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## **Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	7 March 2023
<b>Report Title:</b>	Proposal to change meetings to quarterly and review of the terms of reference
<b>Report of:</b>	Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's Services
<b>Ward(s) Affected:</b>	Not applicable

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### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1. This report proposes that from the new committee year (from May 2023 onwards) the Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee meets on a quarterly basis, instead of bi-monthly.
- 1.2. The committee is also requested to review its terms of reference as this is required on an annual basis.
- 1.3. The Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee contributes to delivering the priority in the council's Corporate Plan 2021-25 to be the best corporate parents to our children in care.

### **2. Executive Summary**

- 2.1. This report proposes that from the new committee year (from May 2023 onwards) the Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee meets on a quarterly basis, instead of bi-monthly.
- 2.2. The committee is also requested to review its terms of reference as this is required on an annual basis.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1. The Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee is recommended to:
- 3.2. Endorse that the Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee meets on a quarterly basis from the new committee year (from May 2023 onwards).

- 3.3.** Review and endorse the proposed changes to the terms of reference (Appendix 1).

#### **4. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4.1.** Members of the committee have previously raised during meetings that the business of the committee could be conducted effectively on a quarterly basis. Three of the four meetings held to date since June 2022 have been shorter than the allocated two hours, with two being under one hour. Therefore, holding the committee on a quarterly basis would be a more efficient use of councillor and officer time and would not impact on the business of the committee.
- 4.2.** Holding the committee on a quarterly basis would allow the committee dates to be in sync with quarterly performance reports which would support effective scrutiny of outcomes for cared for children and young people and care leavers.
- 4.3.** There is no risk to reducing the frequency of meetings, as additional meetings can be requested if required. The committee currently has five meetings a year due to the committee calendar, so meeting on a quarterly basis would only reduce the number of meetings by one meeting.
- 4.4.** The constitution requires that the terms of reference (Appendix 1) are reviewed on an annual basis. Proposed changes have been included to the terms of reference to reflect the change of name from the Corporate Parenting Strategy to the Cared for and Care Leaver's Strategy, the change of name to the committee as agreed in the meeting on 10 January 2023 which was endorsed by the Children and Families Committee on 13 February 2023, and to reflect the proposal for quarterly meetings. Point 2.4 has been amended to reflect that Cheshire East Council does not provide residential homes for children and young people.

#### **5. Other Options Considered**

- 5.1.** The Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee could remain as meeting bimonthly but this would not be as effective in terms of use of resources.
- 5.2.** The constitution requires that the terms of reference are reviewed on an annual basis, so there is no alternative option for this. The proposed changes do not need to be agreed.

Option	Impact	Risk
Keep the committee meeting on a bimonthly basis	The committee is not able to benefit from more efficient use of councillor and officer time, and aligning the	None

	committee with quarterly performance reports.	
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## 6. Background

- 6.1. The Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee is responsible for ensuring the council effectively discharges its role as corporate parent for all children and young people in care and care leavers from 0-25 years of age. It holds services and partners to account for the discharge of their responsibilities.
- 6.2. A proposed forward plan for quarterly meetings is included in Appendix 2. This covers all the areas and reports currently received by the committee, therefore under quarterly meetings the committee would still carry out the same amount of business.

## 7. Implications

### 7.1. Legal

- 7.1.1. There are no specific legal implications.

### 7.2. Finance

- 7.2.1. The proposal to move to quarterly meetings should allow us to use resources more effectively by streamlining administration outside of the meeting and reducing travel.

### 7.3. Policy

- 7.3.1. There are no policy implications.

### 7.4. Equality

- 7.4.1. There are no implications for equality, diversity or inclusion.

### 7.5. Human Resources

- 7.5.1. Changing the frequency of meetings will support more efficient use of councillor and officer time.

### 7.6. Risk Management

- 7.6.1. There is no risk to reducing the frequency of meetings, as additional meetings can be requested if required.

### 7.7. Rural Communities

- 7.7.1. There are no implications for rural communities.

### 7.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

**7.8.1.** Holding the committee on a quarterly basis would allow the committee dates to be in sync with quarterly performance reports which would support effective scrutiny of outcomes for cared for children and young people and care leavers.

**7.9. Public Health**

**7.9.1.** There are no public health implications.

**7.10. Climate Change**

**7.10.1.** Holding the committee on a quarterly basis will reduce the number of meetings per year by one meeting, which will reduce the carbon footprint of the committee by reducing travel.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Lauren Conway, Business Manager <a href="mailto:Lauren.conway@cheshireeast.gov.uk">Lauren.conway@cheshireeast.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee Terms of Reference Appendix 2: Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee Forward Plan 2023-24
Background Papers:	None

## Appendix 1:

### Cared for Children and Care Leaver **Committee Terms of Reference**

#### **Membership: 12 Councillors**

Additionally the committee is informed by representative young people from My Voice (Cheshire East's Children in Care Council) to advise the committee.

The Chair is the Lead Member for Children and Families.

#### **Functions**

1. The purpose of the Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee in its role as an advisory committee to the Children and Families Committee is to ensure that the council effectively discharges its role as corporate parent for all children and young people in care and care leavers from 0- 25 years of age and holds partners to account for the discharge of their responsibilities.
2. The committee's responsibilities include:
  - 2.1. acting as advocate for cared for children and care leavers, ensuring that their needs are addressed through key plans, policies and strategies throughout the council and its commissioned services;
  - 2.2. ensuring key strategic plans relating to children in care and care leavers are in place and are delivered including the Cared for Children and Care Leaver's Strategy, Sufficiency Statement and Children and Young People's Plan;
  - 2.3. overseeing the implementation of Cheshire East's Cared for Children and Care Leaver's Strategy and action plan and monitoring the quality and effectiveness of services to ensure that they fulfil the council's responsibilities;
  - 2.4. oversight and scrutiny of the quality of care in residential children's homes for Cheshire East children and young people through visits and reports, including summary reports of Ofsted inspections;
  - 2.5. reviewing the performance of the council in relation to outcomes for children and young people in care via the scrutiny of both quarterly performance reports and annual reports including the Health of Cared for Children and Care Leavers, the Virtual School, Fostering and the Independent Reviewing Service;
  - 2.6. establishing an environment whereby Councillors and young people work together to address the needs and aspirations of Cheshire East's children and young people in care and empower children and young people to participate in decision making with adults;

- 2.7. overseeing with the Children and Families Committee the implementation of best practice principles in all aspects of service delivery, with the aim of producing positive outcomes for children and young people in care;
- 2.8. supporting the work of foster carers and adopters in making a difference to the care and support they provide;
- 2.9. making sure that staff and partners commit to follow the pledges to cared for children and young people and care leavers set out in the Cared for Children and Care Leaver's Strategy.

### **Governance**

- 3. The committee will:
  - 3.1. meet quarterly;
  - 3.2. report to the Children and Families Committee on at least an annual basis; and
  - 3.3. review its terms of reference annually.
- 4. The Committee will be serviced by Democratic Services.
- 5. Minutes and agendas will be distributed and published no later than 5 clear working days prior to the meeting.

## Appendix 2:

### Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee Forward Plan 2023-24

#### June 2023

Item	Lead
Update from the shadow committee	Cllr Kathryn Flavell, Committee Chair and Annemarie Parker, Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers
Cared for Children and Care Leaver Scorecard Q4 and covering report	Annemarie Parker, Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers and Bev Harding, Business Intelligence Manager
Cared for Sufficiency Update	Annemarie Parker, Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers
Cared for Children and Care Leaver Committee Annual Report	Cllr Kathryn Flavell, Committee Chair and Annemarie Parker, Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers
Engagement with frontline services from councillors	Annemarie Parker, Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers

#### September 2023

Item	Lead
Update from the shadow committee	Cllr Kathryn Flavell, Committee Chair and Annemarie Parker, Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers
Cared for Children and Care Leaver Scorecard Q1 and covering report	Annemarie Parker, Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers and Bev Harding, Business Intelligence Manager
Care Leavers Annual Report	Steve Nevitt, Service Manager for Care Leavers
IRO Annual Report	Head of Service Safeguarding
Children's Rights Annual Report	Sue Preston, Manager Children's Society

#### December 2023

Item	Lead
Update from the shadow committee	Cllr Kathryn Flavell, Committee Chair and Annemarie Parker, Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers
Cared for Children and Care Leaver Scorecard Q2 and covering report	Annemarie Parker, Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers and Bev Harding, Business Intelligence Manager
Virtual School Headteachers Annual Report	Laura Rogerson, Head of Service Inclusion
Adoption Annual Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adoption Service</li><li>• Adoption Panel</li></ul>	Gail Spray, Head of Service Adoption Counts, and Nicola Booth, Service Manager Adoption Counts

**March 2024**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Update from the shadow committee	Cllr Kathryn Flavell, Committee Chair and Annemarie Parker, Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers
Cared for Children and Care Leaver Scorecard Q3 and covering report	Annemarie Parker, Head of Service Cared for Children and Care Leavers and Bev Harding, Business Intelligence Manager
Health of Cared for Children Annual Report and Mid Year Report	Sue Pilkington, Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children
Fostering Annual Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fostering Service</li><li>• Fostering Panel</li><li>• Fostering recruitment update and plans for foster carer fortnight</li></ul>	Shamena Sadiq, Service Manager Fostering
Review of Terms of Reference	