

# **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Children and Families Committee**  
held on Friday, 23rd September, 2022 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 Buckley, S Handley, I Macfarlane,  
J Saunders, L Smetham, R Bailey, D Edwardes, A Critchley and S Holland

## **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's Services  
Jacky Forster, Director of Education and 14-19 Skills  
Claire Williamson, Director of Strong Start, Family Help and Intervention  
Ceri Kay, Principal Lawyer (Childcare)  
Steve Reading, Principal Accountant  
Josie Lloyd, Democratic Services Officer  
Shelley Brough, Acting Director of Commissioning and Integration

## **30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Addison, Gregory, Hayes and Smith. Councillors Bailey, Edwardes, Holland and Critchley attended as substitutes.

## **31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **32 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2022 be approved as a correct record.

## **33 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION**

At the Chair's discretion, Ms Rebecca Parkinson attended the meeting to highlight an art project she was arranging for schools in Macclesfield to showcase their artwork within the community. The project was still in the initial stages but had support in place. The committee welcomed the project and would be keen to hear back on its progress.

**34 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT MANAGEMENT PLAN 2022/23 TO 2026/27**

The committee received the report which sought the approval of the updated Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan for the period 2022/23 to 2026/27.

Officers gave assurances that this was a national issue and that intelligence and feedback from a range of sources, including members and residents, was factored into the mitigation plan.

Concerns were raised by some members which included not understanding the financial risks behind each area of mitigation and the impact if an area of mitigation fails. A motion was moved and seconded which sought to defer the plan until the committee had a full understanding of the financial implications, particularly having an understanding and assurance that there had been a line by line analysis of all planned expenditure. The motion was declared lost.

**RESOLVED (by majority):**

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Approve the DSG Management Plan for 2022/23 to 2026/27.
2. Note the need to pursue external capital funding and review the capital programme to identify additional projects within the DSG management plan as determined by the sufficiency statement.

(The council will be updating its SEN sufficiency statement in autumn 2022. This will set out the additional provision needed over the next five years to further mitigate the overspend and require significant capital investment to deliver).

3. To note that engagement has begun with the DfE's Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme.

**35 SCHOOL ORGANISATION: UPDATE ON THE PROPOSAL FOR A PRIMARY SCHOOL, BASFORD EAST, SHAVINGTON, FOLLOWING CONSULTATION**

The committee received the report which provided an update to the previous committee paper, considered by the Children and Families Committee on 10 January 2022, on the establishment of a new primary school in Basford, Shavington.

**RESOLVED (unanimously):**

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. That the committee notes, the summary of the feedback received, including the proposed mitigations, following the 4-week informal representation period which is a required stage in the DfE free school presumption process to allow the opening of a new primary school at Basford East, Shavington.
2. That the committee agrees to the progression of the prescribed free school process in the generation and submission of the draft specification for the new school to the DfE.

**36 HOLIDAY ACTIVITY FUND GRANT – OPEN PROCUREMENT 2022-2025**

The committee received the report which sought approval to move to an open procurement procedure, as set out at Regulation 27 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, to spend up to the total amount of the holiday activity fund grant allocated by the Department for Education each financial year.

**RESOLVED (unanimously):**

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Approve the Holiday Activity Fund grant to providers to be delivered via the open procedure from the winter programme in 2022 to 2025.
2. Delegate authority to the Executive Director, Children's Services for the dispersal of funds and contract awards to providers for the delivery of the holiday activity and food programme up to the allocated Holiday Activity Fund grant amount each financial year.
3. Receive an annual report on impact and spend against the Holiday Activity Fund grant.

**37 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Q4 SCORECARD 2021/22**

The committee received the report which provided an overview of performance against the core indicator set within the three directorate areas of Children's Services.

A request was made for the national benchmark figure for the number of children in care. The Director of Children's Social Care advised that it is a complex position of when the data becomes available but that the data will be shared retrospectively as it had not been available at the time the meeting. It was requested that this information should be shared ahead of the next committee meeting if available.

A further request was made for the report to include links with the Corporate Plan and it was agreed that this would be taken forward.

A query was raised regarding dental checks within the last 12 months for cared for children as the quarterly figure appeared to vary from the annual figure. It was agreed that a written response would be provided.

Cllr Handley left the meeting during this item and did not return.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Children and Families Committee note the performance of children's services for quarter 4.

**38 CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22**

The committee received the report which detailed the progress and achievements over 2021-22 against the five pledges the Council has made to cared for children and care leavers in the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Children and Families Committee endorse the Corporate Parenting Committee Annual Report 2021-22 as set out at Appendix 1.

**39 SCHOOL ORGANISATION: ACADEMISATION OF SCHOOLS: FORWARD PLAN**

The committee received the report which provided information on planned schools across the borough which were seeking to move to academy status and join a multi academy trust. This was a standing item brought to each committee meeting.

It was noted that, since publication of the agenda, Oakfield Lodge had converted.

**RESOLVED:**

That the committee receives and notes the summary table (Appendix 1) showing the status of academy conversions across Cheshire East schools.

**40 WORK PROGRAMME**

**RESOLVED:**

That the work programme be noted.

#### **41 MINUTES OF SUB COMMITTEES**

##### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the following sub committees be noted:

Local Authority School Governor Nomination Sub Committee 30 March 2022

Corporate Parenting Committee 15 March 2022

Corporate Parenting Committee 28 June 2022

#### **42 REPORTING OF OFFICER DELEGATED DECISIONS**

##### **RESOLVED:**

That the Children and Families Committee note the officer delegated decision which had been taken since the previous meeting.

#### **43 ALL AGE CARERS HUB**

In accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed to an additional item of business relating to the All Age Carers Hub on the grounds that the matter could not wait until the next meeting as the contract needed to be signed. This was dealt with as a verbal update.

On 6 October 2021, the Children and Families Committee received a report on the All Age Carers Hub and Strategy and gave approval for the recommission of the All Age Carers Hub contract, ending in December 2022, with Cheshire West and Chester Council and Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group. Since that decision was taken, it had not been possible to jointly commission in partnership with Cheshire West and Chester Council and, therefore, committee was being asked to note that the re-commissioning would no longer be a joint venture and give approval to continue with the delegation of authority to the Executive Director of Adults, Health and Integration to award the All Age Carers Hub contract.

It was noted that there had been no change to the budget or the model.

A query was raised as to whether there would be any compromise to the service delivered and assurances were given that there would be no change to the local provision in Cheshire East.

Concerns were raised regarding this urgent business being dealt with verbally and without a briefing paper. Cllr Bailey expressed a concern as she was in attendance as a substitute member and therefore did not have sufficient background information to support this and would have to vote against. Officers gave assurances that learning would be taken forward.

**RESOLVED (by majority):**

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Acknowledge that the recommissioning of the All Age Carers Hub is no longer a joint venture with Cheshire West and Chester Council.
2. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Adults, Health and Integration to award the All Age Carers Hub contract.

The meeting commenced at 13:00 and concluded at 15:16

Councillor K Flavell (Chair)