

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Children and Families Committee**
held on Monday, 8th November, 2021 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor K Flavell (Chair)
Councillor C Bulman (Vice-Chair)

Councillors L Anderson, M Beanland, J Clowes (substitute), D Edwardes,
S Handley, G Hayes, I Macfarlane, J Saunders, L Smetham and L Smith

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care
Ali Stathers-Tracey, Director of Prevention and Early Help
Jacky Forster, Director of Education and 14 – 19 Skills
Mark Bayley, Head of School Infrastructure & Outcomes
Dave Leadbetter, Head of Children's Commissioning
Shelley Brough, Head of Integrated Commissioning
Deborah Nickson, Legal Team Manager (People) and Deputy Monitoring
Officer
Paul Goodwin, Head of Financial Services & Deputy Chief Finance Officer
Josie Lloyd, Democratic Services Officer

27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors M Addison and J Buckley.
Councillor J Clowes attended as a substitute.

28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

29 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2021 be approved as a
correct record.

30 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

Ruben Barrow, a Member of Youth Parliament, attended the meeting to
speak in support of the Crewe Youth Zone. The Chair invited him to speak
at item 6 rather than during public speaking.

31 CARE AT HOME RECOMMISSION

The committee received a report which sought approval for the redesign and recommission of a new Children's Care at Home Purchasing System.

There was extensive debate and concerns were raised by some Members about supporting the recommendations in the report without further detail. A number of Members expressed a view that this report required scrutiny from the Finance Sub-Committee before returning to the Children and Families Committee.

A motion was moved and seconded which sought to approve the recommendations outlined in the report and the motion was declared lost.

A further motion was moved and seconded to refer the item to the Finance Sub-Committee for scrutiny and for the report to be brought back to the Children and Families Committee following this. The motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be referred to the Finance Sub-Committee for scrutiny.
2. That the report be brought back to the Children and Families Committee for consideration following scrutiny at the Finance Sub-Committee.

32 CREWE YOUTH ZONE

The committee received a report which provided an update on the progress made to date to develop a Crewe Youth Zone, including an outdoor satellite site, following Cabinet approval in October 2020.

Ruben Barrow, a Member of Youth Parliament spoke in support of this item and the committee thanked him for his contribution.

A detailed business case would provide more information on arrangements and a further report would be brought back to the committee. The committee received assurances that safe walking routes and parking would be considered within the plans.

RESOLVED:

1. That the committee note the report
2. That the committee note that a further Children and Families Committee report will be prepared to seek approval for the detailed arrangements for the opening, operation and governance of the Crewe Youth Zone.

33 SEND STRATEGY

The committee received a report which set out the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy 1 September 2021 – 31 August 2024 and the consultation and engagement that has occurred to compile the SEND Strategy and associated action plan.

RESOLVED:

1. That the committee approve the SEND Strategy and associated action plan for 2021 – 2024.
2. That the committee receive an annual report on the progress being made against the vision, values and actions contained in the SEND Strategy.

34 SCHOOL TRANSPORT UPDATE

The committee received an update on school transport, including the arrangements in relation to the additional transport provided as a result of COVID-19, implementation of the new COVID guidance from September 2021 and progress in relation to the transfer of Transport Service Solutions (TSS) functions to Cheshire East Council.

A question was raised regarding safe walking routes and it was agreed that Mark Bayley would take this away to ensure transport is not looked at in isolation but to be considered alongside walking routes.

RESOLVED:

1. That the update be noted.
2. That Mark Bayley take away the request to consider safe walking routes alongside transport.

The committee adjourned for a short break.

35 ALL AGE SENSORY IMPAIRMENT STRATEGY

The committee received a report setting out the All Age Sensory Impairment Strategy which had been developed in partnership with Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group following formal consultation.

RESOLVED:

That the committee approve the All Age Sensory Impairment Strategy.

36 CHESHIRE EAST JOINT MARKET POSITION STATEMENT

The committee received a report which outlined the results of the consultation process and presented the final version of the Joint Market Position Statement 2021-25 for approval.

RESOLVED:

That the committee approve the final version of the Market Position Statement 2021-25 as outlined in appendix 1.

37 WORK PROGRAMME

Before considering the work programme, Mark Bayley was invited to provide a verbal update to the committee on the Covid-19 position in schools following the half term break. A concern was raised about Year 6 SATs due to take place next year with a high number of pupils having had regular time out of education due to Covid-19 and it was agreed that Mark Bayley would look into this outside the meeting. A further question was raised regarding what is being done to look at the impact of Long Covid on children and it was agreed that this would be raised with the Director of Public Health. It was agreed that this verbal update would be added as a standing item to the agenda.

The committee considered the work programme. It was agreed that two new items on the recent Ofsted inspection and on support grants would be added to the January agenda. The Finance Third Quarter Review, Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Self Evaluation of Children's Services would be deferred to February. It was requested that the S151 Officer would send an update to all Members to explain the reasons for delay in the finance reporting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Covid-19 Schools Update (Verbal) be added as a standing item to the agenda.
2. That Mark Bayley take away the question on Year 6 SATs to look into outside the meeting.
3. That the question of looking into the impact of Long Covid in children be raised with the Director of Public Health.
4. That the agreed changes be made to the work programme.
5. That the S151 Officer send an update to all Members on the reasons for the delay in the financial reporting.

38 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES

The committee received the minutes of the Corporate Parenting meeting held on 14 September 2021.

A question was raised as to whether the minutes of the Local Authority School Governor Nomination Sub Committee should be received by the Children and Families Committee and it was agreed that this would be looked into outside the meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Committee be received and noted.
2. That the question of the Local Authority School Governor Nomination Sub Committee minutes being received by the Children and Families Committee be looked into.

39 REPORTING OF URGENT DECISIONS

It was noted that an urgent decision was taken on behalf of the committee to undertake an accelerated procurement to recommission two residential Children's Homes.

RESOLVED:

That the decision be noted.

The meeting commenced at 10:30 and concluded at 13:20

Councillor K Flavell (Chair)