

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Children and Families Scrutiny Committee**
held on Tuesday, 15th November, 2011 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor A Kolker (Chairman)
Councillor K Edwards (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors L Brown, S Gardiner, P Hoyland, D Mahon, D Neilson, W Livesley,
G Merry, M Sherratt and B Silvester

In Attendance

Councillors H Gaddum, R Bailey and D Flude.

Apologies

J McCann, J Kelly and Lorraine Butcher

Officers

Fintan Bradley - Head of Strategy, Planning & Performance
Mark Bayley – Quality Assurance Principal Manager
Anne Gadsden – Monitoring and Intervention Manager
Diane Taylor - Partnerships and Planning Manager
Steve Tatham - Commissioning Manager - Integrated Commissioning Unit
Mark Grimshaw – Scrutiny Officer

108 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

109 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2011 be approved as a correct record.

110 DECLARATION OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP

Councillor Stewart Gardiner declared a personal interest on the grounds that he was a Governor of one of the schools referred to in item 7.

111 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public who wished to address the Committee.

112 'CHILD & ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES' (CAMHS) OVERVIEW

Steve Tatham introduced himself as the commissioning manager from the 'Integrated Commissioning Unit' – a service jointly provided by the Central and Eastern Cheshire Primary Care Trust (CECPCT) and Cheshire East Council.

In outlining the most salient points from the report, Steve Tatham firstly referred to the high and increasing demand for 'Autistic Spectrum Diagnostic Services' in the Eastern part of Cheshire East (Macclesfield, Congleton and Alsager). He reported that this had led to longer waiting times for assessment but that this was being addressed by implementing an integrated single point of access for children, families and professionals who might require advice, training, consultation, assessment and ongoing support.

Steve Tatham continued to note that 'The Integrated Commissioning Unit' commissioned mental health services on a continued support basis from two bases in Macclesfield and Crewe. He explained that this meant the service model was based around a 'tiered approach' of universal, targeted and specialist services respectively. Attention was drawn to the appendix provided which gave a more detailed breakdown of the range of services available.

Steve Tatham reported that within this service model, prevention and intervention were two key themes. He explained that in line with this, Cheshire East Council in partnership with Cheshire West and Chester, PCT's and Clinical Commissioning Groups were establishing two new nationally led evidenced based programmes which were due to start in April 2012. These were as follows:

- The 'Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) programme – Intensive and therapeutic support for 100 first time teenage mothers
- A 'Multi-Systemic Therapy' (MST) programme – Intensive support to prevent children and young people entering care and/or custody.

In terms of the 'Family Nurse Partnership' programme, it was queried whether it was appropriate to deal with teenage pregnancy as a mental health issue. Steve Tatham explained that as teenage parents tended to be isolated, evidence showed that they were more prone to post-natal depression and other related issues. Therefore the aim of the programme was to try and provide assistance to improve the life chances of both the parent and child.

It was questioned why the Eastern part of the Borough had longer waiting times for autistic spectrum assessments. Steve Tatham explained that this was due to the historical legacy of how the PCT footprint used to function. In the 'central' part of Cheshire which included areas such as Crewe and Middlewich there had been a history of integration and harmonisation of services which was not present in the East. It was expected that this would be addressed by putting in place an integrated single access point in the Eastern part of the Borough.

A comment was made with regards to the process of applying for Individual Pupil Funding (IPF). It was asserted that the process was difficult and that it was very rarely granted. It was queried therefore, whether the process could be simplified. Fintan Bradley reported that this was one of the issues that the ongoing SEN Review was looking at and that they were exploring reducing the bureaucracy around the IPF.

It was stated that a number of children in care would benefit from support from the CAMHS service. It was asserted however, that this care was very often slow to arrive and by the time it had been made available, the child had already moved on. It was queried therefore whether children in care had a 'fast track' option

available to them for accessing CAMHS services. Steve Tatham reported that the CECPT had invested £100,000 to support cared for children. He acknowledged however that the threshold for accessing these services was relatively high and that the challenge, as was with all children, was widening access to low-level preventative support; something which the service was seeking further investment in. Steve Tatham also noted that the service needed to start asking children themselves about the services they received in order to make improvements.

Referring to the recommendation which suggested the Committee support further investment into a preventative approach to the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people and their families, a number of queries were made regarding how this investment would be constituted. Indeed, it was firstly asked what current funding was in place proportionately from each organisation and who managed this in terms of allocation for CAMHS as a whole and the preventative agenda. Secondly, it was questioned how the investment needs had been worked out, where it was expected the money would be spent and from which organisations proportionately would the extra funds come from. Steve Tatham confirmed that he would distribute this information to the Committee for consideration.

It was queried where a young person in Cheshire East would be placed if they required a residential bed. Steve Tatham confirmed that these beds were commissioned on a Cheshire and Merseyside footprint and therefore the beds were in Chester. He acknowledged that this was not ideal in terms of travel distance for relatives but that it was not affordable to have a unit in Cheshire East for three to four young people.

As a final point, it was suggested that it would be useful for the Committee to receive a geographical map indicating where services relating to CAMHS were located. Steve Tatham confirmed that he would distribute this to the Committee.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the report be received
- b) That the Committee support the work to integrate the existing autism provision into a single 'multi-agency' pathway to improve the autism assessment and support pathways across the authority.
- c) That the Committee support further progress in preventative approaches and services to meeting the emotional health and wellbeing needs of children, young people and their families/carers.
- d) That more detail on the financial background and requirements for increasing investment into preventative approaches be circulated to the Committee for consideration. That this information include:
 - a. What current funding was in place proportionately from each organisation for CAMHS as a whole and for the preventative agenda?
 - b. Who managed the current budget in terms of allocation?
 - c. How the investment needs had been worked out.
 - d. Where it was expected the money would be spent and from which organisations proportionately would the extra funds come from.

- e) That a geographical map indicating where services relating to CAMHS were located be circulated to the Committee.

113 **CHILDREN'S TRUST AND CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN
2011-2014**

Diane Taylor, Partnerships and Planning Manager attended to provide the Committee with the background to the Children's Trust, including its roles, plans, achievements and future challenges. She also presented the newly developed Children and Young People's plan which had been produced for and in consultation with Children and Young People.

Diane Taylor reported that the government had removed the requirement on local authorities to set up to set up Children's Trust Boards and the requirement on those Boards to prepare and publish a joint Children and Young People's Plan. However, she explained that Cheshire East Children's Trust had recognised the importance of strong partnership working in meeting the needs of all children. As a result, the Trust made the decision to continue to work together as an effective partnership and saw this as an opportunity to address the issues that are most important to the Children and Young People in Cheshire East with solutions that are based on local need.

Referring to the future of the Trust and the Young People's plan, Diane Taylor outlined the outcomes that she expected to be achieved how these would be delivered and managed. She suggested that a report be brought back to the Committee in six months to review progress on the proposed outcomes.

In opening the questions, a concern was expressed that in a climate of savings and spending restrictions, Cheshire East was continuing to proceed with a service that was no longer required by the government. It was queried whether this was worthwhile. Councillor Gaddum explained that she felt that it was vital to retain the Trust as it was a rare opportunity to bring together a number of agencies and authorities to work collaboratively in a meaningful way. She reported that this not only created efficiencies by reducing duplication and creating budgetary accountability but most importantly, created better outcomes for the wellbeing of children and young people in Cheshire East. Whilst the Committee accepted and supported this argument it was suggested that the budgetary implications of retaining the Trust could be brought as part of the update report along with evidence of any possible savings the joint working fostered by the Trust had produced.

It was also suggested that it would be useful for the Committee to receive the minutes of the Trust meetings as this would provide an insight to the work that was being done on a day-to-day basis. Diane Taylor confirmed that these would be circulated when available.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the report be received
- b) That the Committee supports the work of the Trust as the best way of achieving joined up, integrative working for the benefit of children and young people in Cheshire East.
- c) That an update report be brought back to the Committee in six months outlining the progress against the Trust's proposed outcomes and priorities and that this report

include the budgetary implications of retaining the Trust along with evidence of any possible savings the joint working fostered by the Trust had produced.

- d) That the minutes of each respective Trust meeting be circulated to the Committee for their information.

**114 ADDRESSING SCHOOL UNDERPERFORMANCE : LOCAL
AUTHORITY INTERVENTIONS INCLUDING THE 'IMPROVING OUTCOMES
PROGRAMME' (IOP)**

Mark Bayley, Quality Assurance Principal Manager and Anne Gadsden, Monitoring and Intervention Manager attended to firstly update the Committee on the systems that were in place to monitor underperforming schools and secondly to outline the process and impact of the Improving Outcomes Programme.

Mark Bayley explained that there had been a number of changes to the relationship between local authorities and schools, particularly with regard to monitoring and improving performance. He noted that a recent reduction in school improvement funding to Local Authorities had resulted in a major review of school improvement functions. A result of this was the retention of a small monitoring and intervention team with a commissioning budget to secure intervention strategies where required.

Anne Gadsden moved on to discuss the information provided in appendix c which outlined details on the schools being supported by Cheshire East through the Improving Outcomes Programme.

It was noted that several primary schools had not met the 60% SATS floor target for Level 4 in English and Maths. It was queried therefore why all of these schools were not in the Improving Outcomes Programme. Mark Bayley explained that it was only schools with yearly cohorts of over 10 pupils that were judged against the target criteria.

Attention was drawn to the fact that no information had been provided on what Cheshire East was doing to improve 'coasting' schools. It was suggested that it would be useful to have 'value added' information in future reports so that 'coasting schools' could be identified. Mark Bayley explained that it had been difficult to provide this information as the definition of a 'coasting school' was unclear. He reported that the Department for Education were due to publish some guidance on 'coasting schools' and when this was available, information would be incorporated into future reports.

It was suggested that when a school receives an Ofsted report, the relevant ward Councillor(s) should be informed and briefed by officers so that any constituent queries could be answered. Indeed, it was also suggested that ward Councillors should be informed of any problems in schools in their area.

It was queried why Oakefield Primary School was being allowed to expand its pupil number when it was in special measures. Anne Gadsden explained that Cheshire East were confident in the leadership team at the school to deliver on the expansion. She also noted that there was a population 'hot spot' in the area and therefore an expansion was necessary.

As a final point, Fintan Bradley drew attention to the fact that the landscape between schools, local authorities and performance had changed considerably in the last couple of years. He noted that there had been a significant erosion of national strategies and advising bodies and that Cheshire East only had three officers doing work related to school performance on behalf of the local authority. The Committee accepted this point but suggested that it was important that detailed school performance figures needed to be circulated so that informed questions could be asked regarding educational disparities in Cheshire East. It was also suggested that updated versions of appendix c be brought to subsequent Committees as part of any future general performance reports. As an aside, it was suggested that it would be useful to include the date of publication for the OfSTED report when it is referred to in the table.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the report be noted
- b) That when a school receives an OfSTED report and/or when a school has a number of issues identified, the relevant ward Councillor be made aware and adequately briefed.
- c) That detailed performance data relating to Cheshire East Schools be circulated to Members when available.
- d) That 'appendix c' be brought back to the Committee as part of the regular performance report and that this include the date of publication for respective OfSTED reports.

115 **DRAFT SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY POLICY**

Fintan Bradley, Head of Strategy, Planning & Performance, attended to present the draft Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy. Setting the context, he explained that in 2010, Cheshire East began a process of reviewing its educational arrangements for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

Fintan Bradley suggested to the Committee that they consider the proposed SEND policy and offer feedback on the draft document.

It was asserted that as this was a vital document for the Council, it needed further and closer scrutiny. It was suggested therefore that the item be deferred to the next meeting and that site visits to the respective special schools in Cheshire East be arranged.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the draft SEND policy be brought back to the Committee on 13 December 2011 for further consideration.
- b) That site visits to the special schools in Cheshire East be arranged.

116 **WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Members considered the work programme.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the following items be deferred until January 2012:
 - a. The impact on council services following the opening of Academies
 - b. Out-of-Borough Care Placements Task and Finish Report from Lancashire County Council
 - c. Disabled Respite Care
- b) That the Quarter 2 budget report be brought to the next scheduled meeting.

117 **FORWARD PLAN - EXTRACTS**

The Committee gave consideration to the extracts of the forward plan which fell within the remit of the Committee.

RESOLVED – That the forward plan be noted.

118 **CONSULTATIONS FROM CABINET**

There were no consultations from Cabinet.

The meeting commenced at 1.30 pm and concluded at 4.30 pm

Councillor A Kolker (Chairman)