

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cared For Children and Care Leavers Committee**  
held on Tuesday, 18th June, 2024 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,  
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

## **PRESENT**

Councillor J Saunders (Vice-Chair)

Councillors M Beanland, S Bennett-Wake, J Bird, E Gilman, G Hayes,  
S Holland, B Posnett and B Puddicombe

### **1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That Cllr Carol Bulman be appointed as Chair for the 2024-25 municipal year.

### **2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That Cllr Jos Saunders be appointed as Vice-Chair for the 2024-25 municipal year.

### **3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Carol Bulman and Cllr Dawn Clark. Cllr Jos Saunders chaired the meeting in the absence of the Chair.

### **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

#### **RESOLVED:**

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

### **6 UPDATE FROM SHADOW COMMITTEE (VERBAL UPDATE)**

The committee received a presentation outlining the recent activities of the shadow committee, My Voice. This included:

- The children and young people had been supported with sharing their experiences with Ofsted and had been part of an Ofsted focus group to speak to inspectors. There had been positive comments around social workers and also comments shared on experiences that could have been better
- There had been activities for the group throughout February, an Easter activity day and planning for the Star Celebration Day
- The group had been involved in developing the 'Coming into Care' guide and providing feedback
- Care Leavers had developed a training resource aimed at equipping professionals who work with Cared for Children and Care Leavers with the right skills to support those facing domestic abuse. Care Leavers used their lived experiences to promote messages, influence the training and develop case studies

## 7 OFSTED INSPECTION FINDINGS

The committee received the report on the findings from the Ofsted inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) conducted in February and March 2024, the plans in place to improve services in relation to the findings, and monitoring arrangements from Ofsted and the Department for Education.

It was requested that Members have more oversight of the service's self-evaluation. Officers gave assurances that this was being actioned, with a proposal being planned to be brought to both this committee and the Children and Families Committee on enhancing Member frontline visits to give more insight into practices.

It was felt that the Corporate Parenting Working Group was positive and it was requested that all Members across the Council were encouraged to engage with corporate parenting and to undertake the training.

It was clarified that this report had also been to the Children and Families Committee, which most members of this committee also sit on, and two hours had been spent at that meeting thoroughly scrutinising and debating this report in addition to the discussion today.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Committee:

1. Note the inspection findings, implications for monitoring from Ofsted and the DfE, and plans to improve services.
2. Note that a task and finish workshop for the Cared for Children and Care Leavers committee and Children and Families committee will take place on 2 July 2024 to review and scrutinise the draft improvement plan.

**8 CHILDREN IN CARE ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23 (NHS CHESHIRE AND MERSEYSIDE)**

The committee received the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside System Oversight Board/Quality and Performance Committee Children in Care Annual Report 2022-23.

There was a concern about the delay in reporting and this leading to conflicting data between this report and the scorecard.

It was requested that there be more regular representation from health colleagues at meetings of this committee going forward.

Dentistry continued to be an area of concern for the committee. Officers advised that data on dental checks were forming part of the weekly performance scrutiny to ensure that the data was up to date and recorded clearly. This was intended to improve Cheshire East's data accuracy and ensure targeted action.

It was requested that dentistry be picked up as part of the work streams for the improvement plan.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**9 FOSTERING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT**

The committee received the Fostering Service Annual Report for 2022-23.

There was a request for comparison data with statistical neighbours and the national average position. Officers agreed that future reports could include data from north west local authorities.

It was noted that the timeliness of reporting needs consideration.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**10 VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEAD TEACHER ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23**

The committee received the Virtual School Headteacher Annual Report 2022-23.

The committee noted some of the recent successes of the cared for children and young people, including graduating university and securing apprenticeships. The committee were keen to ensure that the successes were being celebrated by the Council as corporate parents in a timely

manner and in a way that would be meaningful to each individual. Officers gave assurances that this suggestion would be taken away and would also be reflected in the next Virtual School Headteacher report.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**11 REVIEW OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The committee received the report on the review of the committee's terms of reference, as required on an annual basis.

There was a request for this to reference the newly established working group and workstreams that were set up as part of the improvement plan. Officers undertook to refresh the terms of reference to reflect this and would bring back to a later meeting of the committee.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**12 CARED FOR CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS SCORECARD Q3 2023-24**

The committee received the quarter 3 scorecard and an update in relation to Cared for Children and Care Leavers services following the Ofsted inspection.

Members reiterated that more regular health reporting was required.

Officers undertook to ensure that overall reporting would be more timely going forward to ensure meaningful scrutiny.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

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

Councillor J Saunders