

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

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

held on Monday, 30th January, 2017 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor Rhoda Bailey (Chairman)
Councillor S Pochin (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors B Burkhill, B Dooley, I Faseyi, D Flude, M Grant, G Merry and S Edgar

In Attendance

Councillor G Heyes
M Bayley - Head of Service: Infrastructure and Outcomes
S Hodgekiss - Land & Sites Coordinator
J Forster - Director of Education and 14-19 Skills
N Moorhouse - Director of Children's Social Care
T Ryan - Director of Children's Prevention & Support

64 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Deakin and J Macrae

65 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no apologies for absence

66 WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no whipping declarations

67 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present wishing to speak

68 NEGLECT/INNOVATION FUND

The Committee received a presentation on Cheshire East Neglect Strategy and the next steps in its refresh. The presentation detailed:

- The current data. As at December 2016, 117 individuals were on a plan for neglect.
- The previous neglect strategy required refreshing and practitioners were not using the identified tools. A new strategy would be developed by March 2017.

- The new strategy aimed to improved response to concern around neglect in a timescale that met the needs of the child and achieve positive outcomes for children.

The presentation also detailed the success of Project Crewe, which was designed to reduce the number of children escalating to Child Protection status, deliver statutory services at a lower basic operating cost and reduce the number of repeat referrals to Children in Need status. Project Crewe had been in place for 15 months and there was early evidence of a reduction in referrals, escalations and case loads. Social workers were now focussed on increasingly complex cases, this had enabled a focus on children experiencing significant harm from neglect. The timeliness of assessments, plans and visits to children had all improved, leading to improved outcomes for children as the quality of social work interventions were being enhanced.

Project Crewe would be expanded to cover the whole of the Cheshire East footprint and project Macclesfield would be established in April 2017. Funding from Cheshire East was in place for Project Crewe and Project Macclesfield which would be available until July 2018. Members were concerned about the sufficiency of funding for the expansion of Project Crewe and agreed that this should be monitored by the Committee.

It was agreed that the Committee would give consideration to the formal evaluation report of the project, which was to be produced by the DfE, once it had been completed.

RESOLVED

1. That the evaluation report be submitted to the Committee in due course.
2. That the funding for the expansion of Project Crewe be monitored by the Committee.

69 SCHOOL ORGANISATION CAPACITY

Members received an update on the school organisation and capital services re-alignment of service delivery and clarification of policies and procedures. The purpose of which was to:

- Have robust, transparent and effective procedures for school place planning which secured sufficiency of places through effective management of capital projects.
- Have more strategic planning of need which combined available funding stream – basic need and section 106 monies with a 3 year overall strategy.
- Liaise more strategically and operationally with corporate services to achieve clarity of methodologies in order to achieve consistent joint working.
- Establish project management principles against key projects resulting in a single conversation.

Members suggested that S106 monies should also be sought from affordable housing providers and stressed the importance of having discussions with head

teachers regarding local need and finding a solution to meet local need rather than providing for those living further afield.

It was noted that if an academy chose to increase its PAN, Cheshire East would not provide resources to pay for facilities as funded school expansions must be a Cheshire East Council strategic decision.

RESOLVED

1. That the update be received.
2. That the validated school results be received at a future meeting of the Committee.

70 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.

71 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the work programme. Councillor S Pochin informed the Committee that further to the Call In on Available Routes to Schools, 5 Councillors had called a special Council meeting with a view to requesting Cabinet to reconsider its decision and a paper would be prepared outlining new information and evidence that had been received.

Consideration was given to the list of questions to ask CAHMs partners at the spot light review on 26 June 2017.

RESOLVED

1. That the work programme be approved.
2. That the questions relating to CAHMs be approved subject to questions 20 being amended to include waiting times for services.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.00 pm

Councillor Rhoda Bailey (Chairman)