

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Children and Families Committee**
held on Tuesday, 16th July, 2024 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor C Bulman (Chair)
Councillor E Gilman (Vice-Chair)

Councillors M Beanland, S Bennett-Wake, J Bird, M Edwards, G Hayes,
B Posnett, B Puddicombe, J Saunders, G Smith, J Clowes and M Goldsmith

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Rob Polkinghorne, Chief Executive
Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director Children's Services
Claire Williamson, Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration
Andrea Stone, Interim Director of Family Help and Social Care
David Brown, Director of Governance and Compliance
Lauren Conway, Business Manager
Janet Witkowski, Head of Legal
Nikki Wood-Hill, Lead Finance Partner
Karen Shuker, Democratic Services Officer

23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Bailey and N Cook. Councillors J Clowes and M Goldsmith attended as a substitutes.

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

25 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

26 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no public speakers.

27 ILACS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The committee considered a report on the Cheshire East children's services improvement plan, which addressed the findings from the Ofsted

inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) conducted in February and March 2024. The committee also considered the approach to providing additional financial investment to ensure that the Council could deliver the plan and the necessary improvements to the quality of services.

It was acknowledged that the improvement plan ratings had caused confusion as there were two separate keys for actions and impact. While this was referenced within the plan, it needed to be clear which the ratings shown referred to. Officers undertook to ensure that two separate ratings in the plan would be clearer to reflect this. The rating currently shown in appendix 1 of the report referred only to the actions as the first impact monitoring had not yet been undertaken at the time of publication.

Some members raised concerns regarding the plans for recruitment, sufficiency and the funding of the improvement plan and it was queried what contingencies were in place. Officers advised that the work being undertaken was looking at securing funding across the system to ensure sustainable solutions were found, particularly around sufficiency. Officers were working collaboratively on a proposal to address the sufficiency need and this would be brought forward to the Improvement Board and to Committee. The plan would be monitored on a monthly basis to identify any need for any contingency action. Details would be shared at each committee, as agreed at committee on 3 June 2024, to provide assurance.

A query was raised regarding the care leavers' scheme in which apprentices were employed by the council but seconded out to carefully selected businesses in the young person's chosen field, and what liability the Council would have. Officers undertook to provide detail in writing but gave assurances that this was a tried and tested model and learning would be taken from examples of best practice.

RESOLVED (by majority):

That the Children and Families Committee

1. Approve the improvement plan as set out in appendix 1 to the report and recommend to full Council on 17 July 2024 the approval of the plan.
2. Approve the approach to funding the delivery of the improvement plan, as detailed in the S151/ finance section of the report and in appendix 2 to the report.

28 WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and concluded at 6.51 pm

Councillor C Bulman (Chair)