executive Director of
 Children's Services



Cllr Kathryn Flavell
 Chair of the Corporate
 Parenting Committee

Introduction

Children in care and care leavers, the Cheshire East picture.

- The number of children in care in Cheshire East fluctuates daily as new children come into care and children leave care. On 31 March 2022 we had 522 cared for children and 364 care leavers (aged 18-25).
- Children come into care for many different reasons, 80% of children in Cheshire East came into care in the last 12 months because of abuse or neglect.
- We are in touch with 99.5% of care leavers aged 18-21.
- 97.5% of care leavers aged 18-21 are in suitable accommodation.
- We have a slightly higher number of males than females in care, with 285 males, 236 females and 1 indeterminate.
- 315 of our cared for children are living within Cheshire East.

**The above figures change daily, data as at 31 March 2022*

Seven principles of Corporate Parenting

Corporate parenting means doing everything we can for every child in the council's care – and every care leaver – to give them the opportunities that children who are not in care get. In 2017 the Children and Social Work Act introduced a set of Corporate Parenting Principles for children in care and care leavers up to the age of 25 years. We are committed to these principles and have developed this strategy to support all our services to address them:

1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people
2. To encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
3. To take account of their views, wishes and feelings
4. To help them gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
6. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
7. To prepare children in care and care leavers for adulthood.

Glossary of terms for working with Care Experienced Children and Young People

Advice to workers from My VOICE: “These are recommendations of how care experienced children and young people would like to be spoken to or about—when you start to work with someone new, please ask them how they would like to be spoken to because everyone is different.”

What workers say:	What we would like you to say:
Looked After Children (LAC)	We don't LAC in anything! Call us children, young people, or cared for children. We are people, not a case number or statistic.
Contact	Family time, going to see family, social time. It's important for us to see our family as much as possible.
PEP (Personal Education Plan)	One young person said: “I thought it was about pets not school”. Please explain acronyms! We prefer school review, education meeting or just meeting.
Placement	Home or the place we live.
Birth Parents/Biological Parents	Mum and Dad, Parents, Tummy Mummy.
Reunification	Going home, reunited with my family.
Permanence	My long-term home, my home without disruption.
Respite	Day out, temporary care, time off, time out, sleep over.
Care Plan	Future plan, my plan, “Help me to achieve my goals”.
Foster Carer	The person who cares for me, carer.
Corporate Parenting	Call strategies, meetings and plans ‘cared for children and care leavers’ instead.

This glossary has been written, designed, and approved by My VOICE, Cheshire East's Voice of in care experience.

Pledge One: We will care for our cared for children and care leavers as any good parent would

Feedback from our children and young people:

Children and young people told us that they don't like the phrase 'corporate parent' as it is too clinical. We have updated the name of this pledge to reflect this. Children and young people told us that support from their PA (personal advisor) and social worker can make a big difference to their life, things like helping them to get to college and appointments and knowing when they need this support.

What are our priorities:

Staff and elected members will understand their responsibilities and be ambitious in their roles to support cared for children and care leavers. They will advocate and champion their needs in everything they do. They will strive to ensure that the wider community shares our understanding and offers support wherever possible.

We will know ourselves and the needs of our cared for children and care leavers well, and design and deliver services that meet these needs. We will always work **TOGETHER** with children and young people when developing and reviewing services.

Decisions about children and young people's lives, and the services that support them will be made with them and for them. We will always value their views, where we can't act on a child or young person's view or follow their wishes, we will always explain why.



1. Year 1 (September 2022 – August 2023)

Ref	Action	How do we measure success	Who's responsible
1.1	Develop a new governance structure to deliver the new Cared for Children and Care Leavers strategy and actions.	A new governance structure will be in place by October 2022, with each workstream lead and groups to be accountable for their action plan to support delivery of the strategy, and to share regular updates with the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group for further scrutiny.	Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers. Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.
1.2	Establish a 'directory' of available resource and support contacts in the permanence service.	The directory will be in place and being used to benefit cared for children and care leavers.	Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers. Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.
1.3	Provide ongoing training and support to our elected members, stakeholders and employees around being the best parents to our cared for children and care leavers.	Our Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee (tbc) will have a good understanding of their responsibilities, to offer robust challenge and support.	Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers. Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.
1.4	Continue to work with cared for children and care leavers to change the language we use.	New language will be agreed and being used across all of children's services.	Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers. Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Participation Team.

1.5	Review our strategy on an annual basis to ensure progress is monitored and actions and priorities remain relevant.	<p>Children and young people will be able to tell us about the difference actions are making to their daily lives.</p> <p>We will monitor progress of our success measures.</p> <p>% of cared for children's reviews in timescales.</p> <p>% of children and young people involved in their reviews.</p>	<p>Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers.</p> <p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Participation Team.</p>
1.6	Continue elected member frontline visits to cared for services, aligned to the cared for children and care leavers outcomes.	Annual rota of frontline visits in place and changing practice.	<p>Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers.</p> <p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p>
1.7	Work together to ensure that the right children become cared for and deliver our strategy on Creating a Sustainable Future for Children's Social Care.	Reduction in the number of cared for children, an increase in the stability of our homes for cared for children. An increase in matched homes for children and young people.	<p>Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers.</p> <p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p>
1.8	Regularly celebrate the achievements of our cared for children through events such as the star awards and national care leaver week. Celebration of individual achievements such as, exam results and settling at a new home.	Our children and young people feel valued through the development of certificates, celebration events and recognition opportunities throughout the year.	<p>Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers.</p> <p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p>
1.9	We will change the name of our Corporate Parenting Committee to reflect children and young people's wishes regarding the language we use.	The pledge will be agreed by the full council.	<p>Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers.</p> <p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p>
1.10	Review and update our scorecard to align with our new Cared for and Care Leavers Strategy.	New scorecard will be in place by September 2022.	Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers.

Pledge Two: We will improve education, employment, and training outcomes

Feedback from our children and young people:

A Care Leavers survey was conducted during October and November 2021. 76 completed surveys were received in total, 90.07% of young people told us that they know how to access education, employment, or training. Children and young people also told us about the importance of being able to stay in the same school when going into foster care.

What are our priorities:

We will have high aspirations for every child and young person and will help them to achieve their ambitions, including using opportunities in the 'family business' and our contacts so that they can be happy and successful in their education, training, and employment.

Every child and young person will have an education plan that is targeted, to enable them to reach their full potential.

We will strive to that ensure that every child and young person will have access to consistent, high-quality, well-matched opportunities in education, training, and employment.



2. Year 1 (September 2022 – August 2023)

Ref	Action	How do we measure success	Who's responsible
2.1	Develop opportunities for apprenticeships within the council and local businesses. Offer support to care leavers in preparing for and undertaking apprenticeships from our Apprenticeship Coordinator Role.	<p>There are a range of apprenticeship opportunities available for our children and young people and support is available for young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET), to help them to become ready to complete an apprenticeship.</p> <p>There is an increase in the number of children and young people on apprenticeship programmes within the council from 7 young people to a target of 12 by August 2023.</p> <p>Number of care leavers in Higher education.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Deputy Virtual School Headteacher.</p> <p>Post 16 Adviser.</p>
2.2	Share success stories across the authority and local community, promoting the benefits for all.	Success case studies shared through virtual schools headteacher's report annually, and through communications during the year such as the NEET programme.	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Virtual School Headteacher.</p>
2.3	Continue to improve the completion rate and quality of PEPs across all years from early years to post 16.	The completion rate of PEPs has increased. The number of PEPs graded as good or outstanding has increased.	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Virtual School Headteacher.</p>
2.4	Continue to provide support and interventions for schools and children to improve outcomes (narrow the gap and lost learning) and attendance, evaluating the impact of the intervention and use of pupil premium.	<p>Improved literacy and communication of early years and primary aged children.</p> <p>Pupil premium requests and impact will be monitored termly.</p> <p>Ensure effective support and interventions are in place for cared for children to support attainment and progress, ensuring children are accessing full time education.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Virtual School Headteacher.</p>

2.5	Strengthen the children and young people's voice to support the strategic development across all areas of the virtual school.	<p>Children and young people annual surveys will capture their voice.</p> <p>We will have incorporated new ways of gaining wider children and young people's voice within the strategic development of the virtual school.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Virtual School Headteacher.</p> <p>Post-16 Adviser.</p>
2.6	Ensure that agencies providing opportunities for our children and young people are supported and equipped to understand and meet their needs.	<p>An effective annual training will be in place and being delivered through the virtual school for agencies / services / schools and settings.</p> <p>Additional whole school training for inset days will be available throughout the academic year.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Virtual school Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher.</p>
2.7	Ensure a robust action plan is in place to reduce NEET and encourage re-engagement opportunities for our care leavers.	<p>A monthly review of education plans during challenge meetings with the senior PA and virtual school. Feedback to be shared with Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group for further scrutiny.</p> <p>6 monthly dip sampling of children's records to monitor progress and address any identified worries.</p> <p>Extension of opportunities and direct work with young people to re-engage in education, employment, or training.</p> <p>Number of 16–18-year-old care leavers that are NEET.</p> <p>Number of 19–21-year-old care leavers that are NEET.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Virtual school Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher.</p>

Pledge Three: We will be truly aspirational to give all children and young people a forever home and to keep them safe.

Feedback from our children and young people:

Children and young people told us that they don't like the word permanence as it's too clinical. We have changed this pledge to reflect this.

What are our priorities:

We will strive to ensure that every child and young person will have the opportunity to live in a good, safe home locally, either with their family or in another long-term home. All decisions will be made and reviewed with them, without delay.

We will respect those people who are important to our children and young people and make sure that these safe relationships are sustained.

We will keep children and young people safe.



3. Year 1 (September 2022 – August 2023)

Ref	Action	How do we measure success	Who's responsible
3.1	Further strengthen our communication and engagement with foster carers and involve them in service development.	<p>Increased attendance at our quarterly Foster Carer forum.</p> <p>Foster carer representation on development groups.</p> <p>Our annual foster carer survey will tell us that foster carers feel our communication is good.</p> <p>Foster carers feel supported by their peers.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Fostering service manager.</p>
3.2	Review all residential placements monthly to ensure that children and young people can have the opportunity to live within a family.	<p>Reduction in the number of children and young people placed in residential provision.</p> <p>Every child to have a trajectory for permanence and timescales.</p> <p>Increased fostering sufficiency and step-down plan to be considered for all children and young people in a residential placement.</p> <p>% with 3 or more placements in a year % leaving through adoption / Special Guardianship Order (SGO).</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Service Manager, Cared for and Care Leavers.</p>
3.3	<p>Continue to ensure that cared for children and young people can live in good, safe homes locally, as early as possible.</p> <p>Development of a discharge team for children that are already living with their family or parents to reduce the need for care orders and ongoing intervention.</p>	<p>Increasing our in-area placement sufficiency through fostering recruitment and effective matching.</p> <p>Redevelopment of permanence policy, including stability and matching to be jointly developed between cared for children's service, fostering and commissioning.</p> <p>Development of caring for children at home services and support.</p> <p>Annual assessment of children's needs to be considered in children and family assessments to increase to a minimum of 80% within timescales.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Service Manager, Cared for and Care Leavers.</p>

		<p>Strengthen matching and transitions for our children within our current commissioned children's homes.</p> <p>Reduction in number of children and young people in residential care.</p> <p>Discharge team in place by September 22, within 2 years 15 SGO's and 47 care orders will be revoked.</p>	
3.4	Development of the No Wrong Door model and principles within Cheshire East which will provide support to young people who are within or on the edge of the care system.	<p>Decrease the number of children and young people in residential placements as a long-term care plan.</p> <p>Increased young people in family settings or with a plan of reunification to their families.</p> <p>Increased amount of young people in a long-term matched home.</p> <p>Review of every child's long-term match after 12 months in placement.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Service Manager, Cared for and Care Leavers.</p>
3.5	Increase support to cases where there is a possibility of adoption disruption.	<p>Increased early intervention with adoptive families prior to safeguarding concerns arising.</p> <p>Increased support and strategies to maintain adoptive children in their families.</p> <p>The adoption stability panel will be fully embedded.</p> <p>Adoption panel will meet bi-monthly.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Service Manager, Cared for and Care Leavers.</p> <p>Head of Service, Early Help and Prevention.</p> <p>Adoption Counts Regional Manager.</p>
3.6	Improve our decision making regarding Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs).	<p>Clearer decision making and effective support and challenge in achieving permanence through special guardianship.</p> <p>Embedded agency decision making process in place to consider SGOs.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Fostering Service Manager.</p>

	Develop a clear process and policy around entitlements and support for SGO's.	<p>Clearer pathway to understand financial and practical support within SGO support plans.</p> <p>Increase by 25% in the number of children placed with their families progressing to SGO within the next 12 months.</p>	Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers.
3.7	<p>Develop a pathway and forum for senior leaders to support the service to achieve permanence plans and ensure progress is reviewed regularly. Clear actions to be set to hold the service to account.</p> <p>Undertake a peer review of the permanence service to assist in driving developments forward.</p>	<p>Effective oversight and challenge of permanency plans for our cared for children, increase in placement stability.</p> <p>Care planning meetings to occur at a minimum of every 12 weeks to prevent drift and delay.</p> <p>Peer review to take place late 2022 to action plan and have a clear view of service strengths and areas of development.</p> <p>Permanence forum to be redeveloped to take place weekly from June 2022 to review all permanence plans regularly across the service.</p> <p>Number of children who have achieved permanence in foster care.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers.</p>
3.8	We will ensure children and young people have opportunities to stay connected to their families and friends in the least restrictive way possible.	<p>Development of Family time policy and process to be in place by July 2022.</p> <p>Review of all cared for children's current family time arrangements and supervision levels to ensure that those children that can have unsupervised contact do and for those that can't, the most appropriate person in their network can be identified to supervise.</p> <p>All arrangements to be developed by July 2022 with ongoing review and scrutiny at each cared for review every 6 months.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers.</p> <p>Service Manager, Cared for and Care Leavers.</p>





We will equip our children and young people to have high aspirations for their own health and wellbeing.

The Cared for survey was conducted from 22nd January 2021 until 12th March 2021, 87.34% of young people stated that they have someone that they can talk to if they have any health concerns. 78.70% of care leavers told us they feel well informed of how to make good choices regarding their health, and the local services to help them.

We are committed to understanding the health needs of our children and young people as early as possible and to ensure they are given the highest priority in every service.

We will ensure that practitioners understand and meet the diverse health needs of our children and young people, including those with health inequalities faced by race, ethnicity, ability and disability and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

We have ambition to ensure that we further improve responses to children and young people in relation to having their health needs met.

  Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust		  Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust	
My Health Information			
Name DOB NHS Number Current Doctor (GP)			
Birth Information	Weight: Time of birth: Additional Information:		
Immunisations (this is sometimes known as jab or injection)			

Additional information about your Health including conditions diagnosed with and tests carried out	
Date	

4. Year 1 (September 2022 – August 2023)

Ref	Action	How do we measure success	Who's responsible
4.1	Raise awareness across our workforce and promote and monitor access to a range of services and agencies available to support the health needs of our children and young people.	Increased referrals to emotional wellbeing services, increased health assessments and increased engagement with GP and dentist appointments.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Designated Nurse and Named Nurse, Looked After Children and Care Leavers.
4.2	Track and monitor the health needs of our children and young people, including those who are currently living outside of Cheshire East, ensuring their needs are met.	Collection and use of data around the following outcomes will provide benchmarking and identify areas for improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immunisation status Timeliness and quality of health assessments GP registration Completed strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQs) and their use to inform practice Timeliness of dental checks. % of under 5's with up to date immunisations.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Designated Nurse and Named Nurse, Looked After Children and Care Leavers.
4.3	We will support children and young people in care to have improving emotional and mental health and wellbeing.	Decreased SDQ scores and effective use of this tool to inform care and education planning and support for our children and young people in line with statutory guidance. Early identification and response to emotional and mental health issues. Increased referrals and engagement with services for those young people that require support.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Designated Nurse and Named Nurse, Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

4.4	We will ensure cared for children and care leavers have their health assessed in a timely way and that assessments are of a good quality and used to inform the care plan.	<p>Quarterly submission of key performance indicators will evidence timeliness and quality of health assessments.</p> <p>Threshold target of 90% completed in timescale (20 working days) to be achieved for children placed both in and out of Cheshire East area.</p> <p>Use of escalation pathway and tracker will evidence any issues related to timeliness or quality and enable appropriate action.</p> <p>Annual audit of care plan reviews will provide evidence that health assessments are being used as part of the care planning process.</p> <p>Number of care leavers with a health passport.</p> <p>Number of care leavers with a health passport.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Designated Nurse and Named Nurse, Looked After Children and Care Leavers.</p>
4.5	Promote the New NHS England dental referral programme to ensure cared for children have access to timely dental health services.	<p>Target of 100% of children and young people will have been seen for their statutory annual dental check.</p> <p>Number and outcome of referrals will be tracked and reported quarterly.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Designated Nurse and Named Nurse, Looked After Children and Care Leavers.</p>
4.6	Improve access and timeliness of full health screening for all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).	<p>Increased early intervention and support for UASC.</p> <p>Number of initial health assessments (IHAs) completed in timescales.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Designated Nurse and Named Nurse, Looked After Children and Care Leavers.</p>
4.7	Development of an effective tool that can be used to measure health outcomes for cared for children.	Increased understanding and tracking of the needs of our cared for children.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.

			Designated Nurse and Named Nurse, Looked After Children and Care Leavers.
4.8	<p>We will support timely and effective transitions from child to adult services.</p> <p>Information and data around the following themes will be used to inform service development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health • Long term/complex health needs • Transitions for those young people who do not have a diagnosis and yet will continue to need support from social care. • Young people aged 14-25 who are known to at least one mental health professional • Young people aged 14-25 who also have a diagnosis of learning difficulties and/or disability, attention deficit disorder (ADHD) or autism. 	<p>Clear pathways of support available for care leavers moving to adult services.</p> <p>Care leavers will report confidence in addressing their health needs and accessing services.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Designated Nurse and Named Nurse, Looked After Children and Care Leavers.</p>

Pledge Five: We will prepare young people for adulthood

Feedback from our children and young people:

Young people told us it's important that they are supported to be able to make important decisions ahead of time, around finance and housing to help them feel comfortable, safe and secure when they leave care. 85.20% of care leavers told us that they feel in control of the decisions that affect their life.

What are our priorities:

We will support young people early with the skills needed to prepare for their future through access to a range of good quality services.

We will be a consistent guide for our young people. We will celebrate their successes and support them when things don't go well.

We will respect our care leavers as young adults and adapt our relationships to their needs.



5. Year 1 (September 2022 – August 2023)

Ref	Action	How do we measure success	Who's responsible
5.1	Communicate with children and young people what our relationship and contact with them will look like, so they understand what to expect and know how to raise any worries they have around this.	Improved knowledge of rights and entitlements and effective pathway planning.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Head of Service Cared for Children and Care leavers.
5.2	Understand how children and young people want us to communicate with them and look at ways to develop our digital offer in line with their views.	Increased and sustained relationships with our cared for children and care leavers.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Head of Service Cared for Children and Care leavers.
5.3	Publish and publicise the local authority's care leaver offer in accessible ways, in line with statutory guidance. Ensure that care leavers know what they are legally entitled to and are helped to access support after they leave care. Review the care leaver offer in partnership with care leavers when there is an annual review.	Clear knowledge and understanding of rights and entitlements. Care leaver offer to be published by autumn 2022.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Head of Service Cared for Children and Care leavers.
5.4	Ensure that all children in care and care leavers know how to make a complaint and have access to advocacy services.	Clear bi-monthly tracking through our independent visitor and advocacy service. Increased complaints as well as increased satisfactory resolution.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.
5.5	Involve children in care and care leavers in developing their plans for after care. Plans should take account of young people's wishes and concerns, when possible, including those related to feeling safe, where young people want to live, and what they want to do with their future.	Increased number of pathway plans completed and reviewed in timescale. % of care leavers in suitable accommodation.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Head of Service Cared for Children and Care leavers.

5.6	Work with Mark Riddell, Ambassador for care leavers, as he visits and offers further support to Cheshire East on our journey to excellence with our care experienced adults.	Ensure connection and wider learning and challenge regarding our local offer.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Head of Service Cared for Children and Care leavers.
5.7	Allocate cared for children a PA as close to age 16 as possible, in line with statutory guidance.	Early intervention and effective pathway planning. Increased understanding of plans for independence.	Head of Service Cared for Children and Care leavers.
5.8	Celebrate the achievements of our care leavers, during national care leavers week.	Recognition and praise for care leaver achievements throughout the year. Increased wider council and community understanding.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Head of Service Cared for Children and Care leavers.
5.9	Ensure that care leavers who become parents are well supported and have prioritisation of access to services.	Increase in care leavers being able to care for their children. Earlier referrals to early help services and family nurse partnership.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Head of Service Cared for Children and Care leavers.
5.10	Ensure care leavers are supported to make decisions that affect their lives e.g., housing, jobs, etc.	Effective pathway planning. number of 16-18 year olds completing Bronze/ silver / gold independence packs. number of 19-21 year olds completing Bronze/ silver / gold independence packs.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Head of Service Cared for Children and Care leavers.
5.11	Embed family networking and safety planning to reduce 16/17 year old homelessness and support young people to return to live at home sooner.	Reduction in number of 16/17 year olds becoming cared for. Increase in the numbers of 16/17 year olds returning to live with a family member.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Head of Service Cared for Children and Care leavers.

Pledge Six: We will work **TOGETHER** with children and young people

Feedback from our children and young people:

Children and young people have told us that the most important thing we can do is listen to them. We have developed an additional pledge to focus solely on participation (working together with children and young people) to ensure that children and young people are always at the heart of everything we do.

What are our priorities:

We will work **TOGETHER** with children and young people in all that we do.

We will work to make sure that participation is at the heart of everything that our staff, partners, and elected members do.

Cared for children and care leavers will be empowered to make decisions that affect their lives.

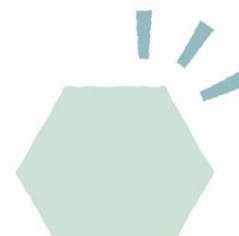
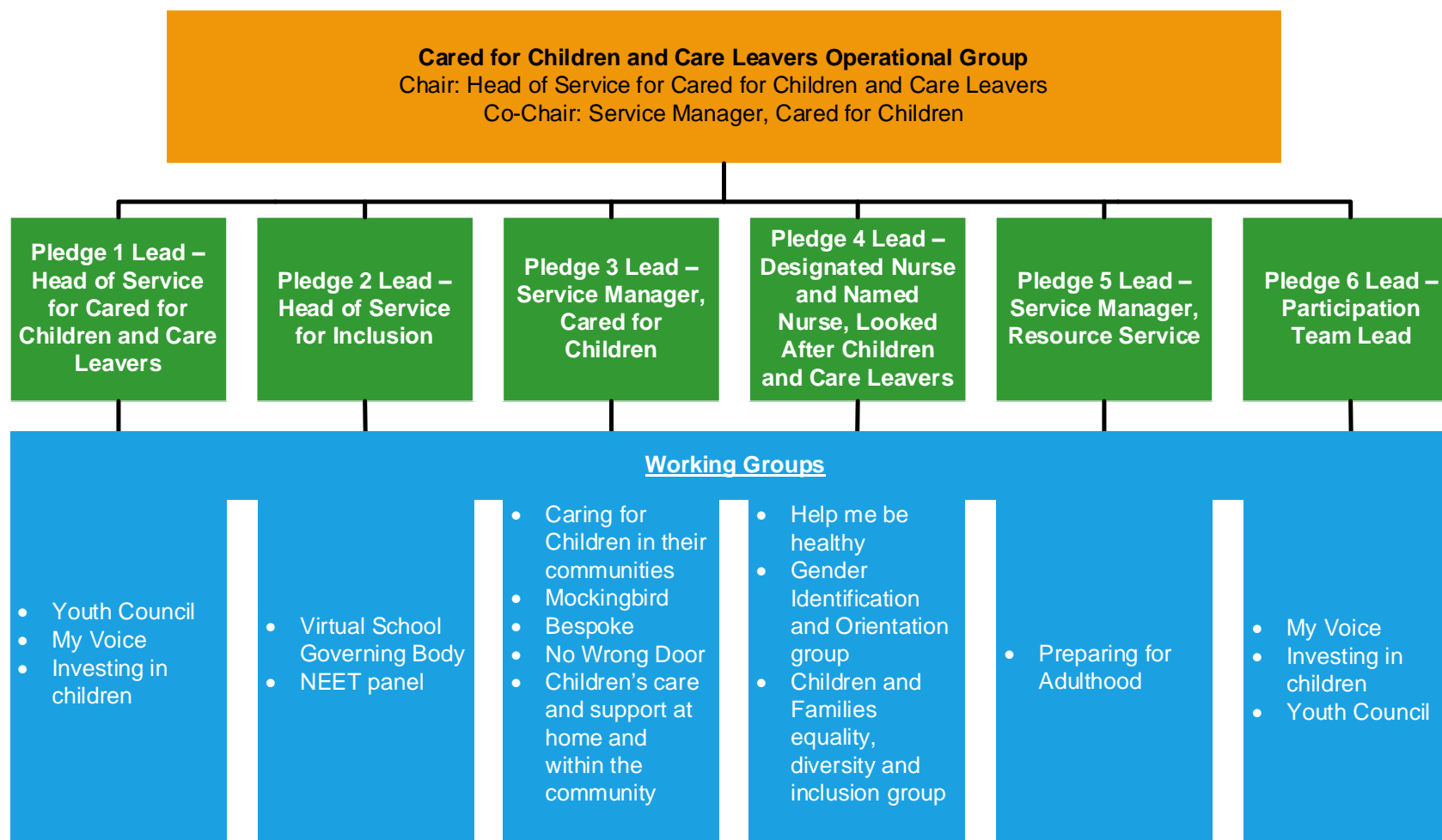


6. Year 1 (September 2022 – August 2023)

Ref	Action	How do we measure success	Who's responsible
6.1	Embed the TOGETHER approach with our children and young people, making sure that all staff, partners, and elected members are working to listen to and act on what children and young people tell us.	<p>Annual cared for and care leaver survey will tell us that children and young people feel they are listened to.</p> <p>The voice of cared for children and care leavers is clear in our key strategies, plans and services across the council.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>All staff, partners, and elected members.</p> <p>Participation Team.</p>
6.2	<p>Increase the range of opportunities and number of children and young people engaging in activities in ways that are helpful to them.</p> <p>Children and young people who don't wish to attend groups are able to share their views via 1-1 sessions with frontline colleagues and digital communication.</p>	Increase the number of children who can share their views in a variety of ways.	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Participation Team.</p>
6.3	Ensure opportunities for senior managers and elected members to hear direct from young people about their experiences and ideas.	Shadow Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee (tbc), evidence of change as a result of the voice of children and young people at Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee (tbc).	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>All staff, partners, and elected members.</p> <p>Participation Team.</p>
6.4	Following the annual survey of cared for children and care leavers, all services to evidence actions based on recommendations by children and young people.	<p>Each annual survey feedback will demonstrate how children and young people feel about the changes made.</p> <p>An increase in the numbers of children and young people completing the survey.</p>	<p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee (tbc) and Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group.</p> <p>Participation Team.</p>

		Children and young people will tell us that there have been positive changes as a result of the annual survey feedback.	
6.5	Ensure that the child's voice is evident in recruitment of all key posts in children's services.	All interview panels for key posts have involvement from cared for children and care leavers.	All services and teams, participation team to support where required.
6.6	Ensure that the child's voice is evident in the decision making when commissioning services.	Children and young people will be attending panels, presentations, judging and scoring.	Cared for Children and Care Leavers Operational Group. Participation Team. Commissioning Team.

Governance



If you have any views on this strategy or how we can improve our services, please contact us at corporateparenting@cheshireeast.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Cheshire East Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy
Strategy 2022 – 2026

VERSION CONTROL

Date	Version	Author	Description of Changes
18/03/22	1.1		Initial EIA
14/04/22	1.2		Update of data


EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Stage 1 Description: Fact finding (about your policy / service /

Department	Children's Social Care		Lead officer responsible for assessment		Kerry Birtles Director of Children's Social Care	
Service	Children and Young People		Other members of team undertaking assessment		Laura Hindhaugh Business Development Manager	
Date			Version		1.2	
Type of document (mark as appropriate)	Strategy ✓	Plan	Function	Policy	Procedure	Service
Is this a new/ existing/ revision of an existing document (please mark as appropriate)	New ✓		Existing		Revision	
Title and subject of the impact assessment (include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate and how it fits in with the wider aims of the organisation) Please attach a copy of the strategy/ plan/ function/ policy/ procedure/ service	<p>Cheshire East Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2022 – 2026</p> <p>In Cheshire East, we believe caring for our cared for children and care leavers is one of the most important responsibilities held by elected members, partner agencies, and individual staff working with children and young people in the care of the local authority. We want these children and young people to have the same opportunities and care as any good parent would want for their own child. The strategy sets out a number of pledges to improve outcomes for cared for children and care leavers, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will care for our cared for children and care leavers as any good parent would • We will improve education, employment and training outcomes • We will work to give all children and young people a forever home and to keep them safe • We will improve health and wellbeing outcomes. 					

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will prepare children and young people for adulthood. • We will work TOGETHER with children and young people <p>This strategy has been developed TOGETHER with children and young people. The 'Pledges' that we make to them are based on the things that they have told us matter most to them.</p> <p>The Cared for and Care Leavers strategy meets the strategic aims and objectives in the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25 as it contributes to 'A council which empowers and cares about people' and the priority to 'be the best Corporate Parents and improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people'.</p> <div data-bbox="696 608 752 667" data-label="Image">  </div> <p>Cared for Children and Care Leavers Stra</p>	
Who are the main stakeholders and have they been engaged with? (e.g. general public, employees, Councillors, partners, specific audiences, residents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children and young people ▪ Foster carers ▪ Councillors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Operational Staff ▪ Partners such as Health, Housing, Education.
What consultation method(s) did you use?	<p>Our Cared for and Care Leavers strategy has been developed with our cared for children and young people and care leavers, we have carried out a variety of group and one to one sessions to gain their views and an understanding of what matters most to them. Children and young people told us that the pledges in the current strategy still feel relevant, however they didn't like some of the language we use to talk about their lives, we have made changes to the new strategy to reflect this and have also changed the name of the strategy from Corporate Parenting Strategy to Cared for and Care Leavers strategy .We have also referred to the results of our care leavers survey carried out in November 2021 when developing this strategy.</p> <p>We conducted an online survey in March to give foster carers an opportunity to share their views and ideas during the development of the strategy. Their responses around the relevance of the pledges echoed that of the children and young people we spoke to, with some feeling the use of 'being a good corporate parent' is vague and lacks context. 72% felt that a pledge around participation should be included in our new strategy. Some foster carers commented that they would like improved communication with them to be included as part of the new strategy and</p>	

OFFICIAL

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

	<p>we have developed actions to support this in our action plan.</p> <p>We have held focus sessions during workstream groups and Corporate Parenting Operational Group where managers, operational staff, councillors and health colleagues were able to share their views on the priority areas and actions needed in the strategy.</p>
--	--

Stage 2 Initial Screening

<p>Who is affected and what evidence have you considered to arrive at this analysis? (This may or may not include the stakeholders listed above)</p>	<p>There are approximately 523 children and young people currently in the care of Cheshire East Council and 364 care leavers, we know that this cohort of children are among some of the most vulnerable in our community and we aim to improve outcomes for these children and young people.</p> <p>Currently there are 286 males and 236 females with one indeterminate cared for children.</p> <p>The age range of cared for children is as follows:</p> <p>0-4 years 97 children</p> <p>5-10 years 116 children</p> <p>11-15 years 186 children</p> <p>16+ years 124 children.</p> <p>The ethnicity of cared for children is as follows:</p> <p>White British 432</p> <p>White Other 22</p> <p>Chinese 2</p>
---	--

OFFICIAL

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

	<p>Pakistani 1</p> <p>White and Black Caribbean 9</p> <p>African 3</p> <p>Information not obtained 2</p> <p>Gypsy/ Roma 4</p> <p>Any other Asian Background 5</p> <p>White Asian 3</p> <p>Other Ethnic Group 19</p> <p>Other Mixed Background 13</p> <p>White and Black African 4</p> <p>Any other Black Background 3</p> <p>Traveller of Irish Heritage 1</p> <p>Indian 0</p> <p>Caribbean 0</p>
Who is intended to benefit and how?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children and young people in care of the local authority ▪ Young people who are care leavers ▪ Unaccompanied children (immigrants who are under the age of 18 years and are not under the care of a parent or legal guardian)

OFFICIAL

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

	<p>This strategy will help us to ensure we follow the 2017 the Children and Social Work Act Corporate Parenting Principles for children in care and care leavers up to the age of 25 years as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people 2. To encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings 3. To take account of their views, wishes and feelings 4. To help them gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners 5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people 6. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work 7. To prepare children in care and care leavers for adulthood
Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups?	The strategy supports the cared for children and care leavers in Cheshire East, who are some of the most vulnerable children in our community, it will not result in any adverse impact on any other part of the community.
Does it include making decisions based on individual characteristics, needs or circumstances?	Only to the extent of provision of support and services to Cheshire East children and young people who have life experiences of being cared for children or care leavers.
Are relations between different groups or communities likely to be affected? (eg will it favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others?)	No - The strategy supports the cared for children and care leavers in Cheshire East, who are some of the most vulnerable children in our community, it will not result in any adverse impact on any other part of the community.
Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality? Is there a history of unequal outcomes (do you have enough	All children and young people have a right to be treated equally and have their disability, gender, ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic needs met. As corporate parents for children and young people in care and care leavers, it is essential that the Council is able to demonstrate that it considers equality implications in all decisions made in relation

OFFICIAL

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

evidence to prove otherwise)?	to cared for children and care leavers. The new strategy will consider any actions to improve equality issues for cared for children and young people and care leavers (a vulnerable group because of their experiences) and ensure that they are supported to achieve the same outcomes as their peers.
-------------------------------	--

Is there an actual or potential negative impact on these specific characteristics? (Please **highlight**)

The implementation of this strategy addresses the potential negative impact on all specific characteristics to reduce the level of risk.

Age	Y	N	Marriage & civil partnership	Y	N	Religion & belief	Y	N
Disability	Y	N	Pregnancy & maternity	Y	N	Sex	Y	N
Gender reassignment	Y	N	Race	Y	N	Sexual orientation	Y	N

What evidence do you have to support your findings? (quantitative and qualitative) Please provide additional information that you wish to include as appendices to this document, i.e., graphs, tables, charts							Level of risk (High, Medium or Low)	
Age			The age range of cared for children in Cheshire East shows that we have more 11 plus aged children in care. We will need to continually recruit experienced carers who can look after more challenging children and young people, including teenagers.				Low	
Disability			Factors that lead to a disabled child becoming looked after are complex, factors can include family stress, abuse or neglect, and parental illness. We are working to recruit more carers who can care for disabled children, including short breaks foster carers.				Low	

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Gender reassignment	Gender identity and sexual orientation issues may be masked by behavioural and Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health (EWMH) difficulties making early intervention and support more difficult to deliver effectively. We provide support and training to foster carers to support children and young people and through the delivery of this strategy will ensure that Cared for Children and Care Leavers have their health assessed in a timely way, leading to appropriate support where needed.	Low	
Marriage & civil partnership	Cheshire East will highlight to potential foster carers that they do not need to be married in order to foster, and that single people can foster too, as well as those in civil partnerships, and living with their partner. We continue to raise awareness through our market and recruitment activity on social media and through events such as Foster Care Fortnight.	Low	
Pregnancy & maternity	Research shows that girls in care are around three times more likely than the average to become teenage mothers and figures also suggest at least one in 10 care-leavers who become parents have their children taken into care. We have made it an action within this strategy to support care leavers that become parents through prisonisation of access to services and earlier referrals to support services.	Low	
Race	An increasing number of asylum-seeking children are becoming cared for in Cheshire East as part of the National Transfer Scheme (NTS). Many of these children may have experienced trauma, which means that they often need more specialist care. We continue to work with our Marketing and Communications Team on launching a fresh campaign for Foster Care Fortnight to launch our new 'BE THERE' campaign and to consolidate our targeted recruitment to attract more foster carers who can offer home to sibling groups, teenagers, and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Through the delivery of this strategy we will ensure that practitioners understand and meet the diverse health needs of our children and young people, including those with health inequalities faced by race, ethnicity, ability and disability and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.	Low	
Religion & belief	We are aware of the importance to some children and young people of the religious observance of their family's traditional religion. Our fostering recruitment aims to seek a diverse range of carers who can support children and young people from a variety of	Low	

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

	religions and beliefs.		
Sex	In Cheshire East we have a slightly higher number of boys than girls in care which reflects the national demographic profile. We regularly monitor this figure and through our marketing and recruitment campaign continue to ensure that we recruit foster carers who are experienced to support male and female children and young people.	Low	
Sexual orientation	Research by Action for Children in 2013 revealed that 32% of LGBT people in the UK believe that being LGBT means you cannot foster, a misconception which must be challenged. Cheshire East is talking this by attending events such as Virtual Pride event whereby a fostering couple from the LGBTQA+ community talked about fostering for the council.	Low	
Proceed to full impact assessment? (Please tick)	Yes	No ✓	Date: 14 April 2022
Lead officer sign off	Laura Hindhaugh	Date: 09 May 2022	
Head of Service sign off	Kerry Birtles	Date: 09 May 2022	

If yes, please proceed to Stage 3. If no, please publish the initial screening as part of the suite of documents relating to this issue

Please publish this completed EIA form on the relevant section of the Cheshire East website

OFFICIAL

This page is intentionally left blank



Working for a brighter future together

Children and Families Committee

Date of Meeting:	11 July 2022
Report Title:	Children and Young People's Plan, 2022-25
Report of:	Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's Services
Report Reference No:	CF/12/22-23
Ward(s) Affected:	All wards

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report sets out our new Children and Young People's Plan for Cheshire East which sets out the ambition of the partnerships to improve outcomes for all our children and young people. Whilst some of our support is targeted at groups of children and young people, the aim is that as a partnership we improve outcomes for all Cheshire East children through our universal services.
- 1.2. The Children and Young People's Plan meets the strategic aims and objectives in the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25 as it contributes to 'A council which empowers and cares about people' and the priority 'All children to have the best start in life with ongoing opportunities to maximise their potential'.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The purpose of the Children and Young People's Plan is to support the aim that every child and young person in Cheshire East will have the best start in life, be safe, happy, healthy and to reach their potential. The outcome areas set out in the plan that we want to achieve for all of our children and young people are:

Outcome 1 – Children and young people we care for are happy and given every opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Outcome 2 – Children and young people are and feel safe.

Outcome 3 – Children and young people are happy and experience good mental health and wellbeing.

Outcome 4 – Children and young people are healthy and make positive choices

Outcome 5 – Children and young people leave school with the best skills and qualifications they can achieve and the life skills they need to thrive into adulthood.

Outcome 6 – Children, young people and young adults with additional needs have better life chances.

Outcome 7 – Children and young people have access to early help and prevention when they need it.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1.** The Children and Families Committee is recommended to endorse the Children and Young People's Plan 2022-26.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1.** The Children and Families Committee is recommended to endorse the Children and Young People's Plan 2022-26 to ensure that we have a current and relevant plan, put together with Cheshire East children and young people, to improve their outcomes.

5. Other Options Considered

- 5.1.** There is an option not to have a Children and Young People's Plan, but that would mean not listening to what children and young people have asked for and potentially lead to silo working across partnerships.

6. Background

- 6.1.** The existing Children and Young People's plan runs from 2019 to 2021. Feedback from children and young people during the development of the new plan was that the overarching outcomes of this plan are still relevant, so only minor amendments have been made to refresh these.
- 6.2.** As children and young people told us that early help and prevention is important to them, an additional outcome has been added to the plan to reflect this.
- 6.3.** The Children and Young People's Plan will run from 2022-26. Children and young people told us that they would like the plan to remain relevant. We have therefore set out our priorities for 2022-23 and will refresh these priorities on an annual basis, reflecting on what we have achieved and what we still need to do.
- 6.4.** Each outcome has a lead partnership agency, a named outcome lead and a named young person lead, who will work together and report progress to the Cheshire East Children and Young People's Trust (CYPT).

7. Consultation and Engagement

- 7.1.** The Children and Young People's Plan 2022-26 has been developed TOGETHER with Cheshire East Youth Council and the Children and Young People's Trust. The Cheshire East Children and Young People's Trust (CYPT), includes representatives from children and young people, and staff from a range of agencies across the partnership such as the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Safeguarding Children Partnership and the 0-25 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Partnership.

8. Implications

8.1. Legal

- 8.1.1.** There is a range of legislation and statutory guidance that sets out the role of the local authority and partners in respect of children and young people, including the Children Act 2004 that focuses on the wellbeing of children and young people and the Children Act 1989 that defines the local authority's broader range of duties and responsibilities.
- 8.1.2.** Whilst there is no legal duty to produce a children and young people's plan, doing so promotes and enables engagement in the prioritisation of cross-cutting outcomes and actions across the partnership.
- 8.1.3.** The outcomes within the new plan will be developed in line with current legislation and best practice.

8.2. Finance

- 8.2.1.** There are no direct finance implications of this plan. Individual projects and actions that have financial implications either have finances already agreed or will go through the relevant approval processes before progressing.

8.3. Policy

- 8.3.1.** Cheshire East is ambitious and committed to ensuring that together we will make Cheshire East a great place to be young. Our priorities for improving outcomes for children and young people are driven through the Council's Corporate Plan, the Children and Young People's Plan, and the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy. Amendments to the plan may be required in line with emerging policies such as the SEND and alternative provision green paper, the schools white paper and proposals from the independent review of social care.

8.4. Equality

- 8.4.1.** Good quality practice with families ensures that all children and young people's needs are considered and supported.
- 8.4.2.** An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and will be published with the endorsed plan.

8.5. Human Resources

- 8.5.1.** There are no direct HR issues in developing the new plan, although delivery of the outcomes will need sufficient staff with the right skills to deliver them.

8.6. Risk Management

- 8.6.1.** There are reputational and financial risks of not providing good children's services, as well as risks to individual children and young people. The plan enables engagement across partnerships to ensure agencies are working together to provide quality services to improve outcomes for all our children and young people.

8.7. Rural Communities

- 8.7.1.** The Children and Young People's Plan aims to improve outcomes for all children across all communities in Cheshire East. This includes ensuring that our services can be accessed in a range of ways to benefit those living in our rural communities.

8.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

- 8.8.1.** Our plans intend to improve the experiences and outcomes for all children and young people across the borough, in particular those that are most vulnerable.

8.9. Public Health

- 8.9.1.** The Children and Young People's Plan aims to address health inequalities for children and young people. Outcomes 3 and 5 specifically aim to improve the physical and mental health of children and young people.

8.10. Climate Change

- 8.10.1.** Children's services continue to support the council with climate change objectives.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Laura Hindhaugh Laura.Hindhaugh@cheshireeast.gov.uk 07442 963620
Appendices:	Appendix 1- Children and Young People's Plan, 2022-26 Appendix 2- Equality Impact Assessment
Background Papers:	The Children and Young People Plan 2019-21 can be found at: https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/livewell/childrens-trust/children-and-young-peoples-plan-2019-21.pdf



Cheshire East

Children & Young
People's Trust

Children and Young People's Plan

2022-26 Draft





Contents

Foreword.....	3
Introduction	5
Jargon buster:	7
Outcome 1 - Children and young people we care for are happy and able to achieve their full potential.....	8
Outcome 2 – Children and young people feel and are safe.....	10
Outcome 3 – Children and young people are happy and experience good mental health and wellbeing	12
Outcome 4 – Children and young people are healthy and make positive choices.....	14
Outcome 5 – Children and young people leave school with the best skills and qualifications they can achieve and the life skills they need to thrive in adulthood	16
Outcome 6 – Children and young people with additional needs have the support they need to achieve and be happy	18
Outcome 7 – Children and young people have earlier access to support when they need it	20
Summary of our Plan and priorities.....	22
How we will know we have made a difference.....	24
How we will check on our progress.....	24





Foreword

The Children and Young People's Plan 2022-26 has been developed **TOGETHER** with Cheshire East Youth Council and the Children and Young People's Trust. As young people we are members of the Cheshire East Children and Young People's Trust (CYPT), alongside people who provide services for children, young people and families. We work with other groups, such as the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Safeguarding Children Partnership and the 0-25 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Partnership to make the lives of children and young people better.

The 7 main outcomes of the plan are:

Outcome 1 - Children and young people we care for are happy and able to achieve their full potential.

Outcome 2 - Children and young people feel and are safe.

Outcome 3 - Children and young people are happy and experience good mental health and wellbeing.

Outcome 4 - Children and young people are healthy and make positive choices.

Outcome 5 - Children and young people leave school with the best skills and qualifications they can and achieve and the life skills they need thrive in adulthood.

Outcome 6 - Children, young people and young adults with additional needs have better life chances.

Outcome 7 - Children and young people have earlier access to support when they need it.

When we reviewed our last plan (2019-21), we discussed what we would want for ourselves and other children and young people in our community in the next plan. All of these link to the main 7 outcomes, including that children and young people in Cheshire East:

- Have the right to be equal.
- Feel safe – everywhere and not just at school.
- Can be who they want to be and celebrate diversity.
- Feel happy and represented.
- Have a voice and are listened to.

OFFICIAL

3





We also discussed what success would look like for children and young people:

- Children and young people would feel and know about the impact of the Children and Young People's Plan.
- Children and young people would know who is responsible for services and decisions that affect their lives.
- Children and young people will know who to go to and where to go for support.
- Children and young people will work **TOGETHER** with professionals.

We feel that getting the plan right and following through with actions will mean that Cheshire East continues to be a great place to be young and provide a brighter future **TOGETHER**.



Cheshire East Youth Council Members



Deborah Woodcock
Executive Director of Children's Service





Introduction

Our new Children and Young People's Plan for Cheshire East sets out the partnerships' ambition to improve outcomes for all our children and young people. This is our 4-year plan. We have set our year one priorities and will review these each year using annual reviews and reports to ensure our priorities remain relevant to children and young people.

We are committed to continually improving outcomes for children and young people in these changing times, and we will ensure that we respond to key legislation and developing priorities.

Within our plan, some support is targeted at particular groups of children and young people, however, our aim is that as a partnership we will improve outcomes for all Cheshire East children and young people through our universal services such as education and health settings, libraries, leisure centres and other council and partner services.

During the development of our plan, children and young people told us about the importance of being able to access help when they need it, to prevent problems from getting worse. To reflect this, and to ensure we have a focus on early help across the partnership, we have added an additional outcome 'Children and young people have earlier access to support when they need it'.





The Together Principles

TOGETHER in Cheshire East

TOGETHER is our shared definition of coproduction in Cheshire East because it is inclusive to all.

Teamwork when designing, delivering and evaluating individual support and services

Open-minded ideas and discussions

Genuine communication for all parties involved

Equal partners help to shape and improve support for all

Trust each other to make the right decisions

Honest

Engage and empower children, young people, adults and families

Respect for everyone's views and opinions

Working TOGETHER as equal partners towards a common goal for all of our children, young people, adults living in Cheshire East.

Our **TOGETHER** Values and Commitment

We will...

- Listen to your views
- Communicate honestly
- Trust each other
- Be person centred
- Adapt to people's needs
- Respect and value all opinions
- Do what we say we will

We won't...

- Use jargon or acronyms
- Give too much information
- Rush meetings
- Take too long to complete our actions
- Be judgemental

Here is some further information about our four key principles of **TOGETHER** going forward, and who is involved in delivering that.



Co-Involvement

We will involve and engage with you from the very start to make you aware of changes to services and policy. Your needs will be identified and views are welcomed at every stage.

Co-Design

We will work closely with you to plan and design your individual support, services, and policy making sure that children, young people, adults and families are at the centre of those services.

Co-Delivery

We will plan and deliver services together ensuring your voice is heard and acted on at every stage.

Co-Evaluation

We offer opportunities for feedback so that we can improve your experience.

OFFICIAL

6





Jargon buster: Although we have tried to make this plan simple, there are some words that might need explaining.

Jargon	Meaning
CAMHS	NHS service to assess and support children and young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties.
Cared for child or young person	Those children and young people who the local authority look after when they are not able to live with their families. Often this will be with other family members, or perhaps in foster care or residential care.
Care Leaver	An adult (an adult 18 or over) who has spent time in care before the age of 18.
Commissioned Provider	A service we have chosen to do a piece of work.
Contextual Safeguarding	Where we are worried about the risk of harm to children and young people from people beyond their family.
Co-Production	Working on a project from the start to the end with those who use the service. In Cheshire East, we call this TOGETHER
County Lines	Groups or gangs that use young people to carry and sell drugs from borough to borough, and across county boundaries.
EHC	Education, health, and care.
Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	A plan for children and young people aged 0-25 in education who have additional needs.
Green paper	Proposals made following a government review into how services can better help children and young people with SEND.
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)	When agencies come together to look at the health, care and wellbeing needs of a community.
Multi-Agency	When a range of different agencies such as health, education or social care work together.
NEET	Unemployed or not in training or in education.
Neglect strategy	A plan that we will work to across the partnership to support children and
No Wrong Door	A new way of providing support to young people who are within or on the edge of the care system. It compliments traditional council-run young peoples' homes with hubs which combine residential care with fostering.
Quality Assurance	Checking that services are delivering things to a good standard.
SEND	A child or young person who has a learning difficulty and/or a disability that means they need special health and education support, which is shortened to SEND (special educational needs and/or disabilities).
Targeted Offer	Support and services for children, young people and families with low level worries who need some extra help.
Universal Offer	Support and services for all children, young people and families.
White paper	A government paper detailing how the education system will ensure all children are supported to achieve their potential.





Outcome 1 - Children and young people we care for are happy and able to achieve their full potential

Why this is a priority - Cared for children face some of the biggest challenges in life. Their experiences before they come into care can impact significantly on their outcomes. However, with the right support, we can shape their future happiness and set the foundations for what they can achieve throughout their adult lives. This responsibility means that all those working in children's services must do for them what any good parent would do for their own child.

Our children and young people asked us to:

- Always think about the language we use when working with them so that it is straightforward, and say what we mean.
- change some of the phrases we use when talking about their lives, e.g., permanence and corporate parenting.

Our year one priorities for 2022-23 will focus on the following:

Our previous Corporate Parenting Strategy has been refreshed and is now our Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2022-26. The plan sets out the following pledges to improve outcomes across different areas, ie, we will:

- **Care for our cared for children and care leavers as any good parent would.**
Develop a new governance structure to deliver the new Cared for Children and Care Leavers strategy and actions.
- **Improve education, employment and training outcomes.**
Ensure a robust action plan is in place to reduce NEET and encourage re-engagement opportunities for our care leavers.
- **Work to give all children and young people a forever home and to keep them safe.**
Development of the No Wrong Door model and principles within Cheshire East.
- **Improve health and wellbeing outcomes.**
Develop an effective tool that can be used to measure health outcomes for cared for children.
- **Prepare young people for adulthood.**
Ensure care leavers are supported to make decisions that affect their lives such as housing, jobs, etc.
- **Work TOGETHER with children and young people.**
Embed the **TOGETHER** approach with our children and young people, making sure that all staff, partners and elected members are working to listen to and act on what children and young people tell us.

OFFICIAL

8





Outcome 1 – Continued

Lead partnership responsible: Corporate Parenting Committee.

We will know we have made a difference when:

- More children and young people live closer to their families.
- More care leavers in education, employment or training.
- More of our cared for children will have a forever home with foster carers.
- More of our care leavers will have a health passport.
- More of our care leavers will have a plan in place for their future (a pathway plan).





Outcome 2 – Children and young people feel and are safe

Why this is a priority - We want all children and young people to be safe and to feel safe in their families and communities. We must tackle the risks that they face, including issues such as bullying, domestic violence, substance misuse and more complex safeguarding issues such as neglect, sexual exploitation and county lines. To achieve this, we need to work together as a partnership and with all services that support children and young people to identify when help is needed and how best to provide that help. By reducing levels of risk to children and helping families, we can lessen the impact and reduce and prevent problems from reoccurring.

Our children and young people asked us to think about:

- Sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- Resilience and recovery.

Our year one priorities for 2022-23 will focus on the following:

- Work as a partnership to protect children and young people from **contextual safeguarding**.
- Support the **emotional health and wellbeing of our vulnerable children and young people**.
- Develop a **Pan-Cheshire 'All Age Exploitation Policy'** to support those older children transitioning into adulthood that still require support.
- Develop the **connectivity between community mental health services and early help provision** to reduce the number of children who need additional support and care in hospital (called a tier 4 bed).
- Continue to **implement our plan to achieve consistently good quality social work practice** and have high ambition for children and young people.
- **Embed our Neglect Strategy** and work as a partnership to deliver this, to reduce the number of children and young people who experience neglect and the duration they experience it.
- Continue to **embed our SHOUT campaign to raise awareness of sexual harassment** and support schools and colleges to address these issues.
- **Respond to the findings of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care** to improve the child protection system and support families to care for their children and keep them safe from harm as effectively as possible.

OFFICIAL

10





Outcome 2 – Continued

Lead partnership responsible: Safeguarding Children Partnership.

We will know we have made a difference when:

- Fewer children, young people and families will need to have support from services more than once.
- More children, young people and families having assessments completed on time (in 45 days) to identify the right support.
- More children, young people and families having their CP plans reviewed on time to ensure the right support is in place.
- More contacts made to the front door will have a completed neglect screening tool, to help identify support.
- We will provide good or outstanding services to children and young people, as recognised by Ofsted.





Outcome 3 – Children and young people are happy and experience good mental health and wellbeing

Why this is a priority - Children's emotional wellbeing is just as important as their physical health. Improving mental health for mothers (called maternal mental health) is a key influence in children's outcomes therefore services will be offered to ensure children have the best start in life and parents are supported during parenthood. Good mental health helps children and young people to develop the resilience they need to cope with future challenges in life. Many of our young people have told us that COVID-19 has had a big impact on their mental health. Most mental health problems are preventable and almost all are treatable.

Our children and young people asked us to think about:

- A whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing.
- The increase in mental illnesses, e.g. psychosis and eating disorders.

Our year one priorities for 2022-23 will focus on the following:

- Continue to **deliver Cheshire East's All Age Mental Health Strategy 2019-2022**, which sets out a whole system approach to improve the mental health and wellbeing of individuals and their families, including improving mental services for our most vulnerable children and young people such as, those in transition (ie, between services), children and young people with autism and learning disability, cared for children and young people and care leavers, those in supported employment, those at risk of entering or in the youth justice system; and those who are experiencing or have experienced abuse. It also sets out plans to improve crisis care services. We will work to **update this strategy and consider any new priority areas identified for 2023**.
- **Revisit the Taboo conference model** to deliver an updated event that considers the wellbeing of young people post COVID-19.
- **Improve maternal mental health in pregnancy and during parenthood** to ensure all children have the best start in life.
- Undertake a deep dive needs assessment (known as a joint strategic needs assessment) to help us **better understand the emotional and mental wellbeing needs of children and young people** and ways we can support and work with families to improve emotional and mental wellbeing.

OFFICIAL

12





Outcome 3 – Continued

Lead partnership responsible: Cheshire East Mental Health Partnership.

We will know we have made a difference when:

- More children and young people who report good wellbeing.
- Improved waiting times for access to services.
- Fewer children and young people reported to have attend A&E due to self-harm.
- Improved availability of information to children and young people.
- Improved numbers of parents reporting good mental health.
- Improved numbers of parents reporting good maternal mental health.





Outcome 4 – Children and young people are healthy and make positive choices

Why this is a priority - In general, the health of children and young people in Cheshire East is good. However, there are still some big differences across the borough, which means that the quality of health and how long a person lives depends on where they grow old in Cheshire East. We want to work to address these inequalities by providing extra help for those who need it more.

Our children and young people asked us to think about:

- COVID-19 recovery.
- Sexual health, rights and consent.

Our year one priorities for 2022-23 will focus on the following:

- Deliver our **Cheshire East Partnership Five-Year Plan for 2019-2024 to tackle inequalities.**
- Undertake a deep dive **needs assessment around the impact of poverty** to help us understand the impact of poverty on both children and adults and identify ways we can further support and work with those experiencing poverty to improve their health and wellbeing.
- Undertake a deep dive **needs assessment focusing on Crewe which will help us understand health and wellbeing challenges**, and ways we can support and work with people in Crewe to improve their wellbeing.
- Undertake a deep dive **needs assessment on Special Educational Needs and Disability, Autism and Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder** to understand health and overall wellbeing in children experiencing these challenges and ways we can support to improve their wellbeing.
- **Review how we can adjust spending across children's services** to ensure we are funding the right services to help children and young people at the right time.
- **Support the promotion of inclusivity of LGBTQIA** (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex and asexual and allies) young people in school/education to help support better health outcomes within this community from increased confidence, sense of self and belonging.
- **Develop our child health hubs** with a focus on responding to the findings of 1001 critical days review, maternity wellbeing, respiratory, obesity, SEND and children and young people's mental health





- Develop Services that support **drug and alcohol awareness** with our commissioned provider Change, Grow, Live (CGL) to include training in schools and education settings and children's services.

Outcome 4 – Continued

Lead partnership responsible: Cheshire East Integrated Care Partnership.

We will know we have made a difference when:

- More children being seen in health clinics.
- More babies born with a healthy birth weight.
- Levels of infant mortality have improved.
- More children experience better dental health
- More children have a healthy weight.
- Fewer children and young people going into hospital for common conditions.
- Fewer children and young people experiencing the impact of parental substance misuse.





Outcome 5 – Children and young people leave school with the best skills and qualifications they can achieve and the life skills they need to thrive in adulthood

Why this is a priority - Most children in Cheshire East have access to high quality education across our early year's settings, schools and colleges. Whilst we strive for the best outcomes for every learner, a number of our more vulnerable pupils do not always access full time education, employment or training and therefore this impacts on their future opportunities in life. There are also certain groups that do less well than their peers in terms of academic progress and personal development and we need to address these inequalities. The recent white paper for education and the green paper for SEND will help us shape the strategic vision for our young people going forward and ensure Cheshire East continues to be an excellent place to live and achieve.

Our children and young people asked us to think about:

- Keeping them safe in education from sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- Increasing the availability of apprenticeships and supported internships.

Our priorities for 2022-23 will focus on the following:

- Develop and **deliver the next stage in our school organisation plan** to ensure we have sufficient school places/provision including for children with special education needs.
- **Respond to the emerging agenda as outlined in the recent white paper and green paper for SEND.**
- Develop a collaborative support framework for attendance and behaviour in settings.
- **Review our early years support** through better use of national best practice.
- **Embed Education Wellbeing recovery** to enable schools to support the wellbeing of staff and children and young people in our education settings.
- Support children and young people to access **further education, training or employment through our Journey First programme.**





Outcome 5 – Continued

Lead partnership responsible: Education Extended Senior Leadership.

We will know we have made a difference when:

- More of our primary, secondary and special schools will be good or outstanding.
- More of our vulnerable children and young people are in full time education (ie, not missing education, low attendance, excluded etc.).
- Improved annual outcomes for disadvantaged learners at the end of key stage 2 and 4.
- More young people are in education, employment or training (NEET).





Outcome 6 – Children and young people with additional needs have the support they need to achieve and be happy

Why this is a priority – Our vision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is the same as for all children and young people - that they achieve well in all aspects of their lives and are happy, fulfilled and play an active role in their communities. We want children and young people with SEND and their families to feel supported by all services in Cheshire East through earlier support to receive high quality education, care and health provision.

Our children and young people asked us to think about:

- Preparing for adulthood and social activities
- Support in transitions moving between provision and services

Our year one priorities for 2022-23 will focus on the following:

To deliver SEND Strategy 2021-2024 with a focus on the following 5 priorities:

- **Improve communication and coproduction with families who have children with SEND.**
We will ensure we work **TOGETHER** with families in all that we do.
- **Ensure children and young people with SEND have access to the provision and support they need.**
We will provide early support and access to good quality, local schools.
- **Improve the timeliness and quality of the annual reviews of EHC plans.**
EHC plans will consider the whole range of needs of children and young people and will include preparation for adulthood.
- **Ensure we have an effective and supported workforce.**
A workforce that is knowledgeable and flexible, passionate, and dedicated.
- **Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.**
We will have an effective SEND partnership that manages crisis situations well.





Outcome 6 – Continued

Lead partnership responsible: 0 -25 SEND Partnership.

We will know we have made a difference when:

- More Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) will be completed in 20 weeks.
- More requests for advice from an Educational Psychologist will be completed within 6 weeks.
- More EHCP plans will be graded as good or outstanding.
- Children and young people will spend less time waiting for an autism assessment.





Outcome 7 – Children and young people have earlier access to support when they need it

Why this is a priority - Having a strong universal and targeted early help offer is important to ensure we provide families with the support they need as soon as they need it, and we prevent problems from getting bigger. Without this early support, problems can cause serious harm to children and young people in the long term and become more difficult to address. A range of agencies are involved in identifying where families need additional support, and in providing early help. A consistent and coordinated approach across the partnership ensures all families can expect the same support and good quality service no matter what their needs are and where they live.

Our children and young people told us:

It's vital to have an outcome around early help as it's important to get help before it's too late.

Our year one priorities for 2022-23 will focus on the following:

- **Respect and build on the relationships and trust families have in us**, work with children and families and keep children's lived experience is at the centre of all we do.
- Ensure our **workforce across the partnership has the support, skills and training they need** to deliver good quality support to families
- **Strengthen the Early Help Board** to drive workstreams to improve outcomes for children.
- **Develop an early help offer that gives parents and families the best chance to adapt and thrive when they are struggling** to cope and supports older children that have had adverse childhood experiences. Improve outcomes for children and young people by making sure staff can identify and tackle problems early.
- **Strengthen our Integrated early years offer** particularly focussed on universal and targeted provision that supports early intervention and develop our offer so that more of our children meet their early developmental milestones and are school ready.
- **Embed the principles of Family Hubs**, so professionals work together to deliver early help and preventative services for families aligned to our schools, academies, and early years settings to ensure we improve access to advice, help and support at the earliest opportunity.
- Empower families by developing a **parenting strategy** to support children, young people and families by commissioning evidence-based programmes and services.

OFFICIAL

20





Outcome 7 – Continued

Lead partnership responsible: Early Help Together Board.

We will know we have made a difference when:

- More children and young people being supported by partner agencies.
- More children being supported to access early education through 2-year-old and 3/4-year-old funding.
- More children will be ready to start school with a good level of development in early years foundation stage.
- More children who are at or above the expected level in communication skills as part of their 2 - 2/12-year review
- More children and young people being accessing the Youth Support Service.
- Fewer children and young people entering the youth justice system for the first time.
- Fewer children experiencing the impact of parental conflict.





Summary of our Plan and priorities

Outcome 1 – Children and young people we care for are happy and able to achieve their full potential.

- Care for our cared for children and care leavers as any good parent would.
- Improve education, employment and training outcomes.
- Work to give all children and young people a forever home and to keep them safe.
- Improve health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Prepare young people for adulthood.
- Work TOGETHER with children and young people.
-

Outcome 2 – Children and young people feel and are safe.

- Work as a partnership to protect children and young people from contextual safeguarding.
- Support the emotional health and wellbeing of our vulnerable children.
- Develop a pan-Cheshire 'All Age Exploitation Policy'.
- Develop the connectivity between community mental health services and early help provision.
- Continue to implement our plan to achieve consistently good quality social work practice.
- Embed our Neglect Strategy.
- Continue to embed our SHOUT campaign to raise awareness of sexual harassment and support schools and colleges to address these issues.

Outcome 3 – Children and young people are happy and experience good mental health and wellbeing.

- Deliver Cheshire East's All Age Mental Health Strategy 2019-2022 and review for 2023.
- Revisit the Taboo conference model.
- Improve maternal mental health in pregnancy and during parenthood.
- Needs assessment to better understand the emotional and mental wellbeing needs of children and young people and their parents.

Outcome 4 – Children and young people are healthy and make positive choices.

- Deliver our Cheshire East Partnership Five-Year Plan for 2019-2024 to tackle inequalities.
- Undertake a deep dive needs assessment around the impact of poverty, focusing on the Crewe area.
- Review how we can improve spending across children's services.
- Support the promotion of inclusivity of LGBTQIA.
- Develop our child health hubs with a focus on maternity wellbeing, respiratory, obesity, SEND and children and young people's mental health.

OFFICIAL
22





Summary of our Plan and priorities – Continued

Outcome 5 - Children and young people leave school with the best skills and qualifications they can achieve and the life skills they need to thrive in adulthood.

- Develop and deliver the next stage in our school organisation plan.
- Embed Education Well-being recovery.
- Respond to the emerging agenda as outlined in the recent white paper and green paper for SEND.
- Develop a collaborative support framework for attendance and behaviour in settings.
- Review our early years support through better use of national practice.
- Support children and young people to access further education, training or employment through our Journey First programme.

Outcome 6 – Children and young people with additional needs have the support they need to achieve and be happy.

- Implement our SEND Strategy 2021-2024 with a focus on the following 5 priorities:
- Improve communication and coproduction with families who have children with SEND.
- Ensure children and young people with SEND have access to the provision and support they need.
- Improve the timeliness and quality of the annual reviews of EHC Plans.
- Ensure we have an effective and supported workforce.
- Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Outcome 7 – Children and young people have earlier access to support when they need it.

- Respect and build on the relationships and trust families have in us.
- Ensure our workforce across the partnership has the support, skills and training they need to deliver good quality support to families.
- Strengthen the Early Help Board.
- Develop an early help offer.
- Strengthen our Integrated early years offer.
- Embed the principles of Family Hubs.
- Develop a parenting strategy.





How we will know we have made a difference

We will measure the success of this plan against the difference we make to the lives of our children and young people. We will use the following sources to inform us on how well we are performing, what's working well, and where we need to take action to achieve change.

What our performance tells us

We have a number of scorecards in place which tell us how well we are performing. The Trust will monitor the key measures set out in this plan, along with any other relevant information, to check changes in performance over time.

What our audits tell us

A number of single and multi-agency audits are carried out across children's services. We will use the findings of these to tell us whether the quality of what we are doing is getting better.

What young people and their families tell us

We will continue to work **TOGETHER** with our young people and their families as they are the experts on what works for them.

What staff tell us

We will listen to what staff working directly with children, young people and their families tell us as they have a good insight into what needs to improve.

How we will check on our progress

Each outcome has the following:

A lead partnership – this is the multi-agency partnership that has the most focus on the outcome area and will closely monitor progress.

An officer outcome lead – This officer will be the key link between the lead partnership and the Trust and will coordinate information to the Trust on progress and issues.

A young person outcome lead – There will be at least one young person with a focus on each outcome area. They will link with the officer outcome lead to ensure that work is done **TOGETHER**.

Progress against our plan will be monitored by the Children and Young People's Trust. Progress against individual outcome areas will also be monitored by the lead partnership.

OFFICIAL

24





Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) is the overarching board for the Trust. The HWBB will sign off this plan; ongoing updates will be provided to the board. Individual agencies will also be encouraged to share progress and issues through their own governance and other relevant boards will be informed/consulted, as appropriate.

Following each meeting, the Trust will continue to send out an easy read newsletter to update all on progress.



If you have any views on this plan or how we can improve our services, please contact us at Childrenstrust@cheshireeast.gov.uk



This page is intentionally left blank

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Cheshire East Children and Young People’s Plan

VERSION CONTROL

Date	Version	Author	Description of Changes
18/03/22	1.1		Initial EIA
01/05/22	1.2		Data updates

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT


CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Stage 1 Description: Fact finding (about your policy / service /

Department	Children's Services		Lead officer responsible for assessment		Gill Betton Head of Service, Children's Development and Partnerships.	
Service	Children and Young People		Other members of team undertaking assessment		Laura Hindhaugh Business Development Manager, Children's Development and Partnerships.	
Date			Version		1.2	
Type of document (mark as appropriate)	Strategy	Plan ✓	Function	Policy	Procedure	Service
Is this a new/ existing/ revision of an existing document (please mark as appropriate)	New ✓		Existing		Revision	
Title and subject of the impact assessment (include a brief description of the aims, outcomes , operational issues as appropriate and how it fits in with the wider aims of the organisation) Please attach a copy of the strategy/ plan/ function/ policy/ procedure/ service	<u>Cheshire East Children and Young People's Plan</u> The purpose of the Children and Young People's Plan is to support the aim that every child and young person in Cheshire East will have the best start in life, be safe, happy, healthy and to reach their potential. The outcome areas set out in the plan that we want to achieve for all of our children and young people are: Outcome 1 – Children and young people we care for are happy and given every opportunity to achieve their full potential. Outcome 2 – Children and young people are and feel safe. Outcome 3 – Children and young people are happy and experience good mental health and wellbeing. Outcome 4 – Children and young people are healthy and make positive choices Outcome 5 – Children and young people leave school with the best skills and qualifications they can					

OFFICIAL

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

	<p>achieve and the life skills they need to thrive into adulthood. Outcome 6 – Children, young people and young adults with additional needs have better life chances. Outcome 7 – Children and young people have access to early help and prevention when they need it.</p> <p>This plan has been developed TOGETHER with children and young people.</p> <p>The Children and Young People's Plan meets the strategic aims and objectives in the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25 as it contributes to 'A council which empowers and cares about people' and the priority 'support all children to have the best start in life'</p> <div data-bbox="790 525 848 588" data-label="Image">  </div> <p>09.05.22 CYPP Draft.docx</p>	
Who are the main stakeholders and have they been engaged with? (e.g. general public, employees, Councillors, partners, specific audiences, residents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children and young people Councillors Children and Young People's Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational Staff Partners such as Health, Housing, Education.
What consultation method(s) did you use?	<p>Our Children and Young People's Plan has been developed with children and young people. We have carried out a variety of group and one to one sessions to gain their views and an understanding of what matters most to them. We have also sought views from our Children's Trust attendees.</p> <p>Children and young people told us that they feel early help is really important so we have added an additional outcome to the plan to reflect this. Children and young people also suggested that they write the foreword of the plan to give them improved ownership.</p> <p>We have discussed during workstream groups such as Investing in Children's and Young People's Partnership where partners and Cheshire East staff were able to share their views on the priority areas and actions needed in the plan. The relevance of the current outcomes were discussed and the possibility of merging outcome 3 (children and young people are happy and experience good mental health and wellbeing) and 4 (children and young people are healthy and make positive choices) was considered, however all felt that these subjects need to be focussed on separately as they cover a wide range of services and priorities.</p>	

OFFICIAL

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Stage 2 Initial Screening

<p>Who is affected and what evidence have you considered to arrive at this analysis? (This may or may not include the stakeholders listed above)</p>	<p>With an estimated population of 386,700, Cheshire East is the 3rd biggest unitary council in the North West and the 17th largest in the country. Approximately 40% of the population lives in rural areas and the remainder in the two major towns of Crewe and Macclesfield and smaller towns of Wilmslow, Congleton, Sandbach, Poynton, Nantwich, Middlewich, Knutsford and Alsager. We have approximately 104,700 children and young people (children and young people) aged 0-25 years old; approximately 27.3% of the total population. Residents of Cheshire East are predominantly white (96.7%). The black and minority ethnic population (3.2%) is lower than in the North West (10%) and England (14%). A proportion of our residents (2%) are from European countries, with 3,868 of these being from Poland (1%). Cheshire East has a travelling community. 7.3% of Primary, 5.5% Secondary, and 5.1% Special School pupils' first language spoken at home was not English.</p> <p>This plan aims to improve outcomes for all children and young people living in Cheshire East whilst also focusing on improving life chances for vulnerable children by reducing health inequalities, supporting cared for children and care leavers, children and young people with additional needs, children in need of help and protection and those that need early help and preventative services.</p> <p>Most children in Cheshire East have a level of wellbeing that is equal and often higher than the national average. However, there are 18 small areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived 20% nationally (an increase from 16 areas in 2010). These areas are in Crewe, (13) Macclesfield (2), Wilmslow (1), Alsager (1) and Congleton (1).</p> <p>There are currently 523 cared for children and young people and 364 care leavers.</p> <p>Currently 3572 children in Cheshire East are supported by an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)</p>
<p>Who is intended to benefit and how?</p>	<p>The Children and Young People's Plan aims to benefit all children and young people in Cheshire East, with a focus on the support available to vulnerable children such as cared for children and care leavers and children and young people with additional needs.</p>
<p>Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups?</p>	<p>The purpose of the Children and Young People's plan is to support the aim that every child and young person in Cheshire East will have the best start in life, be safe, happy, healthy and to reach their potential. It is not expected to result in any adverse impact on any other part of the community. The plan and the difference it is making to children and young people will be monitored on an annual basis and the priorities will change if these are not having the required impact.</p>

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Does it include making decisions based on individual characteristics, needs or circumstances?			The plan is generally aimed at all children, but does specifically target more vulnerable children, including those who experience health inequalities, support cared for children and care leavers, children and young people with additional needs, children in need of help and protection and those that need early help and preventative services.					
Are relations between different groups or communities likely to be affected? (eg will it favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others?)			No - The plan aims to improve outcomes for all children in Cheshire East, it will not result in any adverse impact on any other part of the community.					
Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality? Is there a history of unequal outcomes (do you have enough evidence to prove otherwise)?			All children and young people have a right to be treated equally and have their disability, gender, ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic needs met. The Children and Young People's Plan promotes outcomes for all children in Cheshire East, with a focus on vulnerable groups of children such as cared for children and care leavers and children and young people with additional needs to ensure that they are supported to achieve the same outcomes as their peers					
Is there an actual or potential negative impact on these specific characteristics? (Please highlight)								
Age	Y	N	Marriage & civil partnership	Y	N	Religion & belief	Y	N
Disability	Y	N	Pregnancy & maternity	Y	N	Sex	Y	N
Gender reassignment	Y	N	Race	Y	N	Sexual orientation	Y	N
What evidence do you have to support your findings? (quantitative and qualitative) Please provide additional information that you wish to include as appendices to this document, i.e., graphs, tables, charts							Level of risk (High, Medium or Low)	
Age			The Children and Young People's Plan seeks to improve the life of all children and young people in Cheshire East up to the age of 25.					
Disability			The Children and Young People's plan seeks to support children who have SEND to					

OFFICIAL

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

	<p>ensure that they are supported to achieve the same outcomes as their peers. The plan focuses on the priorities of our SEND 2021-24 strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve communication and coproduction with families who have children with SEND. • Ensure children and young people with SEND have access to the provision and support they need. • Improve the timeliness and quality of the annual reviews of EHC plans. • Ensure we have an effective and supported workforce. • Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. 		
Gender reassignment	The Children and Young People's Plan supports all children and young people in Cheshire East, regardless of their gender identity.		
Marriage & civil partnership	No adverse impact has been identified.		
Pregnancy & maternity	The Children and Young People's Plan seeks to Improve maternal mental health in pregnancy and during parenthood to ensure all children have the best start in life.		
Race	The Children and Young People's Plan seeks to positively impact all children and young people in Cheshire East, regardless of their race.		
Religion & belief	The Children and Young People's Plan seeks to positively impact all children and young people in Cheshire East, regardless of their religion and beliefs.		
Sex	The Children and Young People's Plan seeks to positively impact all children and young people in Cheshire East, regardless of their sex.		
Sexual orientation	The Children and Young People's Plan seeks to positively impact children and young people in Cheshire East, regardless of their sexual orientation. One of the priorities of the plan for 2022-23 is to support the promotion of inclusivity of LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex and asexual or allies) young people in school/education to help support better health outcomes within this community from increased confidence, sense of self and belonging.		

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Proceed to full impact assessment? (Please tick)	Yes	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Date: 14 April 2022
Lead officer sign off	Laura Hindhaugh	Date: 10 May 2022	
Head of Service sign off	Gill Betton	Date: 10 May 2022	

If yes, please proceed to Stage 3. If no, please publish the initial screening as part of the suite of documents relating to this issue

Please publish this completed EIA form on the relevant section of the Cheshire East website

OFFICIAL

This page is intentionally left blank



Working for a brighter future together

Children and Families Committee

Date of Meeting:	11 July 2022
Report Title:	Schools Catering Service: External Review
Report of:	Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's Services
Report Reference No:	CF/10/22- 23
Ward(s) Affected:	All Wards

Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the committee of a commissioned review into the Cheshire East schools catering service. This report sets out the current operating status of the Cheshire East schools catering service and the overall position in terms of both delivery of the service and the ongoing pressures to work within a balanced annual budget. Based upon this context, it is proposed that an externally facilitated review will take place of the schools catering service to consider the options going forward for consideration by committee.

2. Executive Summary

Over recent years, the year-end position of the schools catering service has seen an overall loss of revenue. Previously, the service provided significant income for Children and Families Directorate some of which was re-invested back into service delivery. There are numerous factors which have caused this overall change. The emergence of multi academy trusts (MATs) locally has seen some schools move away from the service and source alternative providers; this coupled with increasing staffing and food costs in particular has placed pressures on the service to maintain its very high standards of delivery. The impact of the pandemic cannot be underestimated

- 2.2 The purpose of the externally commissioned review is to help shape the future direction of the service through reviewing current performance and

considering differing delivery models in order that a sustainable and financially viable service is available to our schools.

- 2.3 This report outlines the current delivery model and the proposed scope of the external review which will be undertaken by the Association of Public Sector Excellence (APSE).

3. Recommendations

That the committee:

- 3.1 notesthe external commissioning of a review of the schools catering service through APSE which will take place during the autumn term 2022.
- 3.2 that the outcomes of this external review are shared with committee in January for consideration of the future delivery model for the schools catering service.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The challenges for the service to deliver within budget have continued to rise over more recent years. The pandemic has been a critical factor in this and the increasing rise in prices for food items has seen the pressures of the service continue to mount. Having an external review of the service by sector specialists will enable scrutiny of our current business model, benchmarking with other local authorities and identifying potential delivery models going forward.
- 4.2 The service has, over time, initiated a range of delivery approaches and service level agreements with schools which have attempted to respond to increasing business expertise within schools and the need for value for money principles. Such delivery models, as agreed within service level agreements, have tried to adapt/respond to an ever-increasing competitive market. Whilst this diversification has been helpful, it has also generated a diverse range of approaches.
- 4.2 Overall, the profile of many staff employed within schools has seen some challenges to change practice, embrace new technologies and approaches to menu selections and managing costs. Staffing levels have also been very hard to maintain in some schools with an increasing challenge from staff experiencing long term sickness. Such challenges on a day-to-day basis have put increasing pressures on the service to maintain service delivery especially considering the distances across the borough in needing to have adequate staffing coverage of all schools.

- 4.3 The service has been striving to reduce costs over recent years knowing the increasing pressures on the budget. Staff vacancies have not been filled in some areas and whilst this has helped with overall costs, it has impacted on the monitoring of school delivery by operational managers. In addition, the availability of capital funding to assist in the replacement of major kitchen equipment items has reduced therefore restricting the option to support schools where kitchen upgrades are required.
- 4.4 The service continues to widen its offer in terms of school menus to include more vegetarian / vegan options and catering for those who may have allergies. Such offers have been well received overall by schools/families but again add to costs by having an increased range of foods available each day. The service work hard to update menus on a regular basis to meet both diversity of meals and respond to changes in society as greater consideration of food tolerance and allergies are considered.
- 4.5 The attached terms of reference have been drawn up in discussions with APSE representatives and are presented for consideration in Appendix 1. The number of days to undertake this review have been judged carefully to allow sufficient depth of review and scrutiny. APSE is a leading market provider for this type of public sector service review with the council being an active member of this organisation. This enables benchmarking of our performance against other local authorities which is a key aspect to consider when considering other models of delivery.

5. Other Options Considered

- 5.1 To do nothing and continue with the service delivering with operational costs above income. This cannot continue as the catering service has to operate within available funding.
- 5.2 To undertake an internal review and seek feedback from various stakeholders prior to making recommendations for future delivery models. It is felt that utilising sector expertise who have undertaken similar reviews with other local authorities will give a more holistic review and allow for comparative data to be accessed to generate a richer source of information to be considered.
- 5.3 To progress with decisions regarding the service without a detailed review. This option is felt inappropriate in that this is a complex and wider reaching service delivering across a large number of schools; therefore, needs the benefit of sector expertise to help shape the future options.

6. Background Information

- 6.1 The schools catering service has the following overarching principles which it promotes in terms of day-to-day delivery of services:

‘to provide exceptional food and outstanding service

- *...to put fresh, quality local produce at the heart of every menu*
- *...to listen to feedback and constantly strive to improve what we do*
- *...to work with schools and parents to help up-take of school meals*
- *...to make meal times a valued and important part of the school day’*

In addition, a key aim of the service is to create a knowledge and enthusiasm for food in schools, providing future generations with the right experience to help them appreciate its importance for the rest of their lives.

- 6.2 The service currently provides school meal service for 92 schools across Cheshire East (86 primary schools, 4 special schools, 1 secondary and our Pupil Referral Unit). In addition, it provides commissioned catering services to 2 adult care homes.
- 6.3 Over many years, the service has been fully committed to combining both high quality ingredients/meals with the education of pupils and families as to the importance of eating healthily. Achieving the status as a ‘Soil for Life’ Gold Award in 2017-18 reflects this commitment with a good percentage of foodstuffs being sourced organically through local suppliers. The service now is judged as Silver for its ongoing commitment to high quality produce; it was unsustainable to maintain the higher standard due to increasing costs to the service
- 6.4 The service operates with a dedicated core team of 11 when fully staffed. This core team includes an overall team manager, operation managers who liaise with schools on a daily basis in terms of quality assurance as well as an administrative team who oversee orders, marketing, and budget management.
- 6.5 Across the 92 schools, just over 300 staff are employed with most schools operating with a combination of a kitchen supervisor and kitchen assistant(s) depending upon size of school and daily meal update.
- 6.6 Current daily meal statistics across contracted schools shows that approximately 13,000 meals are prepared and delivered each day to our children and young people.
- 6.7 Significant work was undertaken by the service during the pandemic to continue to meet the daily needs of children even when schools were not open. As an example, prior to the national school meal voucher system, the service generated food parcels for schools which included where needed, a delivery system to ensure vulnerable families continued to receive food items

to prepare family meals at home. Feedback from school leaders and parents was extremely positive to the high-quality produce included in the parcels which also included menu ideas.

- 6.8 The selection of APSE as the identified external reviewer was based upon the council already being an active member of this organisation and therefore being able to extend this work with an organisation with considerable experience of undertaking school catering reviews. Procurement documentation has been completed and registered with the procurement service to progress with this review.

7. Implications of the Recommendations

7.1 Legal

- 7.1.1 Legal Services note that a contract for the review has already been awarded to APSE following a procurement process.
- 7.1.2 There are no legal implications of the recommendations in this report. Advice should however be sought from Legal Services in due course as to the legal implications and details of the outcome of the review and consideration of the available options,

7.2 Finance

- 7.2.1 Provisional year end out turn for 2021-22 shows that overall, the service made a financial loss of £95,219. It is not possible to accurately compare this figure to previous years due to the fact that the impact of COVID has not allowed the service to operate at the capacity which it is achieving prior to the pandemic.
- 7.2.2 It is positive to report that based upon budget forecasting for the year 2021-2022, the position was achieved where income was up by almost £70,000 at £5,340,368. This was offset by the increased employee costs of £174,213 compared to budget forecast; a fact explained by the significant need for having to provide additional staff coverage in schools where COVID rates were high and the need to keep schools open meant that additional hours were needed to maintain service delivery.
- 7.2.3 The detailed analysis of service budgets will be an integral part of the commissioned review in being able to scrutinise our performance against similar local authorities and benchmark our work to consider best value principles and assist in shaping future delivery models

7.3 Policy

7.3.1 The catering service have a dedicated website for its customers which outlines the policies/guidance within which is currently operates. The link to this site is shown within the background papers section of this report.

7.3.2 The outcomes of the review and subsequent decision on any recommendations put forward may change policies in critical areas including charging policy, commissioning/procurement arrangements and marketing. Such revised policies would be developed to provide the best sustainable models of delivery that are financially viable, but which allow our schools to access a high-quality catering service.

7.4 Equality

7.4.1 The external review, will include completion of an equality impact assessment for the proposed recommendations and potential changes to service delivery.

7.5 Human Resources (HR)

7.5.1 The council currently employees the 300 staff within the schools catering service and therefore all employees are subject to the corporate support mechanisms and conditions of service as per any other council employee. As many of the catering staff are employed on short, fixed term hours in schools, they do not have full access to online resources / communications as they do not have council provided IT equipment. The introduction of a specialist IT system for the management of the catering service has improved communication routes with catering staff in schools

7.5.2 Going forward, if there are any changes in how the catering service is provided/commissioned, consultation processes with HR would be initiated. This would also include early consultation with trade unions.

7.6 Risk Management

7.6.1 The ongoing management of the schools catering service and its associated risks are currently overseen through regular supervision between the team manager and Head of Service with key actions necessary escalated to the Director of Education & Skills. As outlined, the risks associated with overall budgets are increasing and therefore in need of significant review.

7.6.2 There is a wider risk of overall trading with schools including school catering services due to changing national policy for schools. As more schools move to academy status, there is a risk of schools considering alternative providers for specialist services which may involve other commercial providers rather than through the council. As examples, these include payroll, governor

services, safeguarding and insurance cover. There is an expectation for all schools to be part of a trust structure by 2030 at the latest.

7.7 Rural Communities

- 7.7.1 There are no direct implications for rural communities although some schools where pupil numbers are smaller have foods prepared off site and transported into school each day.

7.8 Children and Young People/Cared for Children

- 7.8.1 The service works hard to provide the highest quality service to meet the catering needs of learners whilst at school and to educate families on the importance of healthy eating. Increased diversity of menu options has been made to try to meet the varying needs of learners and to use high quality local food providers to provide confidence in parents that the offer is of the best quality possible within available budgets.

7.9 Public Health

- 7.9.1 Other many years, the school catering service has undertaken a range of initiatives with Public Health services to promote healthy eating at school and at home. This work has included surveys with families, competitions, and research into the importance of a healthy diet. A contribution of funding from Public Health (£200,000) has been made in recent years to recognise the contribution to educating families around healthy eating but such support will not continue going forward. The Director of Public Health has indicated this cannot continue to be supported moving forward.

7.10 Climate Change

- 7.10.1 The promotion of commissioning food suppliers which uses local providers will have a positive impact on transportation costs and reducing the impact on the environment.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Mark Bayley Head of Service – Infrastructure and Outcomes mark.bayley@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1
Background Papers:	About Fresh Catering Services

Services consulted on this report	Name of person consulted	Role of person consulted	Date consulted
Legal	Bronwen Miller	Senior Lawyer	9/6/22
Finance	Steve Reading	Senior Accountant (Education)	23 May 2022
ESLT	Jacky Forster	Education Senior Leadership Team	28 th March 2022
DMT	Deborah Woodcock	Executive Director – Childrens Services	6 th June 2022
CLT	Lorraine O'Donnell	Chief Executive	



APPENDIX 1

Cheshire East Council: external review of school catering service

APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) is a not-for-profit unincorporated association working with over 300 councils throughout the UK. Promoting excellence in public services, APSE is the foremost specialist in local authority frontline services, hosting a network for frontline service providers in areas including school meals. Through Performance Networks, APSE operates the largest public sector benchmarking facility with over 200 local authority members covering 16 service areas and data for the past 22 years. Clients benefit from the mass of performance data contained within the Performance Networks benchmarking database. This is used in almost all consultancy projects as it provides an instant benchmark to see value for money and where an authority can improve.

Consultancy Proposal Re: Service Diagnostic and Future Options Appraisal.

The scope and purpose of this external review:

- That the council provides catering services to fee-paying customers but predominantly schools. The service that is of primary focus is that of catering **services for schools** which has been experiencing increasing pressures, recently exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and despite some new clients, still resulted in a nett loss of customers in recent years.
- This has raised the strategic question, '**will the service be sustainable in the future and if not, what options need to be considered in terms of different /alternative delivery models?**' and you are seeking support to answer this question.
- Therefore, you are keen for the service to have a **full diagnostic service review covering performance, structure, potential efficiency savings, the competition, existing service offering including structured feedback from stakeholders**
- As part of this process, you require external input to provide a constructive challenge and to establish how well the **service performs through comparison with other local authorities and the commercial sector.**
- Based upon the above, to consider the position of the current delivery model compared to **alternative models** which may include formalised commissioning with other local authorities, use of other commercial organisations as delivery partners or full delivery external to the local authority.
- Overall, to support, via evidence, the council's decision-making processes to decide upon a delivery model that **is fit for purpose going forward and has flexibility** to respond to the changing education landscape particularly the increasing academisation of schools and the trading of specialist services such as school meals.

**LOCAL SERVICES
LOCAL SOLUTIONS**

Association for Public Service Excellence

3rd floor Trafford House

Chester Road, Old Trafford

Manchester M32 0RS

telephone: 0161 772 1810

fax: 0161 772 1811

email: enquiries@apse.org.uk

web: www.apse.org.uk



Agreement has been reached that this review will involve 14 days of dedicated time to complete*
Our proposed solution

APSE Solutions uses a tried and tested approach to headline service review designed to provide an accurate picture of performance at minimum cost to APSE member authorities. Our diagnostic approach to service review can be carried out with as little as nine days consultancy input and will clearly identify areas where a more in-depth approach will generate service improvement or cost reduction. The diagnostic makes use of benchmarking data collected through APSE Performance Networks to indicate areas of poor performance and an on-site workshop to establish potential causes and solutions. Following lean principles and using appropriate analytical tools the team will then provide an overview of the potential for process changes to drive improvement as part of a diagnostic report.

Typically, the review will focus on:

- Financial performance,
- The competitive strength of the service,
- Performance against outcome requirements for the service,
- Service productivity and process efficiency,
- Management and culture,
- The latent potential for external income generation,
- Contribution to corporate objectives, e.g., external income generating opportunities, social & child health and wellbeing objectives.

We will review requirements and benefits throughout the project to focus on activities that offer the greatest value to the reviews' findings and outcomes, while working within the total number of days currently identified. As always, we will only charge for days actually used.

Reporting mechanisms back to the council

Following the collation of the findings based upon the review, a draft report will be issued to council leads to allow for any points of clarification or amendments to the report content.

* Once the report has been finalised, further discussions can take place to consider the report findings and recommendations and draw upon the expertise within APSE in considering next steps. This may involve further commissioned work as required to explore specific themes in order to reach a position that a sustainable delivery model is agreed by all stakeholders including elected members.

APSE leads for this commissioned review with Cheshire East Council

Ben Parsons: as Senior Consultant, will oversee the day-to-day delivery of the project and be part of the project team, working in partnership with the other consultants. Ben will play an important role, providing direction and ensuring full access to the support APSE can provide. In the unlikely event of any issues occurring between the client and APSE he will be able to swiftly intervene and trouble shoot any issues. Since joining the APSE team he has formed strong bonds with the other Consultants and his unique experience greatly contributes to the team. Ben has worked on a number of projects, either as part of team of consultants, or on a sole basis. These include providing an impartial critical friend role to Trade Unions, diagnostic service reviews of waste management and building cleaning, and benchmarking reviews. He joined APSE from his previous role as Waste Collections Manager with a Local Authority.

Tim Blowers: brings with him a particularly unique set of mass catering experience particularly appropriate to educational catering, where palatable, nutritional, low cost, fast service food are priorities. His experience includes military, private sector commercial, local authority direct delivery including the use of Central Production Units. All of which will undoubtedly be of assistance in the delivery of your project.

Timescales

It is anticipated that following consideration of this review specification by senior staff within the council and elected members, that the review would formally commence in July/August 2022 in terms of data collection and analysis following by stakeholder events as from September 2022.

Proposed breakdown of the review specification and allocation of time

The table below sets out in greater detail how the review will be conducted with suggested time allocations.

Details of methodology

Stage 1	Input from authority	Input from Solutions	Output
Project Initiation 1 day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of stakeholders and arrangement of participation. The provision of all information requested by the consultancy team. Clarity on the organisation chart for management, Kitchens and relief Craft skills & Learning organisation Number of schools and NOR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams meeting invite / link. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree final terms of reference, timescales, and protocol for conducting review. Agree governance and reporting protocols. Clarify required key objectives. Obtain an understanding of any key sensitivities associated with project activities (political/union) Agree attendees and arrangements for Workshop(s)
Data comparison 2 days per service PN member, with data submission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff turnover Service or business plan Customer satisfaction measures – does the service know what the school clients want? Does the service communicate how they match performance with promises to their clients on a regular basis. Do the Operations managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis against family group, all service and bespoke group where appropriate. Assess comparative performance and direction of travel on cost and service delivery. Unit cost data Net cost data – i.e. taking account of external income Sickness absence Productivity measures Customer satisfaction measures 	Indication of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service cost and how it compares with relevant comparators Potential for improvement in value for money Performance against requirements Potential for increasing external income Potential for improvements in productivity

	<p>proactively visit clients and monitor service?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To take a view against commercial contractors we would need: Pricing of SLA's, Service wide annual profit and loss/ monitoring report ending March 21 and March 22, annual meals numbers (Primary); income (Secondary) for both years too; how the PPNs were applied; number of schools and type, Repairs and maintenance responsibility, dinner money collection/pre-ordering innovation; menus, sustainability of supply, reputation, addressing inclusion, flexing the menu, food parcels, Fit and Fed/HAF Information on the local competition – who, how many schools with each competitor etc How the service grows uptake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other relevant indicators For non PN member – prepare data collection template and provide remote support as needed to complete 	
<p>Operational Research / Accompanied site visits</p> <p>2 days.</p>	<p>Arrange observations of a diverse range of typical tasks at a diverse range of sites</p>	<p>Working observations and dialogue with frontline staff and stakeholders to identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General working practices & localised characteristics. Identification of any particular factors 	<p>Clear understanding of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voice of the customer Methodologies Processes Skills / training Service Standards Issues at a practical level

		<p>that are contributing to productivity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the practical application of efficiency proposals. Head Teacher / customer experience & perception. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational staff feedback Applicability of operational efficiencies Management capacity Structural suitability Hidden savings
Operational Research: School leaders forum 1 day	Virtual /face to face meetings with school leaders to ascertain current/future thinking based upon experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with collective group of representative school leaders/ business managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback on experiences over recent years Potential models of delivery going forward.
One day service workshop 2 days (2 Consultants for 1 day)	Attendance of operational managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant tools/discussions to explore key aspects of the service: PESTLE – gauge understanding of external factors SWOT – explore internal factors, verify opportunities and strengths against data analysis Resources analysis including people, plant etc. Kano, CTQ tree or similar to explore extent of customer focus SIPOC – headline processes Organisational culture analysis – key question re capacity to innovate, commercialise etc. Impact of organisational objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verification of data analysis Indication of strengths and weaknesses Indication of improvement opportunities and capacity to pursue them. Understanding of culture and how it impacts on appetite and capacity for improvement Outline understanding of wider value of service, i.e. local economic, social and environmental well being
Corporate Objectives and any follow up queries interviews.	Telephone/email availability might include clarification with senior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emails Telephone interviews Exceptionally on-site if necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of relevant corporate objectives for consideration regarding structure

1 day	managers and/or elected members		and recommendations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity over any anomalies between data and workshop learning • Feeling for leadership strengths and weaknesses.
Diagnostic report. 5 Days		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of cost and performance • Assessment of capacity and culture • Identification of opportunities • Options & risk matrix regarding operational structure and any potential delivery issues. • Recommendations as to what needs to be done to take opportunities i.e., further work on systems, processes, culture. Ongoing assistance – • interim manager, consultancy support re specific skills and knowledge. Development of future delivery options • Options appraisal • Business cases for commercialisation • Mentoring and coaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority clear about current state performance • Authority aware of opportunities for improvement • Authority aware of areas of potential efficiency & 'invest to save' opportunities. • Authority aware of options regarding potential restructure. • Authority aware of next steps in relation to each opportunity • Authority aware of further support that can be provided
Stage 1 Total Days: 14			

The fee proposal

The diagnostic review will require 14 days of consultancy input (assuming PN Membership and data input) with an option of a phase 2 (5 days suggested). These will be charged at an APSE member authority rate of £630 per day, plus expenses at cost and VAT. Therefore, based on 14 days, the total fee would be £8,820 plus expenses, at cost and VAT.

Stage 2 : to be decided on completion of stage 1 (as yet, not commissioned)			
Report presentation & Workshop with the Services Management / Senior Management to develop service future plan 2 Days. (2 Consultants for 1 day)	Attendance of operational / senior managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant tools/discussions to explore key aspects of the service: • PESTLE – gauge understanding of external factors • SWOT – explore internal factors, verify opportunities and strengths against data analysis • Resources analysis including people, plant etc. • Kano, CTQ tree or similar to explore extent of customer focus • SIPOC – headline processes • Organisational culture analysis – key question re capacity to innovate, commercialise etc. • Impact of organisational objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of how the department(s) function, Management capacity, skills, remit. • Department / client relationships. • Recommended structure options.
Corporate Objectives and any follow up queries interviews. 1 day	Telephone/email availability might include clarification with senior managers and/or elected members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails • Telephone interviews • Exceptionally on-site if necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of relevant corporate objects for consideration regarding structure and recommendations. • Clarity over any anomalies between data and workshop learning • Feeling for leadership strengths and weaknesses.

Diagnostic report amendment to include an output service future recommendation. 2 Days		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of cost and performance • Assessment of capacity and culture • Identification of opportunities • Options & risk matrix regarding operational structure and any potential delivery issues. • Recommendations as to what needs to be done to take opportunities i.e. further work on systems, processes, culture. Ongoing assistance – interim manager, consultancy support re specific skills and knowledge. • Development of future delivery options. • Identification of the most effective service delivery solutions / models going forward. • Business cases for commercialisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority clear about current state performance • Authority aware of opportunities for improvement • Authority aware of areas of potential efficiency & 'invest to save' opportunities. • Authority aware of options regarding potential restructure. • Authority aware of next steps in relation to each opportunity • Authority aware of further support that can be provided
Stage 2 Total Days: 5.			
Additional Support as required.	Participation in initial follow –up call.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of any further additional support required.

Additional information

In the interest of keeping proposals manageable we do not automatically provide copies of the following but can do so if required:

- Insurance documents
- Corporate policy documents
- Details of previous experience
- Case studies
- References
- Information about services provided by APSE Solutions and other APSE services
- Any other information you might need

General Data Protection Regulations 2018

Any data provided to APSE that is necessary to complete a consultancy project will be held and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018. Where you have collected this data, you warrant that you have done so in compliance with the Regulations, including obtaining any necessary consents to its use by APSE in the course of the provision of consultancy support.

Head of Terms APSE Solutions

Please note that a full copy of the consultancy terms and conditions is available upon request. Below are highlighted some of the salient points.

Calculation and payment of fees and expenses

Fees will be charged on the basis set out in the written proposal or letter of engagement of the association.

Full payment must be received by APSE within 30 days of the date on which the invoice was raised.

If payment is not received within this agreed period, APSE shall be entitled to suspend all work for the client or to terminate the relevant contract and any other contracts with the client without prejudice to any other rights and without liability to the association.

Expenses and office services for consultancy

Unless otherwise agreed, the client shall reimburse the association in respect of all out-of-pocket expenses which may be incurred in connection with the assignment or engagement.

When work is carried out on the client's premises, the client will, at the client's expense, provide appropriate facilities.

Confidentiality

Confidential information concerning the client's business will not be disclosed by either the association or persons performing services on behalf of the association, to third parties, without the client's prior written consent.

Proprietary rights and protection

All intellectual property rights including copyright which are capable of existing in any documents, computer software or information or (without limit) other materials created or provided pursuant to this contract by the association shall be and remain the association's property. The client undertakes to keep all materials, documents and information provided to it by the association confidential to itself and its employees.

General liabilities

All reports, provided by the association to the client are provided for the sole use of the client.

Other than liability in respect of death or personal injury arising from negligence the association will accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to clients or their property however caused. The maximum liability of the association under these terms and conditions shall, save in respect of death or personal injury arising from the negligence of the association, be limited to the fee paid to the association. Under no circumstances shall the association be liable for any economic or consequential loss or loss of profits.

Status of consultant

Subject to any statute that may apply, the consultant shall be an independent contractor and not the employee of the client. In such capacity, the consultant shall bear exclusive responsibility for the payment of his or her national insurance contributions as a self-employed person and for the discharge of any income tax and vat liability arising out of remuneration for the work performed by him or her under this agreement. The consultant shall not be subject to directions from the client as to the manner in which he or she shall perform his or her work.

This page is intentionally left blank



Working for a brighter future together

Children and Families Committee

Date of Meeting: 11 June 2022

Report Title: School Organisation: Academisation of Schools:
Forward Plan

Report of: Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of
Children's Services.

Report Reference No: CF/14/22- 23

Ward(s) Affected: All

Purpose of the report

This report is presented to committee to allow committee members to be informed of planned schools across the borough who are seeking to move to academy status and join a multi academy trust. The forward plan shows such schools and those that will require committee approval or will be progressed through delegated authority.

NOTE: There is no change to this paper from the version which was considered at the march committee meeting. No further schools have formally identified themselves for consideration to convert to academy status.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 At the Children and Families Committee meeting on 12 July 2021 committee approved the delegation, with certain exemptions, for current and future conversions including academy leases and commercial transfer agreements jointly to the Executive Director of Children Services and the Executive Director of Place. Where exemptions apply delegation is not applicable and a full report would be presented to committee.
- 1.2 It was proposed that committee will receive a forward plan at each meeting highlighting conversions due to take place and confirmation of the conversions that have taken place so that committee is fully informed and can note and scrutinise the academisation process. The forward plan has not been to the last two committees due to the size of the agenda and number of key

decisions being taken at these meetings, however, this will be included on the forward plan for all meetings going forward.

- 1.3 A summary report (Appendix 1) provides an update for committee on those schools which have/are planning to convert to an academy so that committee members are kept informed. Note that in the vast majority of cases, schools converting to an academy will be required to join an existing multi-academy trust.

Recommendations

- 2.1 That the committee receives and notes the summary table (Appendix 1) showing the status of academy conversions across Cheshire East schools.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The committee has asked to receive a forward plan at each meeting highlighting conversions due to take place and confirmation of the conversions that have taken place.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The option to not inform committee of academy approvals is not considered appropriate as each academy conversion will have varying levels of risk and the inclusion of a forward plan of pending conversions allows committee members to be kept aware of future changes.
- 4.2 School governing boards apply to the secretary of state to progress with an academy order, the alternative is to remain a maintained school. There is no requirement for a school to convert to an academy unless directed to do so through an inadequate Ofsted inspection.
- 4.3 Failure to cooperate could result in the Secretary of State making transfer schemes which would be binding on the council.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 At the C&F committee meeting in July 2021, committee agreed the delegation for academy conversions as below:
 - a. The Executive Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer, has authority to take all steps necessary to agree and execute the commercial transfer agreement, novation of third-party contracts, shared use agreements/facilities access agreements, staffing and information transfer.
 - b. The Executive Director of Place in consultation with Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer to take all steps necessary to agree and execute any transactions in relation to land, facilities or shared use agreements.

- c. No delegation may be exercised to execute any agreement as set out above where:
 - The school has a deficit of £100k or there is any significant impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy
 - There are substantive third-party land interests.
 - i. Any public funds are to be reclaimed under section (land contributions)
 - ii. Any current or proposed legal claim has been identified where an indemnity is sought against Cheshire East Council on any matter.
- 5.2 This report presents the status of a range of recent and future conversions so that committee are kept aware of ongoing work in this area. However, it should be noted that proposed conversion dates can be delayed for a variety of reasons.

6. Consultation and Engagement

- 6.1 Appropriate consultation and engagement takes place as part of the academy process with both staff and the local community.

7. Implications of the Recommendations

7.1 Legal

- 7.1.1 All legal requirements are undertaken and approved ahead of any academy conversion.

7.2 Finance

- 7.2.1 All financial requirements are undertaken and approved ahead of any academy conversion

7.3 Policy

- 7.3.1 The implementation of academy conversion is undertaken in accordance with national legislation as per the various Education Acts

7.4 Equality

- 7.4.1 Not applicable for this report summary

7.5 Human Resources

- 7.5.1 All HR requirements (mainly relating to TUPE arrangements) are undertaken and approved ahead of any academy conversion.

7.6 Risk Management

7.6.1 All associated risks are considered by legal, finance and HR as part of managing the academy conversion process.

7.6.2 The implications of the roll out of UNIT 4 /ERP administrative/transactional system have increased levels of risk due to the requirement to establish a new payroll process as part of the transition to academy status. This has generated some delays in conversion dates due to associated services having the capacity to build payroll structures ready for conversion.

7.7 Rural Communities

7.7.1 Not applicable for this report summary

7.8 Children and Young People/Cared for Children

7.8.1 There is scrutiny of multi academy trusts by the Regional Schools Commissioner to ensure they have capacity to adopt the school. Therefore, assuring that the school joins a strong trust that can ensure outcomes for children and young people continue to improve

7.9 Public Health

7.9.1 There are no direct implications for public health.

7.10 Climate Change

7.10.1 There are no direct implications for climate change.

Access & Authorisation of Information	
Contact Officer:	Mark Bayley Head of Service – Infrastructure and Outcomes mark.bayley@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Background Papers:	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/convert-to-an-academy-documents-for-schools Committee paper from 12 July 2021
	Academisation of Schools Report.pdf (cheshireeast.gov.uk)

APPENDIX 1:

C&F Committee: School Academisation – Forward Plan

Date of Meeting: 11 July 2022

The following table will be updated ahead C&F Committee meetings as required to provide the latest position on current/forthcoming school academy conversions. Conversions included within the table are from the date of the commencement of the Council Committee system commenced in July 2021.

Green – completed.

Amber – in progress

Yellow – initial discussions taking place

NOR : Numbers of Pupils on Roll (2021 census)

School	Phase	Status	Core School information	Proposed (P) & Actual (A) Conversion Dates	Commentary
Bosley CofE	Primary	Diocese of Chester:	NoR : 35 – Macc. rural school. Ofsted: 2016: Good	A: 1 st September 2021	Converted on time following approval at July C&F Committee.
Audlem St James'	Primary	Diocese of Chester:	NoR : 187 – rural school. Ofsted: 2018: Good	P: 1 st November 2021 A: 1 st December 2021	Converted following approval at C&F Committee meeting in October
Middlewich High	Secondary	Community Maintained	NoR : 705 Ofsted: 2019: Good Leisure Centre on site.	P: 1 st November 2021 A: 1st December 2021	Converted following approval at C&F Committee meeting in October
Christ the King	Primary	Joint Diocesan: Chester & Shrewsbury Diocese.	NoR : 87 Macclesfield Ofsted: 2018: Inadequate	P: 1 st November 2021 A: 1 st April 2022	No requirement to be considered by Committee. Significant work required to agree suitable trust with both Diocesan.
Elworth Hall School	Primary	Community Maintained	NoR : 201 Sandbach Ofsted: 2022: Requires Improvement	A: 1 st April 2022	No requirement to be considered by Committee.
Oakfield Lodge	Secondary	Pupil Referral Unit (those at risk or have been permanently excluded)	NoR : 60 Crewe Ofsted: July 21: Requires Improvement	P: 1 st February 2022 A: 1 st September 2022	Expected conversion now planned for 1 st July. Recs approved at Committee March 23 2022
Wilmslow Group of schools: <i>Proposing to all convert into a multi-academy trust at same time. schools outlined below:</i>	1x Secondary 4 x Primary			Date as yet to be confirmed	Ongoing discussions taking place with schools – will be brought to future Committee for consideration.
Wilmslow High School	Secondary	Community Maintained	NoR: 2130 Ofsted:2019: Good		

			Significant build programme currently in programme		
Styal	Primary	Community Maintained	NoR : 119 Ofsted: 2018: Good Land ownership: National Trust		
Alderley Edge	Primary	Community Maintained	NoR : 203 Ofsted: 2014: Outstanding		
Ashdene	Primary	Community Maintained	NoR : 419 Ofsted: 2019: Outstanding		
Lindow	Primary	Community Maintained	NoR : 210 Ofsted: 2018: Good		

Work Programme – Children and Families Committee – 2022/23

Reference	Committee Date	Report title	Purpose of Report	Report Author /Senior Officer	Consultation and Engagement Process and Timeline	Equality Impact Assessment Required and Published (Y/N)	Part of Budget and Policy Framework (Y/N)	Corporate Plan Priority	Exempt Item and Paragraph Number
CF/15/22-23	19 Sep 2022	Annual School Capital Programme Update	To receive an update on the annual school capital programme.	Director of Education and 14-19 Skills	TBC	Yes	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/20/22-23	19 Sep 2022	Business Plan for Crewe Youth Zone	To be informed of arrangements for the opening, operation and governance of the Youth Zone.	Director of Early Help and Prevention	Yes	Yes	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/19/22-23	19 Sep 2022	Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report	To receive the annual report of the Safeguarding Children's Partnership.	Director of Children's Social Care	N/A	No	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/23/22-23	19 Sep 2022	Children and Families End of Year Scorecard	To consider key performance measures for the end of the year.	Executive Director Children's Services.	N/A	No	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/22/22-23	19 Sep 2022	Children's Travel Support Review	To consider the independent review of travel support for children and young people and approve the recommended actions with the review.	Director of Education and 14-19 Skills	Yes	Yes	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/21/22-23	19 Sep 2022	Corporate Parenting Annual Report	To receive the annual report from the Corporate Parenting Committee.	Director of Children's Social Care	Yes	No	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A

Reference	Committee Date	Report title	Purpose of Report	Report Author /Senior Officer	Consultation and Engagement Process and Timeline	Equality Impact Assessment Required and Published (Y/N)	Part of Budget and Policy Framework (Y/N)	Corporate Plan Priority	Exempt Item and Paragraph Number
CF/16/22-23	19 Sep 2022	First financial review of 2022/23 (update to include progress on policy proposals and material variances from MTFS)	To receive the first financial review for Children and Families and to note or approve virements and supplementary estimates as required.	Director of Finance and Customer Services (s151 Officer)	N/A	No	Yes	An open and enabling organisation	N/A
CF/17/22-23	19 Sep 2022	High Needs Management Plan	To approve the High Needs Management Plan.	Director of Education and 14-19 Skills	Yes	Yes	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/18/22-23	19 Sep 2022	Independent Care Review Outcomes	To update Committee on the outcome of the Independent Care Review and implications for services.	Director of Children's Social Care	N/A	No	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/25/22-23	19 Sep 2022	Update on Academisation	To receive an update on the forward plan for academisation.	Director of Education and 14-19 Skills	Yes	Yes	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
	14 Nov 2022	Takeover of Committee by children and young people for November Children's Rights Month							
CF/28/22-23	14 Nov 2022	Children and Families Scorecard Q1	To consider key performance measures.	Executive Director Children's Services.	N/A	No	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/24/22-23	14 Nov 2022	No Wrong Door	TBC	Director of Children's Social Care	N/A	Yes	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/30/22-23	14 Nov 2022	Report on the Educational Psychology Service	To receive an update on the Educational Psychology Service.	Director of Education and 14-19 Skills	N/A	No	No	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/31/22-23	14 Nov 2022	School Catering Review Outcomes	To consider the recommended outcomes from the review of school catering.	Director of Education and 14-19 Skills		Yes	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A

Reference	Committee Date	Report title	Purpose of Report	Report Author /Senior Officer	Consultation and Engagement Process and Timeline	Equality Impact Assessment Required and Published (Y/N)	Part of Budget and Policy Framework (Y/N)	Corporate Plan Priority	Exempt Item and Paragraph Number
CF/27/22-23	14 Nov 2022	Second Financial Review of 2022/23	To receive the second financial review for Children and Families and to note or approve virements and supplementary estimates as required.	Director of Finance and Customer Services (s151 Officer)	N/A	No	Yes	An open and enabling organisation	N/A
CF/32/22-23	14 Nov 2022	Update on Academisation	To receive an update on the forward plan for academisation.	Director of Education and 14-19 Skills	Yes	Yes	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/29/22-23	14 Nov 2022	Update report on progress against the Mental Health Spotlight Review	To receive an update on progress against the Mental Health Spotlight Review.	Director of Early Help and Prevention	N/A	No	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/18/21-22	16 Jan 2023	Annual Progress Report on the SEND Strategy	To receive the annual progress report on the SEND Strategy.	Director of Education and 14-19 Skills	N/A	No	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/35/22-23	16 Jan 2023	Children and Families Scorecard Q2	To consider key performance measures.	Executive Director Children's Services.	N/A	No	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/33/22-23	16 Jan 2023	MTFS Budget Consultation	To respond to the budget consultation for Children and Families Services.	Director of Finance and Customer Services (s151 Officer)	Yes	Yes	Yes	An open and enabling organisation	N/A
CF/34/22-23	16 Jan 2023	Ofsted action plan and progress update	To receive an update on progress against the recommendations from the Ofsted ILACS inspections.	Director of Children's Social Care	N/A	No	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/36/22-23	16 Jan 2023	Supported Employment Strategy	To approve the Supported Employment Strategy.	Director of Commissioning	Yes	Yes	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/37/22-23	16 Jan 2023	Update from the Transformation Board	To receive an update on the progress of transformation projects overseen by the Transformation Board.	Executive Director Children's Services.	N/A	No	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A

Reference	Committee Date	Report title	Purpose of Report	Report Author /Senior Officer	Consultation and Engagement Process and Timeline	Equality Impact Assessment Required and Published (Y/N)	Part of Budget and Policy Framework (Y/N)	Corporate Plan Priority	Exempt Item and Paragraph Number
CF/38/22-23	16 Jan 2023	Update on Academisation	To receive an update on the forward plan for academisation.	Director of Education and 14-19 Skills	Yes	Yes	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/39/22-23	13 Feb 2023	Schools Funding Formula and Early Years Funding Formula	To approve the schools funding formula and early years funding formula.	Director of Education and 14-19 Skills	Yes	Yes	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/40/22-23	13 Feb 2023	Update on Academisation	To receive an update on the forward plan for academisation.	Director of Education and 14-19 Skills	Yes	Yes	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/44/22-23	20 Mar 2023	12 Month Report on Councillor Frontline Visits to Safeguarding Teams	To receive an update on the findings from member frontline visits carried out over the last 12 months.	Director of Children's Social Care	N/A	No	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/45/22-23	20 Mar 2023	Progress on the All Age Carers Strategy	To receive an update on the progress against the All Age Carers Strategy.	Director of Commissioning	N/A	No	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/41/22-23	20 Mar 2023	Review of the learning disability and mental health strategy	To review the learning disability and mental health strategy.	Director of Commissioning	Yes	Yes	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/43/22-23	20 Mar 2023	Self-evaluation of Children's Services	To receive the self-evaluation of services which shows the quality and impact of services.	Executive Director Children's Services.	N/A	No	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A
CF/42/22-23	20 Mar 2023	Third financial review of 2022/23	To receive the third financial review for Children and Families and to note or approve virements and supplementary estimates as required.	Director of Finance and Customer Services (s151 Officer)	N/A	No	Yes	An open and enabling organisation	N/A
CF/46/22-23	20 Mar 2023	Update on Academisation	To receive an update on the forward plan for academisation.	Director of Education and 14-19 Skills	Yes	Yes	Yes	A council which empowers and cares about people	N/A