

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Children and Families Scrutiny Committee**
held on Monday, 18th January, 2010 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor R Westwood (Chairman)
Councillor D Neilson (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors D Beckford, D Flude, J Goddard, A Kolker, M Parsons, M Simon
and D Thompson

57 ALSO PRESENT

Councillor S Davies, Substitute Member
Councillor W Livesley, Substitute Member
Mr G Roper, Church Representative
Councillor J P Findlow, Cabinet Member
Councillor Rhoda Bailey, Cabinet Support Member
Councillor L Smetham, Cabinet Support Member

58 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T Jackson and G Merry
and J Kelly, Church Representative.

59 DECLARATION OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP

Councillor D Flude declared a personal interest on the grounds that she was a
Governor of Westminster Nursery School and a Director of EIPC Ltd and
Councillor D Neilson declared a personal interest on the grounds that he was a
Governor of a school with a nursery.

60 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16
November 2009 be approved as a correct record subject to:

- a correction to the description of J Kelly in the list of those Also Present to
read Church Representative not Parent Governor Representative; and
- an amendment to minute 49 third paragraph to read "redesign of
Children's Services" not Children's Social Care.

61 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no Members of the Public present who wished to address the
Committee.

62 CHILDREN'S SERVICES ANNUAL RATING

The Committee considered a letter dated 9 December 2009 from Ofsted on the Children's Services Annual Rating. This was now derived from a new performance profile of the quality of services and outcomes for children and young people in each local area. The profile included findings from across Ofsted's inspection and regulation of services and settings for which the Council had strategic or operational responsibilities, either alone or in partnership, together with data from the relevant Every Child Matters indicators in the new National Indicator Set.

The annual rating derived from a four point scale and Cheshire East scored 3 which indicated that children's services performed well.

The overall effectiveness of a majority of inspected services and settings was good or better. A large percentage of childcare, nursery education and primary schools were judged to be better than similar areas or the national provision. There was little inadequate provision but the proportion of secondary schools and sixth forms judged to be good or better was below that found in similar areas or national provision. Provision for children and young people who were vulnerable was variable and one Children's Home was judged inadequate, although this had now closed permanently.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

63 REDESIGN OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Committee considered a report on the current position with the redesign of Children's Services. A Programme Manager had been appointed for a 12 month period to lead the introduction of a new model for Children's Services. The new model would be based on multi-agency working targeted at addressing needs earlier in children's lives as this was the most effective way by which the risks of poor outcomes to children and young people could be reduced.

The main features of the new ways of working were:

- Multi-agency teams co-ordinated around the needs of the child, family and community;
- Services that were well-co-ordinated and reduced need for parents/carers to complete a number of assessments required by a number of separate agencies and processes;
- Effective signposting to the most appropriate services sooner;
- Good information sharing between services and agencies to prevent service duplication and the poor use of resources.

Locality Teams comprising partners from the Children's Trust would be formed to provide access to targeted support appropriate to the local needs presented. Services would be commissioned on a multi-agency basis appropriate to the needs of the locality and informed by a good needs assessment/evidence base. Services would be co-located where appropriate and possible.

Members discussed the report and the following points were raised:

- It was important to ensure there was capacity within Cheshire East to manage all Cheshire East children and reduce the need for any

child/young person to be cared for out of the area; the Locality Teams would be established based on the specific needs of the area;

- How good was data and information sharing between partners? In response, the Committee was advised that data sharing was improving and a protocol was being developed around this issue. The provision of an observatory system, along similar lines to the Police and Fire services, was being addressed through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Steering Group, chaired by the Strategic Director People. The Contact Point system was also in place and awaiting training and licensing approvals; this would be monitored through the Children's Services Business Plan;
- Monitoring of out of area/specialist placements, which were expensive, was done by statutory review and if needs were not being met this would be addressed;
- It was important to focus on training and vocational needs not just academic achievement. The Committee was advised that from 1 April 2010, the Council would be responsible for post 16 funding and must engage with the business community as part of this new responsibility;
- In relation to the timescale for the redesign, Members were advised that budget efficiencies had been identified over a 3 year period;
- This Committee would receive regular progress updates and the possibility of receiving the minutes of the Children's Trust would be investigated.

RESOLVED: that the progress report on the redesign be noted.

64 SUMMARY OF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE 2008-9

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director People summarising performance across all schools for all phases for 2008 – 09. The Committee was advised that constant updates were available to officers on performance results and comparisons with statistical neighbours.

The overall picture of school performance had been outlined at a previous meeting and showed either an improvement or the same position as before. Agreed priorities were:

- Early Years Foundation Stage - Continue to raise the achievement of all children and narrow the gap between the lowest 20% and the rest, improve the achievement of boys, interrogate data at scale point and individual child level especially in the bottom 20% of deprivation to increase rates of progress, support Headteachers and leaders to meet the challenges in the Schools' White Paper;
- In Primary Schools - reduce the number of schools below the floor target, improve two levels of progress in English and Maths and increase the percentage of pupils achieving L4+ in reading at the end of KS2;
- In Secondary schools – improve numbers of pupils gaining 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* - C including English and Maths to ensure performance is within the Fisher Family Trust B-D range following 2010 KS4 results and improve rates of progress made by individuals, groups of pupils and schools; improve the use of data and tracking systems; improve the attainment of pupils eligible for Free School Meals.

The Committee was advised that as part of its inspection regime Ofsted would take account of safeguarding and any issues could result in the school being put

into a category. There were no such schools in Cheshire East. Schools must show that they had strategies and mechanisms in place to track individual pupils' rates of progress. Schools that were low on attainment would receive proactive/assertive engagement at an early stage and there would also be a focus on early education settings and its uptake in the relevant areas.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and the priorities needed to further raise standards and reduce underperformance be endorsed.

65 CHESHIRE EAST BUDGET 2010 - 11

The Committee considered a verbal update from the Chairman on the Scrutiny Budget Task Group. The Group had received a presentation on the budget from the Borough Treasurer and Head of Assets. Special meetings of each Scrutiny Committee would be arranged to look at the budget proposals in relation to the Committee's remit.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

66 SCHOOLS WHITE PAPER

Maggie Swindells briefed the Committee on the White Paper – Your child, your schools, our future – Building a 21st century schools system. The main points in the paper included:

- An ambition for every child that their education would prepare them for the challenges of the 21st century - all schools would provide excellent teaching and extra help that a child may need, schools would work in partnership, schools would improve with stronger accountability and rapid intervention when needed, schools and school leaders would be supported and there would be a highly skilled and motivated workforce;
- Pupil Guarantee – relating to behaviour and discipline, breadth and balance in the curriculum, sport and cultural activities would be available, the school would promote health and wellbeing;
- Parent Guarantee – assurance that the school will deliver the Pupil Guarantee, Home School Agreements to reflect rights and responsibilities, access to extended services;
- New Guarantees – relating to extra help and support including one to one tuition for pupils falling behind at Key Stage 2 and Year 7, personal tutors for secondary school pupils, compulsory Personal, Social and Health Education;
- Partnership working – wider curriculum and qualification choices, specialist schools, increased efficiency and no duplication, effective membership of the Children's Trust;
- Every school improving – an annual report card showing a school's strengths and weaknesses and improvement priorities, Ofsted inspection, School Improvement Partners to provide a challenge and support role but improvement overall to be the responsibility of schools themselves;
- Transition measures were in place and the responsibilities for Local Authorities included monitoring school performance, having tailored support for local needs, supporting School Improvement Partners to identify suitable providers and packages;
- Every school and school leader supported – school funding would be reformed, buildings and infrastructure would receive investment, greater

say for parents, local Authorities would have a key role commissioning services and school places, schools would increasingly review, improve, develop and share emergent and effective classroom practice;

- In every school: delivering a well-led and highly skilled workforce – schools would need the strongest leaders, there would be a well-led and highly skilled children's workforce, teaching would have higher status making it world class, the role of governing bodies would be strengthened, their would be masters degree qualifications for all teachers and a renewable Licence to Teach (every 5 years), Children's Workforce would have a joint training and professional development strategy;
- The implications for Cheshire East would include building on good practice, relate to the Council's Aspire Values (Action, Support, People, Integrity, Recognition, Excellence), new structure and transformation of the service, partnership working.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted and discussed further at a future meeting.

67 EARLY YEARS FUNDING REFORM

The Committee received a verbal update on the reform of Early Years Funding.

A single funding formula had been required to be introduced by April 2010 but this had now been delayed, however, Cheshire East Council could apply for Pathfinder status to implement the new formula from April 2010 if full Cabinet approved this at its next meeting. The new formula applied a base rate with additional elements based on flexibility, quality and rurality.

Following consideration by the Committee in August 2009, when the formula was being consulted upon, officers were looking at doing some pilot work of an additional element being available based on provision for children where English was not their first language.

Transitional arrangements were in place to help providers during the change to a single funding formula and a business manager would help individual schools where required.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

68 CHILDREN'S TRUST

The Committee was briefed on the role of the Children's Trust. The Trust had a statutory basis in that Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 placed a duty on local authorities and their Statutory partners to co-operate in making arrangements to improve children's well-being, this would mean partners working together to improve commissioning and delivery of services for all children, young people and families in a given area. The local authority would have a leadership role in the Children's Trust but would not control it.

The outcomes of the Trust included:

- A shared child-centred outcome-led vision;

- Integrated front line delivery organised around the child, young person or family rather than professional boundaries or existing agencies – Multi Agency Teams;
- Integrated processes, effective joint working sustained by a shared language and shared processes – Common Assessment;
- Integrated strategy, joint planning and commissioning, pooled budgets – The Children's Plan;
- Inter-agency governance, with robust arrangements for inter-agency cooperation – the Trust.

The Trust comprised the Director of Children's Services; the Lead Member with Cabinet responsibility and one representative from:

- the Association of Primary Head Teachers;
- Association of Secondary Head Teachers;
- Children and Young People's Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Hub;
- Cheshire Police;
- Police Authority;
- Central and Eastern Cheshire Primary Care Trust;
- Director of Public Health.

RESOLVED: that the presentation be noted and a training session be organised to explain further the role of the Children's Trust.

69 YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE - IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Committee considered the Cheshire Youth Offending Service Improvement Plan following the inspection of the service in August 2009. The Committee noted that all actions were timetabled for completion by March 2010.

RESOLVED: that a summary of actions taken be submitted to a future meeting.

70 SCRUTINY REVIEW - MANAGING THE PROVISION OF SCHOOL PLACES - REPORT ON TRANSFORMING LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

The Committee was advised that the final report of the Scrutiny Panel who had reviewed the future management of school places had been submitted to Cabinet on 22 December 2009; the Cabinet had accepted in full the recommendations within the report.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

71 WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee considered the current position with the Work Programme which had been revised at the mid point meeting on 14 December. The first meeting of the Task/Finish Panel on Family Support Services would be arranged shortly.

RESOLVED: that the Work Programme be noted.

72 FORWARD PLAN - EXTRACTS

The Committee considered the current Forward Plan in relation to Children and Family Services.

RESOLVED: that the Forward Plan be noted.

73 CONSULTATIONS FROM CABINET

There were no consultations from Cabinet.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 12.45 pm

Councillor R Westwood (Chairman)