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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Committee**
held on Tuesday, 3rd July, 2018 in Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor J Saunders (Chairman)
Councillor D Flude (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors L Durham, S Gardiner, M Grant, G Hayes, O Hunter and G Merry

Officers in attendance:

Gill Betton – Head of Service: Children’s Development and Partnerships
Kerry Birtles – Head of Service: Cared for children and Care Leavers
Nigel Moorhouse – Director of Children’s Social Care
Angela Murney – Youth Support
Sue Preston – Advocacy/ Service Manager the Children’s Society
Annie Sanderson – Lead Participation Worker Youth Support
Cherry Foreman – Democratic Services Officer

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor J Saunders be appointed Chairman of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2018/19.

Councillor Saunders took the Chair.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor D Flude be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2018/19.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Butterill and M Warren.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2018 be approved as a correct record.

6 PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Participation and Engagement and Input from Children and Young People

The Committee welcomed members of the youth support team and also a young representative who was attending on behalf of children and young people. Members received a short presentation on VOICE (voice of in care experience), a newly developed publication due to be launched at a party in September, and on the activities and participation events held during the last year. Members were keen to be involved in the launch if possible and to be able to engage directly with the young people.

In considering how the Council might do more to help young people in care it was suggested that more information could be displayed in schools and meeting places to encourage a larger number of young people in care to engage in events available to them.

Members were keen for this innovative project to be recognised more widely for the benefit of the team and young people involved; it was agreed that this, and its suitability for inclusion in the STAR Awards, be further investigated. It was reported that other North West authorities were already looking at how they could develop such a project in their own area.

RESOLVED

1. That the youth support team and young persons representative be thanked for their attendance.
2. That further investigation be made as to how work on the VOICE project could best be recognized.

The Advocacy and Independent Visitor Report

The Committee considered a report on the work of the Children's Society in delivering the Children's Rights and Advocacy Service for Cheshire East. This was the fourth year of delivery in this way. Members asked a number of questions and received confirmation that:

- Whilst the number of independent visitors might seem low it had always been around this figure and was on a par with those nationally. Volunteers were always being sought and a leaflet was circulated to all Members on how to be involved. The number of interventions were kept to a minimum wherever possible and requests for visits were assessed on a case by case basis.
- The service was available to all young people aged 0-25 yrs in all types of care; a language line was also available if needed.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

7 CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

Consideration was given to the Annual Report of the Committee for 2017/18 covering its work over that period in ensuring the Council effectively discharged its role as corporate parent for all children and young people in care and care leavers from 0-25. The Committee welcomed the report and felt it provided a comprehensive a positive picture with useful year on year benchmarking.

During the discussion and in response to points raised by the Committee it was reported that:

- In the light of the findings of Mark Riddell, the National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers, the Council's 'corporate test' had now been strengthened by the inclusion of the Portfolio Holder as a Member of the Committee. Feedback following the report had also been taken into account in the Corporate Parenting Strategy for 2018 – 20.
- The newly established Shared Foster Care Service with the neighbouring authorities of Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, and Warrington was already showing benefits and a targeted campaign to recruit more foster carers had already seen an increase in expressions of interest. Additional ways were now being considered as to how this and other shared services might be developed.
- The Children and Families Scrutiny Committee would be reviewing school leavers/children in care as part of a their study of their SEND review.
- The establishment of the Positive Parenting Groups, to support pregnant and parent female care leavers, was working well and Members asked for a more detailed report on this to be submitted to a future meeting the Committee. A report on the Family Nurse Partnership due to be considered at the next meeting would also connect with this area of support and care.
- The virtual School was currently working to appraise all its students and to prepare a trajectory for their future attainments so as to know how best to get them there.

RESOLVED

That the Annual Report of the Committee be noted.

8 CORPORATE PARENTING FRONTLINE VISITS

The Committee considered a report on developments in the establishment of corporate frontline visits, an important aspect of strengthening its corporate parenting role and in enhancing members understanding of services for cared for children and care leavers. The visits planned were based around the 'signs of

safety' model and the report included guidance on procedure and also a suggested feedback form which would also be used to populate the annual report.

In addition a Committee training session was proposed which it was noted would be rolled out as a mandatory training for all Members of the Council in their capacity as a corporate parent after its initial pilot with the Committee. Members were advised of the need for them to ensure their DBS records were fully up to date in order to take part in visiting programme.

RESOLVED

1. That the report, and arrangements for DBS checks, be noted
2. That the proposed guidance and associated forms, as shown in appendix 1 of the report, be endorsed.

9 CORPORATE PARENTING UPDATE

Members received an update on relevant national and local developments.

A resume of the following national developments was given:

- Care Crisis Review
- Changes to apprenticeship funding

With regard to apprenticeships it was confirmed that Cheshire East Council would be facilitating apprenticeships across the full range of its 500 different services.

Local Developments reported on included:

- Corporate Parenting Strategy Development
- Developing the local offer
- Children and Young Peoples Conference
- Star Celebrations
- New Tender for Children's Residential Care
- Fostering Collaboration Update
- Re-render for Advocacy and Independent Visitor Services
- Corporate Parent Pen Pictures
- Signs of Safety Training

Councillor Gill Merry agreed to be the Committees representative on the Being a Good Corporate Parent Group, to meet quarterly, aimed at developing ways of improving participation with cared for young people and strengthening the corporate parent role with Members, staff and partner agencies.

Members discussed the pen pictures and their importance in sharing knowledge of them as corporate parents. It was agreed that they each review and approve their final portrait prior to them being added to the Face Book page.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.

2. That the proposed governance to support the implementation of a new Corporate Parenting Strategy, shown in Appendix 1 of the report, be noted.
3. That Councillor Gill Merry be the representative for the Committee on the Being a Good Corporate Parent Group.
4. It be noted that all Members of the Committee were welcome to attend the Children and Young People's Conference on 6 August 2018.
5. That plans for the Star Celebrations at Wychwood Park, Crewe, on 18 November 2018 be noted.
6. That Members each review their personal pen portrait prior to it being shared more widely as part of the information provided to cared for children on entering care.
7. That Members confirm with the Head of Cared for Children and Care Leavers whether they are able to become a Signs of Safety Champion

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and concluded at 6.00 pm

Councillor J Saunders (Chairman)

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