

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Committee**
held on Tuesday, 19th March, 2019 at Committee Suite 2/3 - Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor J Saunders (Chairman)

Councillors P Butterill, B Dooley, L Durham, G Hayes, O Hunter and G Merry

Officers in attendance

Jacquie Sims, Director of Children's Social Care

Gill Betton, Head of Service: Children's Development and Partnerships

Keith Martin, Head of Service: Cared for Children & Care Leavers

Sam Ankers, Care Leaver Manager

Kayleigh Wilshaw, Service Manager: Cared for Children and Care Leavers

Laura Rogerson, Head Teacher, Virtual School CFC

Paul Mountford, Executive Democratic Services Officer

42 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Flude, S Gardiner, A Kolker and M Warren.

43 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

44 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January 2019 be approved as a correct record.

45 CORPORATE PARENTING UPDATE FROM ELECTED MEMBERS

There was nothing to report from the work streams this time. The Chairman had met with young people and gave an update under the item 'Input from children and young people'.

The Committee agreed on the need in future for an elected member to serve on each work stream.

46 CARE LEAVERS ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

The Committee considered the Care Leavers Annual Report 2018-19.

The report outlined the work of the team to improve outcomes for care leavers over the past year, including:

- A joint working protocol with the Department of Work & Pensions to make it smoother for care-leavers to access benefits and receive individualised support from the job centres.
- Publication of the Local Offer to Care-Leavers in October 2018.
- A revisit from Mark Riddell (DfE's National Care Leaver Implementation Advisor), who commented that the Care Leavers Service was functioning at a good or outstanding level
- Two tenancy readiness courses held across the Borough.
- A weekly refugee and asylum seeker support and activity group in Crewe.
- The development of a bespoke job for a care-leaver in the participation team.
- Changes to the housing allocations policy to give Care Leavers more of a voice in terms of their banding.
- The Ignition Panel continued to grow. Since the last report, 35 young people had attended or been discussed and had been shortlisted for a number of national awards.
- The Care Leavers football team were semi-finalists in the 2018 North West Leaving Care Football Tournament.
- A number of social events had been organised, including a successful trip to Chester Zoo.

A discussion took place around apprenticeships and the need for the Council as corporate parent to be proactive in offering these to its cared for children and young people. A recent example was given whereby Legal Services would be offering a placement to a young person who was interested in that area of work.

The Committee discussed progress in relation to the Government's five key outcomes, which formed part of the national care leavers 'keep on caring' strategy.

The report concluded with a summary of the challenges for the year ahead.

With regard to the EET Champion role, the officers reported that the outcome of an application for additional funding was still awaited.

RESOLVED

That the Care Leavers Annual Report 2018-19 be noted.

47 INPUT FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Chairman and the Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers reported back to Committee on their meeting with the Shadow

Committee of young people. The Chairman raised a couple of issues regarding the need for the planning process for children in relation to their options and career progression to start at an earlier age. One example was given of a young person who had moved to a new school, with a less extensive curriculum. The officers undertook to follow up on both matters.

Members also discussed the importance of taking note of comments made by children and young people during informal conversations which provided a rich source of information regarding their aspirations and ambitions. The Virtual Head stressed that her team would include any information sent to them in their PEP conversations with young people.

48 STRENGTHS AND DIFFICULTIES QUESTIONNAIRE AND SCORES IN CHESHIRE EAST

This item was deferred.

49 CORPORATE PARENTING UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered a report providing an update on national and local developments in relation to cared for children and young people and care leavers.

The report aligned with the priorities of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and included an update on the impact of the Children and Families Act 2017.

With regard to member training, the Committee stressed the need for all members who sit on the Committee in future to receive all the requisite training. This would provide members with the necessary knowledge to perform an effective role as challengers. In this respect, the Committee asked the officers to consider using part of the Committee's scheduled meetings for training purposes.

The Committee discussed the document being developed by North West Virtual Headteachers around exclusions. The Virtual Headteacher confirmed that fixed term exclusions were an issue across the North West. Cheshire East had undertaken a lot of work with schools and this was continuing. However, some schools were more inclusive than others. Committee members suggested that governors should be targeted and it was confirmed that a number of training sessions had taken place and were planned in this area, including attachment and trauma training.

It was noted that the venue for the star celebration event on 17th November 2019 could change to Tatton Park.

It was also noted that the four new children's homes referred to in the report would be located in Crewe (2) and Macclesfield (2). These would be based on an innovative hub model. Further details of the model and its impact would be submitted to a future meeting.

A new Service Manager had been appointed to Adoption Counts. Details would be included in the update report to the next meeting.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and concluded at 5.10 pm

Councillor J Saunders (Chairman)