

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Children and Families Committee**
held on Monday, 10th July, 2023 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor C Bulman (Chair)
Councillor L Anderson (Vice-Chair)

Councillors R Bailey, M Beanland, S Bennett-Wake, D Clark, E Gilman,
G Hayes, R Kain, B Posnett, J Saunders, G Smith and L Smith

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's Services
Mark Bayley, Acting Director of Education and 14-19 Skills
Claire Williamson, Director of Strong Start, Family Help and Integration
Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care
Deborah Nickson, Legal Team Manager (People)
Steve Reading, Principal Accountant
Josie Lloyd, Democratic Services Officer
Vicky Whiting, Business Development Manager
Laura Rogerson, Head of Service - Inclusion
Gill Betton, Head of Service – Children's Developments and Partnerships
Jill Stenton, Commissioning Manager

ALSO PRESENT

Nicola Wycherley, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB
Richard Hall, Edge Public Solutions

9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In the interest of openness, the following declarations of interest were made:

Cllr Kain declared that he was a supply teacher working with agencies that operated in Cheshire East.

Cllr G Smith declared that he was a trade union official for NASUWT.

Cllr Bennett-Wake declared that she worked as a teaching assistant for a local school.

11 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

12 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no public speakers.

13 HIGH NEEDS FUNDING CONSULTATION RESULTS AND NEXT STEPS

The committee received the report which outlined the results of the recently undertaken consultation regarding a potential change in model for the allocation of top-up funding associated with Education, Health and Care Plans.

A query was raised regarding the 12 responses relating to one school and what the differences were in these responses. Officers advised that responses were reviewed to ensure that they were not submitted by the same individual and undertook to provide further detail following the meeting.

It was suggested that consideration be given to undertaking a piece of work around sharing consultation responses in accordance with the Corporate Plan priorities of being open and fair.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Scrutinise the results of the recent consultation regarding the model for allocation of top-up funding associated with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans
2. Agree the adoption of the proposed new banding model (as developed by the High Needs Funding Working Group) for funding associated with all Cheshire East EHC Plans for school aged children in mainstream schools
3. Agree the proposed staged implementation of the new banding model
4. Delegate to the Executive Director of Children's Services
 - a) the implementation of the new banding model and
 - b) to undertake any consultations and to make any consequential changes ensure the implementation of banding model.

14 UPDATE ON PROGRESS AGAINST THE JOINT TARGETED AREA INSPECTION ACTION PLAN

The committee received the report which provided an update on the partnership's progress against the action plan from the joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to the criminal exploitation of children in Cheshire East.

The committee noted that colleagues from the police had been unable to attend due to an inspection coinciding with the meeting. A concern regarding cuts to the number of police community support officers available to support young people, for example with online safety, was highlighted as an area to be raised with police colleagues. Officers would take this away to feed back to the police after the meeting.

Members commented that the report focused on the volume of activity carried out and that it would be helpful to understand what impact these actions have had. It was requested that this be incorporated into future reports. A further request was made for future reports to include a greater level of detail; it was noted that there would be a risk in presenting too much detail which could result in individuals being identifiable, and therefore it would require careful consideration as to how this could be done, but that the request would be taken on board.

A query was raised as to arrangements for safeguarding training for members and it was noted that details of this would be shared following the meeting.

It was suggested that the findings of the report be shared with town and parish councils.

Members thanked officers and partners for this work.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Scrutinise the report on the progress to date and impact on outcomes for children and young people at risk of exploitation.
2. Continue to offer support and scrutiny to the partnership in this important work.
3. Agree to receive a report in early 2024 with a further update on progress made against the JTAI action plan.

15 CONSULTATION ON THE PERSONAL TRAVEL BUDGET OFFER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The committee received the report which provided an overview of progress to date against the plans to transform travel support for children and young people.

A query was raised as to whether personal travel budgets redefine the local authority's statutory responsibility and whether an additional mechanism is required for assurance around business use for insurance where parents are transporting their children to school on behalf of the Council. It was agreed that a written response would be provided by Legal.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Scrutinise the progress to date in relation to the transformation of travel support for children and young people.
2. Approve an increase of the current mileage rate for PTBs from 25p per mile to 45p per mile, effective from the start of the next academic year (September 2023).
3. Approve the proposed changes to the school transport policies and procedures in relation to the process for claiming PTBs, including removing the requirement for parents / carers to provide proof of attendance, arrange regular monthly payments and provide flexibility within the scheme for exceptional cases.

16 PROVISIONAL FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2022/23

The committee received the report which provided an overview of the Cheshire East Council provisional outturn for the financial year 2022/23 and the financial performance of the Council relevant to the committee's remit.

RESOLVED (by majority):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Consider the report of the Corporate Policy Committee ([Agenda for Corporate Policy Committee on Tuesday, 11th July, 2023, 10.00 am | Cheshire East Council](#))
2. Consider the financial performance of the Council in the 2022/23 financial year relevant to their terms of reference.
3. Consider the delegated decisions relating to supplementary revenue estimates for specific grants coded directly to services in accordance

with Financial Procedure Rules as detailed in Section 2 of each Committee Appendix (Annex 2).

4. Approve supplementary revenue estimates (SRE) over £500,000 up to and including £1,000,000 detailed in Annex 2: Appendix 2, Section 2, Table 2.
5. Consider the update on performance with regard to the MTFS 2023-27 approved budget policy change items, in respect of Services within the remit of the Committee (Annex 3).

17 PROGRESS ON THE ALL AGE CARERS STRATEGY 2021 - 2025

The committee received the report which provided an update on progress to further develop Cheshire East All Age Carers Strategy since presenting the strategy to committee in March 2021.

The committee were advised of an opportunity to become Carer Champions and details of this would be circulated following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Families Committee note the progress details provided for the All-Age Carers Strategy 2021-2025. The All-Age Carers Strategy was published in September 2021.

18 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCORECARD QUARTER 4 2022/23

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 query was raised regarding case load per social worker and officers confirmed that this could be included in the scorecard going forward.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

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

19 WORK PROGRAMME

The committee received the work programme and discussed the upcoming September meeting which had a large number of reports scheduled. Officers would be reviewing this to establish any reports that could be deferred. Due to time sensitivity of many of the items, it was expected that the September meeting would be extended.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

20 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES

The committee received the minutes of the following sub-committees:

Local Authority School Governor Nomination Sub-Committee – 15 February 2023

Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee (formerly Corporate Parenting Committee) – 15 March 2023

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be noted.

The meeting commenced at 14:00 and concluded at 16:55

Councillor C Bulman (Chair)