

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Committee**
held on Tuesday, 2nd May, 2017 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor G Hayes (Chairman)
Councillor G Merry (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors P Butterill, B Dooley, S Edgar, M Grant, J Saunders, L Smetham and M Warren.

Officers in attendance

Gill Betton – Head of Children’s Development and Partnerships
Nigel Moorhouse – Director of Children’s Social Care and Deputy DCS
Peter Lambert – Head of Service Cared for Children
Steve Nevitt – Senior Manager Resources
Sheila Williams – Designated Nurse Cared for Children
Julie North – Senior Democratic Services Officer

47 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Durham and D Flude.

48 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

49 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meetings held on 7 March and 18 April 2017 be approved as a correct record.

50 CHILDREN’S SOCIAL CARE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION UPDATE

Consideration was given to an update on social care recruitment activity and workforce stability. Members were aware that the recruitment and retention of social workers and team managers remained a challenge for all local authorities and therefore the activity continued to be monitored by the Recruitment and Retention Task Group, under the leadership of the Children and Families Social Care senior management team, following a strategy for the period 2015-17.

It was reported that turnover had continued to reduce and had stabilised, as a result of which social worker recruitment was now of a more targeted approach, as individual vacancies arose. Over half the appointments made in 2016 had been of experienced workers from other authorities, indicating that Cheshire East was being seen as an employer of choice in the region. In addition, the service had moved from a position of being reliant on agency team managers to only requiring agency cover for temporary situations as they arose.

The report included a summary of recent retention and recruitment and also a breakdown of the position in each of the local teams.

In considering the report Members of the Committee made a number of comments and asked a number of questions; they congratulated Officers for the significant improvement in recruitment and retention of social workers and team managers. Reference was made to the importance of the frontline visits and it was confirmed that Members would continue to carry out these visits and receive a written response from the Head of Service.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

51 CORPORATE PARENTING UPDATE

The Committee received an update in relation to cared for children and young people as follows:-

National developments

- New Ofsted Framework
- Homeless Reduction Bill

Local Developments

- Regional Adoption Agency
- Signs of Safety
- Residential Homes Re-design
- Head of Service Cared for Children – Recruitment
- Adoption and Foster Placement Disruptions
- The Cygnet Programme
- Corporate Parenting Training (Set out at Appendix 1 of the report).

The Chairman reported that, following the last Committee meeting, he had written to the Chief Executives of the CCGs to seek assurance around performance on carrying out initial health assessments for cared for children within the statutory timescales and that he had now received a response to the letter. The Chairman also noted that the current Head of Service-Cared for Children, Peter Lambert, was due to leave the Authority on 8th June and he thanked Peter for the work that he had undertaken in his role.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and the Corporate Parenting Training for Elected Members, as set out at Appendix 1 of the report, be endorsed.

52 UPDATE ON HEALTH OF CARED FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Consideration was given to a report providing information to the Committee in its role as corporate parents, regarding the health and well-being of the children in its care. It was noted that it was important to recognise both the statutory responsibilities for this vulnerable group of children and young people and the role of agencies working together as corporate parents, in having “high

aspirations". The report was to provide assurance to the Committee and to highlight any potential areas for service improvement.

The Committee had last considered this issue in February 2017 and had requested six monthly updates. Sheila Williams, Designated Nurse Cared for Children, NHS Eastern and South Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's), attended the meeting to present the report and informed the Committee that she would be retiring from her current post on 30 June. The Chairman thanked Sheila, on behalf of the Committee, for the great work that she had done in this role.

The Chairman expressed concern that this area was "falling under the radar", despite the Committee's best efforts and asked that the Director of Children's Social Care follow up the Committee's concerns with the CCGs. He also requested that the Chief Executives of both CCGs be requested to attend a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED

1. That the information contained within the report be received.
2. That the Director of Children's Social Care raise the Committee's concerns with the CCGs and that the Chief Executive of both CCGs be requested to attend a future meeting of the Committee to speak on this matter.

53 CORPORATE PARENTING OPERATIONAL GROUP SCORECARD QUARTER 3 2016/17

Members considered the scorecard for the third quarter of 2016/17, which covered the six measures of performance, these being:

- General
- Involve me
- Provide me with a good safe home
- keep me healthy
- help me achieve
- Support me to move into adult life

The scorecard compared the current quarter with the two previous quarters and year end and indicated the quarterly direction of travel.

RESOLVED

That the content be noted.

54 IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING QUARTER 3 PROGRESS REPORT

Consideration was given to the activity and progress to date against the Service Improvement Plan for Children's Social Care. The report set out the four priorities of the service and noted its achievements, key areas for improvement,

improvements to services, quality of the services and planned future improvements. As this paper had been circulated at the meeting it was agreed that any queries or issues be fed back outside the meeting.

In considering the scorecard, the Committee felt that it would be helpful to include some sort of comparison between the old and the new.

RESOLVED

That the report be received and any queries or issues be fed back outside the meeting.

55 INPUT FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Chairman reported that he had been unable to meet with the young people in the previous week, due to an administrative error. He stressed the need for a forum to engage with young people and requested that a rota be drawn up by officers to facilitate this.

RESOLVED

That a rota be drawn up and agreed to facilitate engagement with young people.

56 DRAFT CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The draft Corporate Parenting Committee Annual Report 2016/17 was circulated at the meeting for consideration and is attached to these minutes for information. Since its inception in May 2016, Corporate Parenting had been co-ordinated by the Corporate Parenting Committee, acting as an advisory committee to the Cabinet, and its first year of business had shown enhanced Member involvement in their roles of corporate parent. It could be seen that the key elements covered had impacted on the daily lives of the cared for children and care leavers and that the voice of the child and outcomes for children had been at the centre of the Committee's attention throughout. The work of Partners had also been key to the success of the service.

As the Committee had only been constituted in May 2016, the report charted progress against its terms of reference and then looked at the key areas that had been scrutinised and how the work would be continued in the coming municipal year.

Committee members were requested to take the report away for consideration and to submit any comments to the Chairman by 9 May.

RESOLVED

That the report be received and noted and that any comments from Committee Members be submitted to the Chairman by 9 May 2017.

57 MEETING DATES 2017/18

RESOLVED

That the meeting dates for the current municipal year be noted, as follows:-

- 4 July 2017
- 19 September 2017
- 14 November 2017
- 23 January 2018
- 20 March 2018
- 9 May 2018

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and concluded at 6.15 pm

Councillor G Hayes (Chairman)