

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

held on Monday, 28th November, 2016 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor Rhoda Bailey (Chairman)

Councillors B Dooley, L Jeuda, G Merry, J Saunders, M Parsons and I Faseyi

In attendance

Councillor L Durham

Councillor G Heyes

J Forster - Director of Education and 14-19 Skills

N Moorhouse - Director of Children's Social Care

K Rose – Head of Childrens Safeguarding

T Ryan - Director of Children's Prevention & Support

Apologies

Councillors S Pochin, D Flude and A Moran

35 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Flude, A Moran and S Pochin.

36 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2016.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

38 WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no whipping declarations

39 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present wishing to speak

40 LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT 2015/2016

Consideration was given to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Annual Report 2015-2016. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 (WTSC) required local authorities to have a particular officer or team of officers to be involved in the management and oversight of allegations against people who work with children. The LADO provided advice and guidance to employer's and voluntary organisations and would liaise with police and other agencies as required. The LADO had responsibility to monitor the progress of individual cases to ensure they were dealt with quickly, fairly and consistency, as well as identifying significant patterns and trends across the workforce.

It was noted that there had been a 5% increase in referrals relating to transport which would be investigated and highlighted the need to strengthen the links between the LADO and Cheshire East Transport Solutions and Licensing. These generally related to children with complex needs being transported to and from school.

With regard to independent fostering agencies, it was suggested that as there was no national database, there would be no way of knowing if a foster carer had previous unsubstantiated claims from other local authority areas. A national database would be useful as it would enable officers to detect trends.

RESOLVED

That the report be received.

41 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES PERFORMANCE SCORECARD - QUARTER 2, 2016-17

Consideration was given to the performance scorecard which provided an overview of performance across the Children and Families Service for quarter 2 of 2016/17. Improvements had been made since the previous quarter; there had been an increase in those measures judged green and amber and a reduction in red measures. There were 3 red measures; two related to the health of cared for children and the other related to Special Educations Needs Health and Care Plans.

With regard to Health Assessments, members requested that the statutory neighbour average be included in the scorecard.

Members were pleased that the percentage of new Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) completed within 20 weeks were increasing. It was highlighted to Members that there was a huge improvement plan including 5 task and finish groups and a route and branch review of the staffing structure being undertaken.

RESOLVED

That the quarter 2 performance scorecard be received.

42 PROGRESS REPORT ON THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Consideration was given to progress against the Children and Young Peoples Improvement Plan which was set out under 4 key objectives:

- Embedding listening to and acting on the voice of children and young people throughout services
- Ensuring frontline practice is consistently good, effective and outcome focused
- Improving senior management oversight of the impact of services on children and young people
- Ensuring the partnership effectively protects and ensures good outcomes for all children and young people in Cheshire East.

Significant activity had taken place since the Ofsted inspection in 2015 and a number of recommendations had now been fully met. The remaining recommendations concerned the key cornerstones of practice and providing a consistently good quality of practice, which would require a longer timeframe to achieve the shift in culture and practice.

A bid had been submitted to the Department of Education funding innovation programme to assist in cultural change as the authority needed to concentrate on practices as much as processes.

RESOLVED

- That the Committee notes the progress achieved against the improvement.
- That the Committee endorses the progress achieved so far and the proposal for the new Improvement Plan.

43 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The Committee received an update on the recruitment activity and workforce stability since these issues were last reported to the Committee in January 2016. Recruitment and retention of social workers remained a challenge for all local authorities around the region, however there was evidence to suggest that Cheshire East was now an employer of choice. Members were pleased to see work and initiatives that were being undertaken to encourage people to return to social work.

RESOLVED

1. That the report and workforce data be received.
2. That the recruitment and retention activity that had already taken place be endorsed.

44 FORWARD PLAN

Consideration was given to the areas of the forward plan which fell within the remit of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the forward plan be received.

45 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to the work programme. the following amendments were made:

- That the item on emotion health and wellbeing scheduled for 19 December 2016 focus on emotionally health schools.
- That the Child Sexual Exploitation Task and Finish Report be deferred to the meeting scheduled to be held on 19 December 2016.
- That the item on Project Crewe be considered at the meeting scheduled to be held on 30 January 2017 to enable the Committee to give consideration to the evaluation report.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be amended to reflect the issues highlighted above.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.40 pm

Councillor Rhoda Bailey (Chairman)