

Children and Families Committee

Agenda

Date:	Monday, 11th December, 2023
Time:	10.00 am
Venue:	Committee Suite 1, 2 and 3, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the top of each report.

It should be noted that Part 1 items of Cheshire East Council decision making meetings are audio recorded and the recordings will be uploaded to the Council's website.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

To note any apologies for absence from Members.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests, other registerable interests, and non-registerable interests in any item on the agenda.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 3 - 10)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 November 2023.

For requests for further information

Contact: Josie Lloyd

Tel: 01270 686466

E-Mail: josie.lloyd@cheshireeast.gov.uk with any apologies

4. **Public Speaking/Open Session**

In accordance with paragraph 2.24 of the Council's Committee Procedure Rules and Appendix on Public Speaking, set out in the [Constitution](#), a total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to put questions to the committee on any matter relating to this agenda. Each member of the public will be allowed up to two minutes each to speak, and the Chair will have discretion to vary this where they consider it appropriate.

Members of the public wishing to speak are required to provide notice of this at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting.

5. **Special Educational Needs and Inclusion (SENIF) Policy with Consultation**
(Pages 11 - 38)

To consider a report providing the outcome from the consultation process and seeking approval for implementation of the policy set out in appendix 1 for new applications from January 2024, and all funding via the new policy from September 2024.

6. **Proposed Closure of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Bollington**

To consider a report on the proposed closure of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School.

Report to follow

7. **Basford East New Primary School Postponement to Scheme**

To consider a report on the postponement of the scheme.

Report to follow

8. **Children and Families Scorecard Quarter 2 2023/24** (Pages 39 - 48)

To receive the Children and Families scorecard for quarter 2 of 2023-24.

9. **Work Programme** (Pages 49 - 54)

To consider the work programme and determine any required amendments.

Membership: Councillors L Anderson (Vice-Chair), R Bailey, M Beanland, S Bennett-Wake, C Bulman (Chair), D Clark, E Gilman, G Hayes, R Kain, B Posnett, J Saunders, G Smith and L Smith

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Children and Families Committee**
held on Monday, 13th November, 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, R Kain,
B Posnett, J Saunders, G Smith, L Smith and L Wardlaw

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's Services
Claire Williamson, Director of Strong Start, Family Help and Integration
Kerry Birtles, Director of Children's Social Care
Janet Witkowski, Head of Legal Services
Annie Britton, Participation Lead, Youth Support Service
Joanne Prophet, School Organisation and Capital Manager
Dr Susie Roberts, Consultant in Public Health
Katherine Oldacre, Head of Service: Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
Samantha Derbyshire, Head of Service: Children's Provision
Joe Carter, Project Manager
Mark Hughes, Senior Commissioning Manager
Keith Evans, Head of Service: Mental Health and Learning Disabilities
Nikki Wood-Hill, Lead Finance Partner
Josie Lloyd, Democratic Services Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Steve Docking, CEO North West Academies Trust
Maddy Lowry, Associate Director, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS
Foundation Trust
Cheshire East Youth Council Members

40 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr George Hayes. Cllr Liz
Wardlaw attended as a substitute.

41 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

42 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

43 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

Mr Steve Docking, CEO of North West Academies Trust, addressed the committee regarding items 6 (Kingsbourne Academy, Nantwich – 12 month delay for the opening of the new school) and 7 (Academisation of Millfields Primary School and Nursery). Mr Docking thanked officers for the work done so far in relation to both schools.

44 PRESENTATION FROM CHESHIRE EAST YOUTH COUNCIL

The committee received a presentation from members of the Cheshire East Youth Council to mark Children's Rights Month.

The presentation highlighted some current issues and concerns affecting young people. These included:

- The cost of living
- Mental health and wellbeing
- The school curriculum and PHSE
- Vaping and substance misuse

The committee asked questions of the Youth Council and gave assurances that their views were heard. Members were keen to ensure that there was a mechanism for their views to be represented and communicated further. The Executive Director of Children's Services advised that she chaired the Children's Trust Board which provided a process for young people to feed into the Council and had made a commitment to work through the issues raised in that forum and bring back updates to the board on a regular basis.

45 KINGSBOURNE ACADEMY, NANTWICH – 12-MONTH DELAY FOR THE OPENING OF THE NEW SCHOOL

The committee received the report which provided an update on the delay to providing the new 1FE (210 places) primary free school, on the Kingsley Fields Development, Nantwich.

The committee requested that a further report be brought back in a few months to keep members updated on the delay. Officers agreed that a report would be brought to the February committee meeting.

The ward member, Cllr Posnett, requested to be kept informed throughout the process.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Families Committee note the 12-month delay for the opening of the new school Kingsbourne Academy, Nantwich.

46 ACADEMISATION OF MILLFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY, MARSH LANE, NANTWICH

The committee received the report which set out the arrangements in place to support the intended academy conversion of Millfields Primary School and Nursery to become part of the North West Academies Trust Limited.

Officers advised that there was a minor typographical error in the name of the school on the draft transfer agreement at appendix 2 and that this would be corrected.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Authorise the Executive Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer to take all steps necessary to agree and execute the Commercial Transfer Agreement (Appendix 2) to the North West Academies Trust Limited relating to the transfer of all staff under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006, and assets
2. Authorise the Executive Director of Place and Chief Finance Officer to take the steps necessary to agree the required transactions in relation to land, facilities or shared use agreements as are necessary in order to facilitate the conversion, including (but not limited to) the grant and completion of a lease (see Appendix 3) to the North West Academies Trust Limited for 125 years substantially in the form of the model lease produced by DfE at a peppercorn rent. The school site is identifiable as shown on the accompanying redline lease plan (see Appendix 4)

47 CHESHIRE EAST PLACE - LEARNING DISABILITY AND MENTAL HEALTH PLANS

The committee received the report which sought approval of the Cheshire East Place Plans for Learning Disabilities and Mental Health.

A query was raised regarding a breakdown of the mental health conditions in each ward for members to understand where support could be provided in the community. The committee were advised that information based on referrals into secondary care could be shared with committee but officers did not have information from primary care data.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Approve the Cheshire East Place Learning Disabilities Plan
2. Approve the Cheshire East Place Mental Health Plan

48 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2024/25 - 2027/28

The committee received the report which set out the indicative financial envelope for this committee to support consultation on the development of the Cheshire East Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28.

There was a typographical error in paragraph one of the report which stated that members were being asked to approve the indicative financial envelope. It was confirmed that this was for noting only and no decision was required at this stage.

Some members expressed a concern that there was not enough detail provided in the report. Officers advised that the intention was for members to note the envelope that had been allocated to the committee and that, as the MTFS was developed, more detail would be brought back. Members' concerns would be fed back to the Finance team.

A query was raised as to whether there would be MTFS workshops for the committee and officers undertook to confirm this following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Note the indicative budget envelope for this committee, as approved at the Finance Sub-Committee on 2 November, as a way of setting financial targets in support of achieving a balanced budget for 2024/25
2. Note that officers will develop further proposals in consultation with Members to enable wider stakeholder consultation prior to approval by Council
3. Note that Committees will be presented with the opportunity to further review financial proposals, designed to achieve a balanced budget, as part of their January cycle of meetings prior to recommendations being made to Council for approval

49 **SECOND FINANCIAL REVIEW 2023/24**

The committee received the report which provided the second review of the Cheshire East Council forecast outturn for the financial year 2023/24.

In relation to the Dedicated Schools Grant, members suggested considering a spotlight review, LGA peer review or having conversations with local authorities which were holding a surplus to consider best practice. Officers advised that there was a significant amount of scrutiny from the Safety Valve programme which Cheshire East had entered into, and that they were happy to work with other authorities on best practice. It was noted that there were some areas of best practice at Cheshire East.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Consider the report of the Finance Sub Committee: Finance Sub-Committee, 2nd November, 2023
2. Consider the factors leading to a forecast adverse Net Revenue financial pressure of £10.8m against a revised budget of £80.3m (13.4%)
3. Consider the forecast and further mitigations needing to be identified, aimed at bringing spending back in line with budget
4. Consider the in-year forecast Capital Spending of £36.5m against an approved MTFS budget of £53.8m, due to slippage that has been re-profiled into future years
5. Scrutinise the contents of Annex 1 and Appendix 2 and note that any financial mitigation decisions requiring approval will be made in line with relevant delegations

50 CHESHIRE EAST SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

The committee received the report on the activity of the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership in 2022/2023.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Scrutinise the work of the Safeguarding Children's Partnership from 2023/2023
2. Scrutinise the future plan of work for the partnership to ensure that the right actions are in place to deliver high quality support to children and young people

51 CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The committee received the report on Cheshire East's improvement and impact plan, following the Ofsted inspections of local authority children's services (ILACS), which addressed previous inspection findings, and the findings from the self-evaluation of the impact of early help and social care practice on outcomes for children and young people.

The committee were advised that this was a new plan and that officers would be able to bring updates on progress going forward.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Note that Cheshire East Council is expecting to receive a standard inspection of local authority children's services
2. Scrutinise the early help and children's social care improvement and impact plan to ensure that the right actions are in place to deliver high quality support to children and young people
3. Scrutinise the findings from the self-evaluation of early help and social care practice

52 MENTAL HEALTH SPOTLIGHT REVIEW: WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT, PROMOTE, PREVENT, EMPOWER AND INTERVENE EARLY FOR ALL INVOLVED

The committee received the report on emotional and mental wellbeing need seen in children and young people across Cheshire East, and the support currently available to support this need.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Note and endorse the findings and recommendations of the latest spotlight review
2. Continue to champion mental health and wellbeing as a priority across all agendas

53 UNREGULATED AND UNREGISTERED PROVISION PROTOCOL

The committee received the report which outlined the challenges locally and nationally in relation to the use of unregulated and unregistered provision for cared for children.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Consider the challenges leading to the use of unregulated and unregistered placements, the extent of the use of these placements in Cheshire East, and the implications for children and young people in these placements
2. Scrutinise the protocol to ensure it effectively safeguards children in these arrangements and that there is appropriate oversight from the Executive Director of Children's Services

54 WORK PROGRAMME

The committee considered the work programme.

As there was an additional meeting scheduled for December, officers would give consideration to bringing forward some reports from the January meeting to balance the two agendas. A request was made for this to include the 'Basford East New Primary School Postponement to Scheme' report.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting commenced at 14.00 and concluded at 17.45

Councillor C Bulman (Chair)

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Children & Families Committee**11 December 2023****Special Educational Needs Inclusion
Fund Policy (SENIF) with Consultation****Report of: Danielle Holdcroft, Head of Service Early Years, Family
Help & Prevention****Report Reference No: CF/34/23-24****Ward(s) Affected: All****Purpose of Report**

- 1 To request approval to implement the revised mechanism of support provided to enable children with special educational needs (SEN) to access their early education entitlements.
- 2 This is supporting the council's Corporate Plan objectives as follows:

An open and enabling organisation	Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making.
A council which empowers and cares about people	Support all children to have the best start in life. Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential.

Executive Summary

- 3 This report sets out the statutory duty to support children aged 3 and 4 with SEN to access their early education entitlements.
- 4 Support is currently provided for 2, 3 and 4 years olds with SEN via a grant to childcare providers to assist them to make adjustments to their provision. The grant is by application and is linked to the number of hours the child attends the provision and the level of support required.
- 5 This report sets out the limitations of the current process and proposed revisions to refocus SEND support on high quality provision using the graduated approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children & Families Committee is recommended to:

1. To consider the outcome from the consultation process and approve implementation of the policy set out in appendix 1 for new applications from January 2024, and all funding via the new policy from September 2024.

Background

- 6 SEN Inclusion Funding currently provides support for children through the graduated approach from SEN Support (based on the number of hours early education entitlement) up to receipt of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) for children who meet these criteria. This includes 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds.
- 7 The Early Years Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2-year-olds is top sliced by 1.9% to create a budget to enable 2 year olds with additional needs to be supported in the settings, following approval of the overall DSG budget at Children and Families Committee on 13 February 2023. The same percentage top slice will continue to be required in 2024-25.
- 8 An allocation is made from High Needs DSG to create the SEN Inclusion Fund for 3- and 4-year-olds and a budget for early years EHCPs of £1,106,545 was agreed in 2023-24 will continue to be required in 2024-25.

- 9 A Settling in Grant is available to support the transition of children with complex / specialist needs into childcare.
- 10 Specialist equipment may be requested, based on a health professionals' recommendation to enable a child to access their early education. This is paid from the Early Years supplies and services budget. Actual spend last financial year 2022-23 was £37,686.
- 11 Under the current procedures, grants are based on a funding formula of £9 per hour. This is less than the National Living Wage and does not take account of employers on costs. Payment in hours is not a statutory requirement and takes the focus off provision and directs it towards one-to-one support which is not relevant for the majority of children at a SEND support level.
- 12 Financial support is provided for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) as set out in the plan.
- 13 Current SEN Inclusion funding arrangements are being reviewed and alternative options considered due to:
 - (a) A growing number of children with additional needs attending settings in Cheshire East, some of which have severe complex/specialist needs who may start to access provision as early as 6 months of age. Increasing numbers of families are experiencing settings reporting that they cannot meet their child's needs.
 - (b) Insufficient budget - SEN Funding is paid via the SEN Inclusion Fund. This fund is to support 'low and emerging needs' and is paid linked to the child's access to their Free Early Educational Entitlement. However, in Cheshire East this budget supports all children with SEND in early years, including those who are accessing an Education, Health and Care plan. This has been in place since April 2017. This is reflected in budgets from 2023/24.
 - (c) Childcare providers are raising concerns that the current levels of funding are not sufficient to cover the cost of additional staffing hours and are often focused on additional hours rather than the quality of provision.
 - (d) The inclusion funding supports children to access their early education entitlement, including the 30 hours entitlement, but children may be in settings for more than their early education entitlement hours each week.

- (e) A small number of parents defer their child's entry to school. This creates an increased pressure on the budget as the children are funded for longer.
 - (f) The Early Years Supplies and Services budget, in addition to part funding the shortfall in the SEN Inclusion Fund, also provides specialist equipment to enable a child to attend their childcare provision. In the attached draft SENIF policy specialist equipment is factored into the bands and will be paid from the SENIF fund and not out of base budget.
- 14 The recommended model is set out in appendix 1. The revised methodology focuses on an incremental approach to support, concentrating on flexible provision to support children's needs, such as training to upskill practitioners, additional equipment, and resources or for children with the most complex needs additional staff support at times they may require it to effectively meet their needs. The revised draft policy moves us away from a set hours formula to a banding system which will fund additional provision above and beyond what a setting is expected to have "ordinarily available" to all children. The banding system is an "up to" amount that can be applied for termly so will only cover the cost or contribute towards the cost of what is required.
- 15 As an example, a child may be assessed as meeting the Tier 4 banding, an occupation therapist recommends that they need a specialist walking frame to access provision in the setting, no other equipment or support is required, and the walking frame costs £2,500. We would pay the £2,500. If the equipment was £6,000 we would contribute the maximum banding amount of £5,500. Paying an "up to" amount per band will enable us to distribute the SENIF fund in a much more precise and equitable way to meet children's individual needs.
- 16 Assessment of the bands will be based on the settings application as before; the applications will be assessed on a monthly schedule by the early years quality and inclusion coordinators in consultations with officers. A recommendations report is prepared for final approval by the Head of Service for Early years. Where an organisation makes an appeal that cannot be addressed by the early year's coordinator. The appeal will escalate to the early years forum for a decision who may request additional supporting information.
- 17 Crucially, the Special Education Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) is targeted support for childcare providers to meet individual needs. Support is not provided directly to the child / family.

- 18 The proposed SENIF policy would not include children with EHCPs. A Separate budget would be created to fund EHCPs. The proposed SENIF policy focuses on 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds with emerging needs, pre EHCP.
- 19 Consultation was targeted at Ofsted registered childcare providers delivering the early education entitlements and parents via the Parent Carer Forum. The draft report set out in appendix 1 was provided and responses collected and analysed – see appendix 2.

Consultation and Engagement

- 20 Pre-consultation with a multi-agency team of professionals and parent carer former representatives who are part of the early years SEND reforms task & finish group and the Early Years Reference Group, a subgroup of Schools Forum.
- 21 Consultation on the draft policy took place for 4 weeks from 25th September to the 20th of October 2023 through autumn 2023 with the aim to implement the policy for new applications from January 2024, and all funding via the new policy from September 2024.
- 22 The consultation was viewed by 115 people, with 30 people submitting a response. Of the 30 who submitted a response, 60% supported the revised policy, 23% opposed and 17% did not support or oppose.
- 23 Professionals made up 66% of responses. 65% of professionals supported the revised policy, 15% of professionals opposed and 20% did not support or oppose.
- 24 Parents made up 34% of responses. 44% of parents supported the revised policy, 44% of parents opposed and 11% did not support or oppose.
- 25 Respondent themes regarding policy benefits; the most common themes related to increased flexibility, child centred provision, early intervention and increased clarity.
- 26 Respondent themes regarding policy concerns; the most common themes related to timeliness of administration of the process and the policy not covering the full cost of 1:1 provision.
- 27 In response to the most common concern themes relating to timeliness of administration, the process for determining eligibility was streamlined during the pre-consultation stages in anticipation of this concern being raised. Approval via the Early Years Forum was removed in order to avoid delays. In response to the policy not

covering the full cost of 1:1 provision, children with the most complex needs requiring full time 1:1 support would go on to have an EHCP needs assessment which is out of the scope of this policy. This policy provides a contribution to additional support over and above ordinarily available provision and supports children with first concerns and SEND support plans as part of the graduated approach. This policy now makes clear that it is not intended to cover the full costs of additional staffing hours mitigating against the confusion.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 28 The Early years entitlements: local authority funding operational guide 2023 to 2024, Education and Skills Funding Agency (“the operational guidance”) sets out what local authorities must have regard to when discharging their duties to secure free early years provision and should be read alongside the statutory guidance from the DFE “Early education and childcare April 2023”.
- 29 Para 5.3 of the operational guidance under the heading ‘Allocation of funding’ provides as part of the preparation and review of their ‘local offer’, local authorities must consult with early years providers, parents and SEN specialists on how the SEN inclusion fund will be allocated. Under this ‘local offer’, local authorities should publish details on how the SENIF will be used to support their early years SEN cohort. These details should include the eligibility criteria for the fund, the planned value of the fund at the start of the year and the process for allocating the fund to providers.’
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-funding-2023-to-2024/early-years-entitlements-local-authority-funding-operational-guide-2023-to-2024>.
- 30 The outcome of the consultation was the majority of respondents supported the proposed policy.

Other Options Considered

- 31 No alternatives - Local authorities must consult with early years providers to set the value of their local SENIF.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	Failure to meet statutory duty	Very high
Consult	Meet statutory duty and develop policy that meets need	Very low

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

- 32 The Council is under a number of statutory duties under the Childcare Act 2006 including but not limited to - section 6 the local authority's duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents; section 7 a duty to secure early years provision free of charge.
- 33 Local authorities are required to have Special Educational needs inclusion fund (SENIF) for all 3- and 4-year-olds with special educational needs (SEN) who are taking up the free entitlements, regardless of the number of hours taken. The funds are intended to support local authorities to work with providers to address the needs of individual children with SEN. The fund also supports local authorities to undertake their responsibilities to strategically commission SEN services as required under the Children and families Act 2014.
- 34 In order for the consultation to be fair there are guidance principles that must be followed, and these are known as the "Gunning Principles":
- The consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage.
 - Sufficient reasons must be given for the proposal to permit intelligent consideration and response.
 - Adequate time must be given for consideration and response.
 - The product of the consultation must be taken into account when finalising any proposals.
- 35 Legal services will continue to provide support as and when required.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 36 The SENIF schemes are funded through the council's DSG allocation.
- 37 The forecast expenditure for SENIF costs under this proposal is anticipated to be in line with current expenditure levels, so there are no financial implications or changes to the MTFS that are anticipated to be required.
- 38 The number of children progressing through to EHCP's is anticipated to reduce as a result of this change however, therefore potentially

reducing the pressures on the High Needs funding and the DSG deficit.

- 39 As reported to committee the council's DSG reserve deficit is at £46.9m at 31/3/2023 due to the pressures on high needs budget.
- 40 The council's DSG Management Plan (approved at September 2022 Children and Families Committee) sets out the approach to the deficit.
- 41 The next version of the management plan will consider the impact of an improved SENIF offer.

Policy

42

<p>An open and enabling organisation.</p> <p>Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making – We are seeking approval to consult on a new draft policy.</p> <p>Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation – We are proposing to change the way we support early years providers to improve inclusive practice by refocusing on quality provision and upskilling the workforce.</p>	<p>A council which empowers and cares about people.</p> <p>Support all children to have the best start in life – Our revised policy focuses on provision for individual children to meet their additional needs.</p> <p>Ensure all children have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential – Through providing bespoke additional funding we can ensure early years children get the best support from the offset of their education journey, removing barriers early and</p>	<p>A thriving and sustainable place.</p> <p>(Include which aim and priority)</p>
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	supporting independence.	
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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 43 An Equality Impact Assessment has been finalised following the consultation.

Human Resources

- 44 None. Policy to be implemented by existing resources.

Risk Management

- 45 The policy will be overseen by Head of Service Early Years, Family Help & Prevention, Quality and Inclusion Lead and Childcare Development Manager.

Rural Communities

- 46 No specific implications for rural communities.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 47 This report has direct implications for children and young people, and cared for children with SEND aged 2-4 years.

Public Health

- 48 The resulting policy following consultation will have a positive overall impact on the health and wellbeing of Cheshire East residents, with the greatest impact on 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds with SEND and their families.

Climate Change

- 49 The existing statutory requirement to maintain a SENIF policy already helps the council to reduce energy consumption and promote healthy lifestyles through localised service delivery.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Danielle Holdcroft, Head of Service Early Years, Family Help & Prevention danielle.holdcroft@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Draft SENIF policy Appendix 2 – Consultation responses
Background Papers:	Early years entitlements: local authority funding operational guide 2023 to 2024, Education and Skills Funding Agency, para 5.3: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-funding-2023-to-2024/early-years-entitlements-local-authority-funding-operational-guide-2023-to-2024

Appendix 1

Early Years Special Educational Needs Inclusion Funding (SENIF)

Policy for the
Support for children with special
educational needs and disabilities
accessing the early education
entitlements.

DRAFT 25th September 2023



Working for a brighter future together

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. Cheshire East Council has a statutory duty to deliver a Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) to support early years providers in meeting the needs of individual children with SEN.

1.2. Support from the government for children to access early education and childcare:

- 1.2.1. funding 15 hours a week of free childcare for all 3- and 4-year-olds
- 1.2.2. funding 30 hours a week of free childcare for 3- and 4-year-olds in households where both parents work
- 1.2.3. funding 15 hours a week of free childcare for all disadvantaged 2-year-olds – for 40% of all 2 year olds
- 1.2.4. tax free childcare
- 1.2.5. child tax credit entitlement.

1.3. This policy takes account of the increasing government support for children to access early education and childcare:

- 1.3.1. April 2024 – 15 hours for working parents of 2-year olds.
- 1.3.2. September 2024 - 15 hours for working parents of children 9 months plus.
- 1.3.3. September 2025 - 30 hours for all working parents from 9 months to primary school age
- 1.3.4. Increased access to wrap around childcare for school aged children.

1.4. Approximately 80% of the free early education entitlement in Cheshire East is delivered by the private / voluntary / independent sector, and 20% in schools.

1.5. SENIF supports the following corporate objectives:

- 1.5.1. Support all children to have the best start in life.
- 1.5.2. Increase the opportunities for children, young adults and adults with additional needs.
- 1.5.3. Ensure all children to have a high quality, enjoyable education that enables them to achieve their full potential.
- 1.5.4. Thriving urban and rural economies with opportunities for all.

1.6. An application for SENIF may be made for children accessing the Free Early Education Entitlements for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds in Cheshire East. The child does not need to be resident in Cheshire East but must access the Free Early Education Entitlement in Cheshire East.

1.7. Early Years SEND Offer - Levels of support.

1.7.1. **Tier 1 – Universal Help** - First Concerns – “Ordinarily Available Provision”. A provider would be expected to meet the needs of a child in this category using their own responses. Under exceptional circumstances where the provider demonstrates a need for support with their practice, support may be provided to enable practitioners to deliver Quality First Teaching and inclusive practice. This may be in the form of an assessment conversation carried out by a Portage, Quality and Inclusion Practitioner. Grant funding would not be provided.

1.7.2. **Tier 2 – Extra Help** - SEND Support – children with low and emerging needs where practitioners require support and training to meet those needs. This may be in the form of an assessment conversation carried out by a Portage, Quality and Inclusion Practitioner. Grant funding would not be provided.

1.7.3. **Tier 3 – Targeted Help**

1.7.3.1. Band A – **Transition support** – *for up to 10 weeks – SEND Notification from Health / Transferring Setting / Portage*. These children have special educational needs which require enhanced support so that they can access early education opportunities whilst their needs are being fully assessed for any further longer-term support. Maximum Funding £1,000 per term.

1.7.3.2. Band B – **Targeted Support** – These children will have special educational needs that will have an effect on their ability to actively engage with the nursery session without some support. Maximum Funding £1,500 per term.

1.7.3.3. Band C – **Enhanced Support** – These children will have complex and special educational needs that will have an effect on their ability to actively engage with the majority of the nursery session without enhanced support. Maximum Funding £2,700 per term.

1.7.3.4. Band D – **Resources and Equipment** - Some children with special educational needs may require specialist equipment to enable them to have full access to the Early Years Foundation Stage within their early years setting. Providers are required to make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of all children. Funding is available in exceptional circumstances. Applications must be endorsed by the child's physiotherapist or occupational therapist. Maximum Funding £2,000 (£5,000 by exception for complex and specialist help at Tier 4) per term.

1.7.4. **Tier 4 - Complex and Specialist Help** – Exceptional bespoke support. These children will require a totally individually designed curriculum in order to make expected progress and access all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their complex and special educational needs will have an effect on their ability to actively engage with all aspects of the nursery session without enhanced support. Maximum funding £5,500 per term.

- 1.8. Funding should be used to amend and adapt provision, enhancing the early years offer of inclusion. This may be for continuous professional development, purchase of identified resources, and enhanced ratios.

2. LEGAL AND BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

- 2.1. All grant decisions will be made based on the set of principles, set out in this Policy, and within the agreed budget approved by Council each year. The budget for the grants is managed carefully and flexibly to ensure that the Council has money available throughout the year. As far as possible the Council tries to ensure that no one is disadvantaged due to the time of year they apply.
- 2.2. Where financial support is provided by the Council, a contract will be issued to the childcare provider to confirm the grant funding to be made available for a specific child and support to be delivered by the childcare provider.

3. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 3.1. Support for children with special educational needs and disabilities accessing early education provision operates within set criteria, agreed by the Director of Strong Start, Family Help and Integration and relevant Council Officers in line with the Council's Corporate Outcomes.

How to apply

- 3.2. Applications for Support for children with special educational needs and disabilities accessing the Free Early Education Entitlement must be made by the childcare provider, not the child's parent / carer, using the Council's application form and associated guidance notes that are available on the Council's website.
- 3.3. The application form must be completed in full. Incomplete application forms will not be considered, which could cause a delay or defer to your application. Supporting documentation (listed on the application form) may also be requested prior to the application being fully considered. Failure to supply all required documentation will result in the application being treated as incomplete.
- 3.4. The closing dates for receipt and acceptance of complete applications are published on the Cheshire East council website.
- 3.5. Grants cannot be paid retrospectively. Any work commenced prior to acceptance of the grant offer will not be eligible for funding.

- 3.6. All successful applicants will be required to complete a post grant monitoring report as set out in section 5.0 of this Policy.

What can be funded?

- 3.7. Where a child is eligible for funding as set out in 1.7 and subject to any specific requirements set out in the funding agreement for an individual child, grant spend may include transition support, enhancing staff ratios, key person time to engage with specialist support from outside agencies, developmentally appropriate resources, training and upskilling the workforce.

3.8. What cannot be grant funded?

- 3.8.1. Funding of a childcare place
- 3.8.2. 1:1 support unless specified in an EHCP or has the most complex and enhanced support requirements confirmed in the contract
- 3.8.3. Standard inclusive practice

3.9. Who can apply?

- 3.10. To qualify for a grant organisations must meet the criteria listed below:

- 3.10.1. Must be an early education and childcare provider¹ within the Cheshire East area.
- 3.10.2. Provide value for money;
- 3.10.3. Have a set of audited accounts, or as a minimum an organisation bank statement, and are able to provide such information as the Council reasonably requires in order to satisfy the Council as to the organisation's financial position;
- 3.10.4. If a voluntary sector organisation, have a management committee with an up-to-date Governing Document which must be signed by at least two members of the committee who are unrelated to each other.
- 3.10.5. Have appropriate safeguarding policies relevant to their organisation;
- 3.10.6. Have a bank or building society account in the name of the organisation applying;
- 3.10.7. Complete the current application form in full, providing all required information.

3.11. Criteria for Funding / support

- 3.11.1. Providers are required to demonstrate that the provision required for the child is significantly beyond high-quality inclusive practice and will be measured against incremental descriptors.

¹ 'Provider' means; an early year's provider registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register, a childminder registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register, a childminder registered with a childminder agency which is itself registered with Ofsted, or schools taking children aged two and over which are exempt from registration with Ofsted as an early years provider.

3.11.2. SENIF is a contribution towards meeting the needs identified in the application and should be used in conjunction with other funding streams such as the Disability Access Fund (DAF) and Early Years Pupil Premium.

3.11.3. Consideration for funding may be triggered by SEND notification from Health, evidence of graduated response, Assess-Plan-Do-Review cycle, child presenting difficulties in at least one of the four broad areas of need, and significant and persistent delay in meeting milestones.

3.12. General Conditions

- 3.16.1. All grants will be subject to a contract.
- 3.16.2. Grants are classed as one-off and should not be seen as repeat funding.
- 3.16.3. Grants are valid for a period set out in the contract and will be paid in advance of completion of the project.
- 3.16.4. Organisations must be able to participate in a monitoring process and provide monitoring information to evidence how the grant money has been spent and adherence to the conditions of the grant. This must include receipts or invoices and a written report of the project.
- 3.16.5. Organisations must notify the Council of any changes in circumstances which affect their financial position throughout the period in which the grant monies are being used.
- 3.16.6. The grant must only be used for the purposes specifically stated in the application form and agreed in the contract. Should it be spent in any other way, without written approval from the Council, the organisation may be asked to return some, or all of the monies paid.
- 3.16.7. If a successful application is cancelled or only partially achieved, or if the organisation is wound up, some or all of the grant may be recovered by the Council.
- 3.16.8. All conditions under which the grant has been awarded, including any Special Conditions, must be met. Failure to do so could result in the organisation being asked to repay the grant monies to the Council.

4. DECISION MAKING PROCESS

- 4.1. The grant applications will be assessed on a monthly schedule by the Early Years Quality and Inclusion Coordinator, in consultation with officers from other council departments as appropriate, against a scoring criteria based on the priorities outlined in 1.7.
- 4.2. Having assessed all applications a Recommendations Report is prepared by the Early Years Quality & Inclusion Lead for final approval by the Head of Service for Early Years, Family Help and Prevention in line with the Council's financial scheme of delegation.

- 4.3. Organisations will be notified to inform them of whether they have been recommended for approval or not. The outcome of the decision will be notified to organisations within 3 weeks of the application.

4.4. Appeals –

- 4.4.1. In the first instance, appeals should be addressed to earlyyearssenhelpline@cheshireeast.gov.uk for consideration by the Early Years Quality and Inclusion Coordinator and Early Years Quality & Inclusion Lead.
- 4.4.2. Where an organisation or parent continues to disagree with the award decision, concerns will be considered by the Cheshire East Early Years Forum who may request additional supporting information. The appeal will be determined by the Head of Service for Early Years, Family Help and Prevention. A response will be provided within 8 weeks of receiving the official appeal.
- 4.5. Complaints and compliments about any aspect of the grant process will be dealt with under the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure. A copy of the Council's Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Policy is available from the Council's website.

5. MONITORING AND RECORD KEEPING

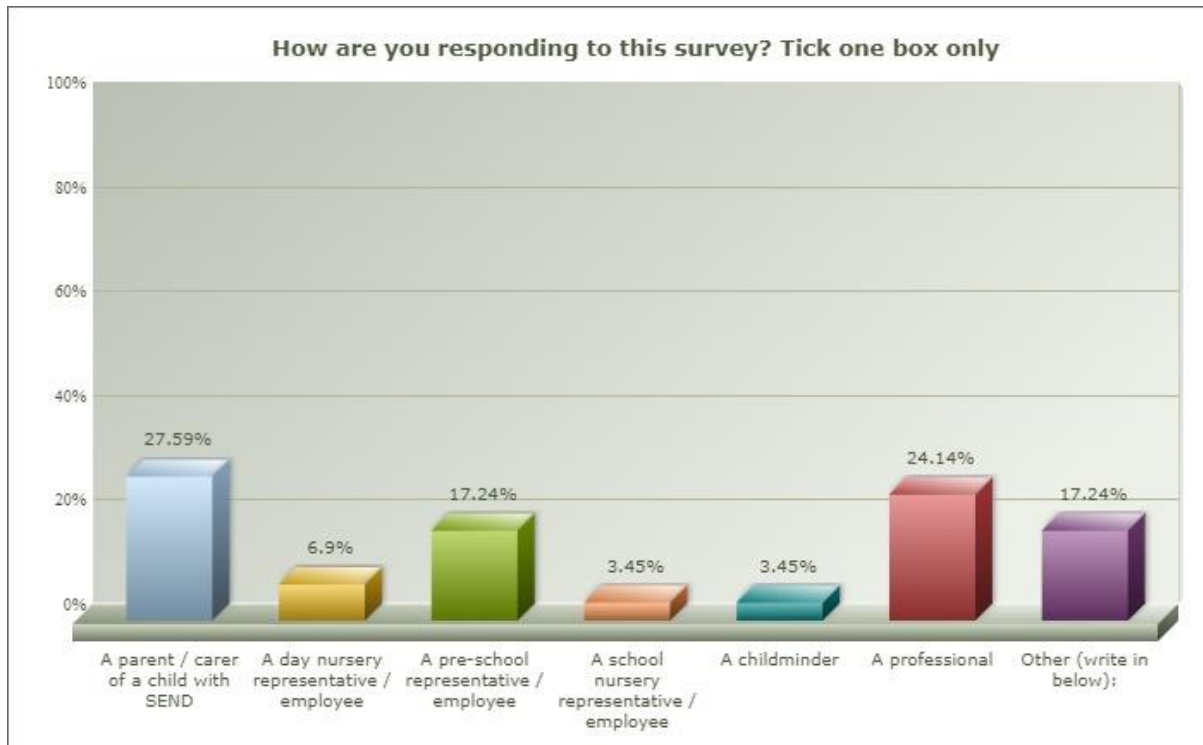
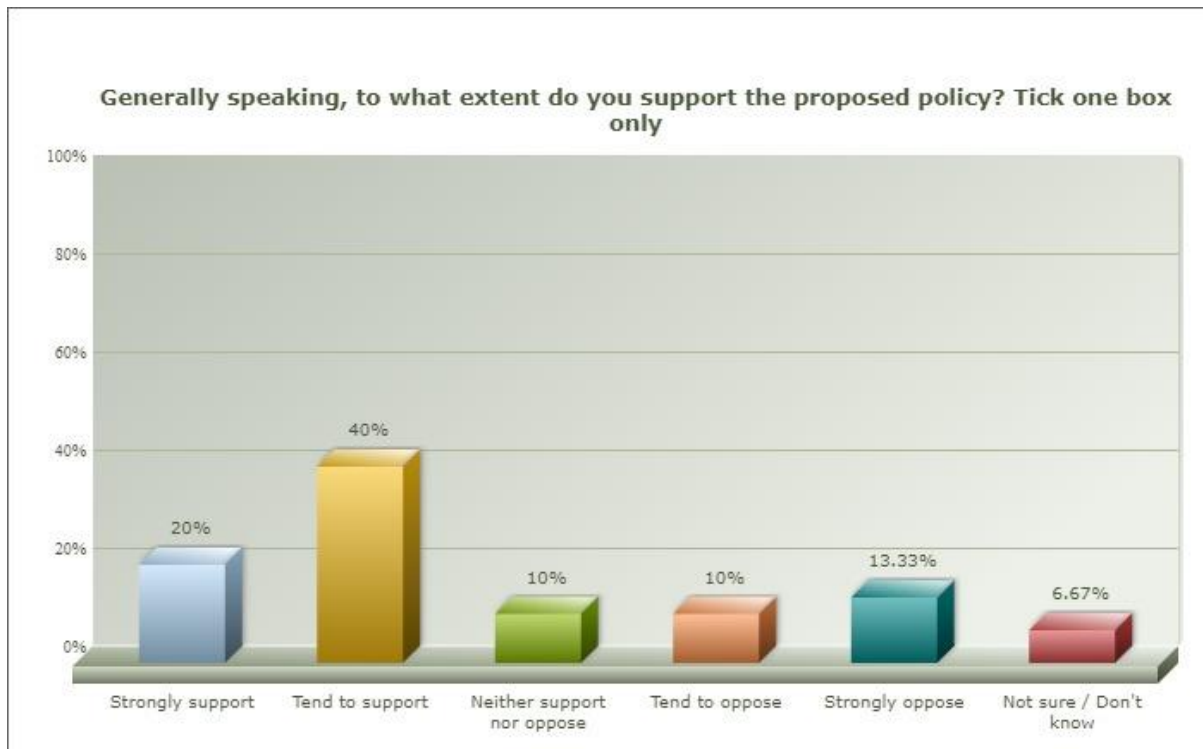
- 5.1. Following a successful application and in order to ensure that monies are used in an appropriate manner, a monitoring report will be required following project completion. This report shall include, but shall not be limited to, how the grant money was used and what difference the funding made.
- 5.2. Invoices, receipts and photographs must be made available to the Council on request.
- 5.3. Invoices or receipts dated prior to the date of the funding contract will not be accepted or reimbursed.
- 5.4. The Council reserves the right to monitor the use of the grant and ask for evidence to support an application.
- 5.5. The organisation must allow reasonable access to premises/accounts upon request from the Council.
- 5.6. Organisations must retain records relating to the grant for an appropriate period (to be confirmed in the contract).

- 5.7. If organisations do not supply satisfactory monitoring reports and supporting information in full and within the set time scale, they may be asked to repay the grant funding to the Council. Failure to comply with the conditions of this grant may be taken into account when considering any further applications for grant funding made by the same organisation in the future.

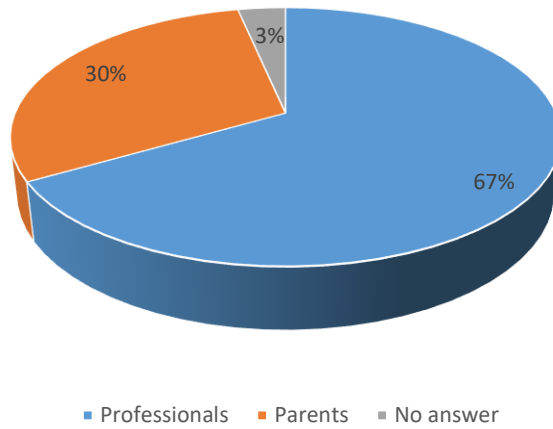
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Appendix 2

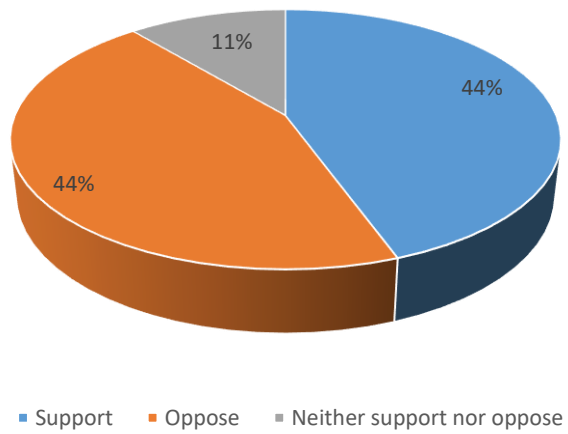
Consultation responses



Respondents



Parent responses by type



Professionals responses by type

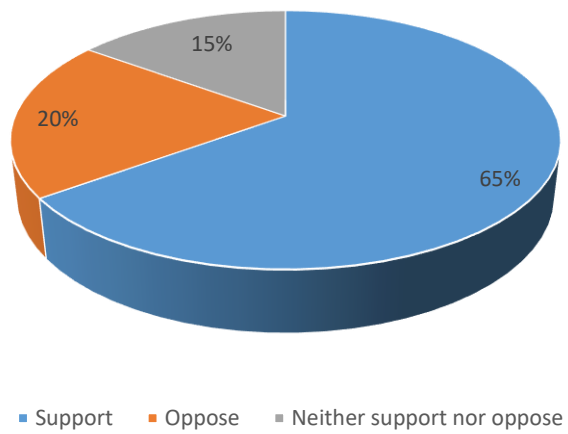


Table of comments:

Q. Please highlight the parts of the policy that you feel will bring about the most beneficial changes for children and families, and why:
I would like to see it all in practice first and see if it all works.
I have not been able to view the policy itself, I'm afraid However, I am very much in favour of the focus going to practitioners who can capably and professional deliver interventions. The added benefit is that the workforce will be upskilled, for the benefit of all children and families.
Funding for children based on need. Clear monitoring process to ensure accountability for expenditure to improv outcomes for children Targeted support for the most disabled children, Policy is about overcoming barriers to children accessing provisions.
That funding is inclusive and that the government have made changes to support children.
clarity for parents and school staff
Moving to a more flexible support system
That the funding given to the provider with help the child have access to suitable resources and equipment and given families the opportunity for children to have a happy early years experience.
Enable all children with SEND, and their families, to get the support they need in a timely manner
Funding the providers of care/support settings for special needs children.
Currently the system of allocation of funding is not sustainable for our more complex children who require 1:1 support throughout the session. Settings that are financially sustainable can offer the best environment for the child. So an increase in funding can only be beneficial to the child as long as the correct decisions are made as to which band they fall into.

The whole scheme will be beneficial as there is a focus on early help and intervention rather than EHCP SEND funding as the only option. It will support with transitions where often children are stuck or forced into transition timetables.

There should be extra funding to that currently available

Children who have a physical special need will benefit from grant money to buy equipment to support them.

I'm not sure what you are proposing financially as you haven't spelled out what this means but the current funding we receive for SEN children is woefully inadequate. It really annoys me that you always put the contracts in terms of hours to the parents and this is their expectation of support. Your funding works out at £9 per hour which is surely illegal given that minimum wage is £10.42 per hour. You also only fund for 38 weeks of the year when we are open for 51 weeks. We are now in the situation where we are writing a policy to charge parents the missing money since as a business we cannot fund the gap between what you pay and what the parents expect ourselves. It will then be the parents' choice to either reduce the number of days the child is in the nursery or pay the difference for the extra support the child needs. This is the sad situation that your council fiscal policy has reduced us to. It used to be sustainable when we only had one or two children with SEN but unfortunately we are seeing more now. We don't want to exclude these children from our settings but without the correct support in some cases, it becomes a safety issue for themselves and other children. The Council urgently needs to acknowledge the TRUE cost of providing one-to-one support for children with SEN needs in early years settings and finance it properly. To dress it up as a contribution to the setting is quite frankly an insult to early years providers and the end result is going to be that children with additional needs are going to struggle to find a setting that will take them on. With minimum wage increasing every year, the gap just gets wider and wider between the funding and the cost per hour of employing someone. This is the actual reality of trying to run a business in the early years sector. If you couldn't employ a member of staff on your Team for £9 per hour why do you expect that we can?

I am not aware of any significant changes as compared to the previous funding but this policy does seem clear and the tiers and procedures make logical sense.

Most beneficial thing is that funding isn't being reduced even further!!

Changing from the confusing hours to a banding.
<p>Removing the misleading number of hours.</p> <p>The first level would be helpful providing support whilst evidence is gathered.</p>
<p>At the moment I receive funding as a childminder to support a child by keeping my ratio under those I am able to allow me to give said child more time and a smaller setting. Not sure how this will work using this system and afraid said child will miss out as will then have to increase numbers. Doesn't benefit childminders in their approach</p>
Ensuring that any funding received is used appropriately by all settings.
More flexibility for settings to meet the child's needs
it will be far more flexible and therefore able to help more children with special needs
Schools will have flexibility to use funding in the best way for their children's needs.

Q. Please highlight any parts of the policy that you feel may have a negative impact for children and families, and why:

As above, I would like to see it in practice first.

The whole policy seems to be aiming to reduce spending rather than support needs. I have read extensive feedback from parents in authorities using this approach and it is overwhelmingly negative.

The possibility that unscrupulous settings will not use the funds to genuinely support the child. The concern that some Settings may not have the skilled workforce, no matter how good the training. Most importantly, the general issue around recruitment and retention in the industry. It could be detrimental to place even more demand on staff who are already stretched.

No inclusion of SALT. Development of communication is key to children's long term development. Communication resources may need to be purchased to support pupils especially those with complex needs, e.g Widget software to produce symbols, as well as staff training.
Band C and Band D are unclear. Can settings apply for Enhanced support and Resources and Equipment. Equipment can come at a very high cost-over £2500 for a specialised seating system.
Equipment-who will own it and will it move with the child?

The lack of individual focus in funding means that the child's needs could get lost and/or the finance is diluted so we cannot meet children's needs -it is already a challenge for schools!

Paperwork issues with the way the panel looks at paperwork it could be terms before a child gets support for a paperwork error. Paperwork is too long and repetitive

Concerns about how 1:1 help is apportioned. Have experienced where only 12 hours of 15 have been funded as it has been concluded the child can be with his peers for those hours. This would be a safeguarding issue for the child as needs constant support. Interesting how those hours get decided. This would have a negative impact for the child as he would be unsafe if the setting did not provide 1:1 support for those hours (which it did) irrespective of funding,

Not a negative impact but more of accessibility. The policy does not detail availability and accessibility. We can easily say that the care providers have been funded. But in reality is we still have a very tough time finding the right care providers. We cant access support from within 10-20 miles from where we live. There isnt SEN practitioners in the settings - nursery, after s school care etc

No negative impact for children and families as long as the process is workable and not time consuming in a current ever changing system. Training on the new paperwork is also necessary. I would like to know if settings can be part of the decision making process as we know the child best. Panels of professionals who may not have had recent experience of the current way that children are presenting due to Covid and other social difficulties cannot possibly assess which band they fall into without seeing them in person. Paperwork is long and often admin based and it is hard to portray the child on paper sometimes. Many years ago settings were invited to panel meetings to put forward the case for the child.

If the funding ids less than that currently availablethe use of a ' banding. ' system does not make it clear to the lay person

Each year we have children with a range of difficulties that make progress slow or nonexsistant without 1-1 support. These children would not be safe or their peers would not be safe without 1-1 support. It is almost imposible to get an EHCP for these children and a one off payment would NOT meet their needs.

Not providing funding to support children who are a danger to themselves or other children would result in settings saying that they can't meet the needs of the child which is discrimiantory. There will be more pressure on staff regarding paperwork and supporting these children.If 1-1 support is not available for children who need it existing staff's mental wellbeing will be compromised.

See my comments above. Without adequate funding, we will have to ask parents to contribute to any extra help that their child needs. If they can't afford this, then they will end up having to reduce their days which puts the child at a disadvantage.

In Section 1.6 it says that an application for SENIF may be made for children accessing the Free Early Education Entitlements for 2, 3 and 4 year olds in Cheshire East. I think it should be made clear here that children who fulfill all the other requirements, but are not receiving FEEE as their nursery has opted out of this system, are still entitled to SENIF. There may need to be stipulations around the fact the council do not fund the placement, but these children are still entitled to SEN support.

1.7.3.3 Not sure if I have calculated this correctly, but for a child needing enhanced support, the funding quoted would cover about 2 days of full time support a week. What / who would be responsible for paying for that necessary support for the rest of the week? Or is it purely linked to the free 15 PEEE hours? However, a child's SEN is not only present for 15 hours a week.

How wide are these 'bands'? I sounds like a very generally and random approach. Cheshire east need to unblur their policies regarding SEN, not make them more complicated!

The way this is worded makes me concerned that setting will have to keep applying for the additional funds and that the funding will be set at a lower level, which can be gradually increased. This will make it more difficult for parents to find settings willing to accept their children due to the costs associated.

At the moment I receive funding as a childminder to support a child by keeping my ratio under those I am able to allow me to give said child more time and a smaller setting. Not sure how this will work using this system and afraid said child will miss out as will then have to increase numbers. Doesn't benefit childminders in their approach

Higher expectations to provide support without funding.
We provide whatever a child needs regardless of funding, but I'm not convinced that all settings have the same attitude.

May mean they get less 1-1 adult support

The fact that parents are unable to be involved in the application process- parents need to be able to retain control over having a say in their child's educational needs

The fact 1:1 support is being withdrawn and not available is one of the worst decisions that can be made for SEND children, many cannot function or engage in learning without the support and direction and 'safety' of an adult. This disrupts their learning and that of the other children around them.

It's difficult for a layperson to understand the draft but it does sound as if the grants have to continually be applied for. Children identified as having additional needs will always have those needs and having to constantly apply puts more pressure and paperwork onto already pressured teaching staff and staff at Cheshire East. Many applications simply won't get processed meaning it is our children who miss out.

The draft doesn't appear to talk about specialist provision. It sounds as if the idea is to fund mainstream schools to make adaptations. As a mum of a boy who had to move to special school in Year 4, I know this doesn't work. Mainstream schools don't have the space, the specialist staff or resources to cater for the needs of SEND children and more funding needs to be put into specialist provision if these children are to grow into adults with meaningful lives and jobs.

Hopefully it will not mean that some children might miss out if the times are not always the same each week.

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OPEN

Children and Families Committee

11 December 2023

Children and Families Q2 (July-Sept) Scorecard 2023/24

Report of: Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's Services

Report Reference No: CF/19/23-24

Ward(s) Affected: All Wards

Purpose of Report

- 1 To provide the Children and Families Committee with an overview of performance against the core indicator set within the 3 service areas of children's services. This report covers a range of the corporate objectives under the overarching corporate priority of a fair authority.

Executive Summary

- 2 This report provides an overview of quarter 2 performance for children and families services for the relevant indicators for the reporting year of 2023-24.
- 3 The committee will note that the format has changed in line with their request and now includes information around the acronyms used and the alignment with the Corporate Plan Aim of a Fair Council. The report now also reflects a rolling 4 quarter activity with the latest quarter reported highlighted in blue.
- 4 The committee will note that there are now 4 indicators relating to social care workforce information as requested.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Childrens and Families Committee is recommended to:

1. Scrutinise the performance of children's services for quarter 2.

Background

- 5 This quarterly report provides the committee with an overview of performance across Children's Services. This report relates to quarter 2 of 2023-24 (1 July 2023 – 30 September 2023).
- 6 The outcomes framework scorecard contains 55 indicators across children's services and provides a strategic overview of the core activity with the service areas that demonstrate how we support the children and young people in Cheshire East.
- 7 The following indicators have been highlighted for consideration – please note the numbers relate to the corresponding indicator in the attached appendix outcomes framework scorecard.

Social Care

- **1.14 - % of repeat referrals.** This has reduced in quarter 2 and remains lower than the latest available national and statistical neighbour performance. This is an indicator that work completed with children, young people and the families is resulting in lasting impact and with tools and techniques to maintain sustained progress.
- **1.15 - % of assessments completed within 45 days.** Quarter 2 shows a significant improvement, with a quarterly performance similar to the latest available national picture. This is seen as an early indicator that when needed individuals are receiving support in a timely fashion.
- **1.22-1.23 – number and rate of Children with a Child Protection Plan.** There has been an increase compared to the previous quarter but this is not an undue cause for concern as it reflects where we would expect to be as a local authority.
- **1.24 - % of ICPC within 15 days of S47 enquiry.** Although there has been a small drop in performance in quarter 2 it remains in line with comparator authorities and relates to a very small number of families. Holding the initial conference in a timely fashion, following the decision that one is required, is an indicator that the multi-agency partnership is working effectively to reduce risks and support families that require a more specialist intervention.
- **1.27-1.28 – number and rate of Children in Care.** This remains higher than statistical neighbours and national averages and

continues to be influenced by Cheshire East's support for the National Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UASC) scheme. Due to this almost 1 in 3 young people in care is aged 16-17 currently. This knowledge is being used to inform the updated sufficiency strategy for placements together with the services that will be needed for an increasing cohort of care leavers.

- **1.37-1.4 – Social worker workforce data.** As requested, there has been the addition of 4 core indicators relating to the social care workforce. The number of vacancies has increased slightly this quarter which in turn has influenced an increase in the use of agency workers in order to ensure that the establishment remains at a safe level. In addition, oversight and management for timely closure is ensuring that caseloads remain at manageable levels.

Education

- **2.14 – 2.17** – Attendance data isn't provided for quarter 2. This is due to a large part of the quarter falling within the summer holiday period together with many primary schools operating a phased school start for new reception class and schools having a range of term start dates so data can be incomplete.
- **2.18 – Elective Home Education.** This is a positive reduction from Q1 and reflects the work being completed by team supporting the young people and families to re-enter school provision as soon as possible.
- **2.19 – Children Missing Education.** This has seen a positive reduction from Q1 and again reflects the work being completed by the team, in conjunction with schools, investigating where pupils don't enrol as expected. We also continue to work closely with National agencies where pupils have understood to have moved abroad.
- **2.2 - Total number with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) aged 0-25.** This continues to increase, albeit the % increase is lower than seen in the previous quarter. This may be in part due to the fact Q2 spans the summer holidays but also reflecting the work being undertaken with schools to focus on more targeted interventions at an earlier stage.
- **2.26 – 2.27 - New Education and Health Care plans completed within 20 weeks.** This is a continued positive upward trajectory from last quarter at 62% and is reflected in the reduction in average weeks to complete new assessments, which is now

significantly under the 20-week target, and improved Education Psychologist advice within 6 weeks.

Strong Start, Family Help and Integration

- **3.14 – 3.15 - 2,3 and 4 -year-old offer.** This data is collated on a termly basis and as such is not available for quarter 2 as it includes the summer holiday period together. This is further complicated by a significant change in the eligible cohort as many 4 years olds transition to school in the autumn period.
- **3.16 – Supporting Families.** The local authority had a target of 480 families with successful outcomes in 2023-24. We currently have over 1,000 families being supported either at Early Help or Child in need level and as at quarter 2 we have had 167 successful claims.
- **3.17 – Young People accessing Youth Support offer.** We continue to offer a wide range of services across the borough which is evidenced by the increased number of individuals accessing a range of support.
- **3.18-3.19 –Not in Education, Employment or Training** -There has been a considerable reduction in quarter 2 which will reflect the changed cohort of Year 12-13 included who will have started 16th form/ college courses in September. It is possible that this figure will dip slightly as individuals decide their chosen path is not their preferred option. 6th form provisions, colleges and the Youth service will work closely to provide a range of support to these young people.

Consultation and Engagement

8 Not applicable

Reasons for Recommendations

9 One of the key areas of focus for the Children and Families Committee is to review performance and scrutinise the effectiveness of services for children and young people. This is in alignment with the strategic aims of a Fair Council.

Other Options Considered

10 Not applicable.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

11 There are no direct legal implications.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 12 Although there are no direct financial implications or changes to the MTFS as a result of this briefing paper, performance measures may be used as an indicator of budget pressures at a service level.

Policy

- 13 There are no direct policy implications.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 14 Members may want to use the information from the performance indicators to ensure that services are targeted at more vulnerable children and young people.

Human Resources

- 15 There are no direct human resources implications.

Risk Management

There are risks associated with some performance measures, e.g. increases in demand and timeliness of services.

Rural Communities

- 16 There are no direct implications to rural.

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

- 17 Performance reports enable members to identify areas of good performance and areas for improvement in relation to children and young people, including cared for children.

Public Health

- There are no direct public health implications.

Climate Change

- 18 This report does not impact on climate change.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Bev Harding, Business Intelligence Manager Bev.Harding@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Children and Families Outcomes Framework Score Card Quarter 2 2023
Background Papers:	None

Sept 2023 - Children and Families Outcomes Framework Scorecard - This contains a rolling 4 quarters for comparison

Notes: The boxes that are grayed out are where national data is not applicable or data isn't available, for example the schools data is available termly which doesn't always coincide with quarterly reporting

Notes: The column highlighted in blue reflects the most recent quarter being reported on

Notes: Rates are calculated using the 2020 ONS mid year population estimate 0-17 of 78,068 (Office of National Statistics) and are calculated as a rate per 10,000 children aged 0-17. This enables the local authority to be compared on a like for like basis with different local authorities or groups of authorities. The exception is the EHCP rate which we have shown as the rate of 0-25 yr olds in line with the number

Directorate	Indicator	Indicator name	Polarity	22/23 outturn	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	23/24 outturn	Benchmark National (most recent available)	Benchmark Stat N'bour (most recent available)	Corporate Plan Aim	Acronym
Childrens Social Care	1.1	Number of referrals		2397	609	653	602	572				Fair	
	1.12	Number of referrals (cumulative)		2397	1748	2397	602	1174				Fair	
	1.13	Rate of referrals (cumulative)		307.0	223.9	307.6	77.1	150.4		538	440	Fair	
	1.14	Percentage of repeat referrals	Low is Good	14%	13%	20%	18%	15%		22%	21%	Fair	
	1.15	Percentage of assessments completed within 45 days	High is Good	63%	49%	63%	63%	80%		84%	90%	Fair	
	1.16	Number of children in need (CIN definition to aid comparison so includes CP/Cared for and some Care leavers)		2230	2168	2230	2031	2020				Fair	CIN - Child in need collection CP - Child Protection
	1.17	Rate of children in need		285.6	277.7	285.6	260.2	258.7		334	278	Fair	
	1.18	Number of S47 enquiries (cumulative)	Low is Good	1339	989	1339	351	653				Fair	
	1.19	Rate of Children subject to section 47 enquiries (cumulative)	Low is Good	171.5	126.7	171.5	45	83.6		180	146	Fair	
	1.2	Number of Children subject to an ICPC (cumulative)	Low is Good	356	250	356	53	191				Fair	ICPC - Initial Child Protection Conference
	1.21	Rate of Children subject to an ICPC (cummulative)	Low is Good	45.6	32.0	45.6	6.8	24.5		60	53	Fair	ICPC - Initial Child Protection Conference
	1.22	Number of children with a child protection plan		218	215	218	190	260				Fair	
	1.23	Rate of children with a child protection plan		27.9	27.5	27.9	24.3	33.3		42	37	Fair	
	1.24	% of ICPC within 15 days of S47 enquiry	High is Good	72%	74%	58%	87%	80%		79%	78%	Fair	ICPC - Initial Child Protection Conference
	1.25	Percentage of children with a second or subsequent child protection (CP) plan (rolling yr)	Low is Good	20%	18%	20%	17%	16%		23%	23%	Fair	
	1.26	% of children on CP plans reviewed within timescales	High is Good	88%	90%	86%	87%	88%		89%	87%	Fair	CP - Child Protection
	1.27	Number of cared for children		580	557	580	576	566				Fair	
	1.28	Rate of cared for children		74.3	71.3	74.3	73.8	72.5		70	60	Fair	

Directorate	Indicator	Indicator name	Polarity	22/23 outturn	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	23/24 outturn	Benchmark National (most recent available)	Benchmark Stat N'bour (most recent available)	Corporate Plan Aim	Acronym
	1.29	Children looked after who had their teeth checked by a dentist in the last 12 months (%)	High is Good	75%	49%	75%	62%	62%		70%	65%	Fair	
	1.30	Children looked after who had their annual health assessment (%)	High is Good	89%	83%	89%	79%	87%		89%	86%	Fair	
	1.31	% of cared for children placed out of borough and over 20 miles from home address	Low is Good	20.5%	17%	21%	17%	17%		16%	19%	Fair	
	1.32	% of cared for children placed over 20 miles from home address (Cheshire East and out of borough)	Low is Good	24%	20%	22%	22%	22%				Fair	
	1.33	% Children who ceased to be looked after in the period who were adopted (YTD)	High is Good	7%	8%	7%	8%	9%		10%	11%	Fair	YTD - Year to Date
	1.34	% Children who ceased to be looked after in the period due to a Special Guardianship Order (YTD)	High is Good	10%	9%	10%	5%	11%		13%	12%	Fair	YTD - Year to Date
	1.35	% of care leavers who are not in education, employment or training (aged 19-21) (NEET)	Low is Good	44%	48%	44%	45%	47%		38%	37%	Fair	NEET - Not in Education, Employment or Training
	1.36	% of care leavers who are in suitable accommodation (aged 19-21)	High is Good	97%	97%	97%	94%	91%		88%	88%	Fair	
	1.37	Social Worker FTE at end of the period (SW Establishment)			154.3	151.1	151.1	147.6					
	1.38	Social Worker vacancies at end of the period (SW Vacancies)	Low is Good		34.9	34.8	37.9	41.8					
	1.39	Social Worker Agency Workers in period (SW Agency)	Low is Good		33.6	42.6	54.6	63.2					
	1.4	Average social worker case load	Low is Good		22	22	19	19					
and 14-19 Skills	2.1	Percentage good or outstanding primary schools	High is Good	93%	94%	93%	94%	94%		92%	92%	Fair	
	2.12	Percentage good or outstanding secondary schools	High is Good	91%	91%	91%	91%	91%		83%	81%	Fair	
	2.13	Percentage good or outstanding special schools	High is Good	75%	75%	75%	80%	80%		94%	95%	Fair	
	2.14	Percentage attendance for primary pupils year to date	High is Good		94%	95%	95%	N/A		96%	96%	Fair	
	2.15	Percentage attendance for secondary pupils year to date	High is Good		91%	91%	91%	N/A		95%	95%	Fair	
	2.16	Percentage attendance for special school pupils year to date	High is Good		86%	85%	86%	N/A		91%	92%	Fair	
	2.17	Number of permanent exclusions from Cheshire East Schools (latest term available)	Low is Good		19	16	27	N/A				Fair	
	2.18	Current Number of pupils educated at home	Low is Good	567	482	567	606	539				Fair	
	2.19	Current number of children missing from education.	Low is Good	64	151	172	197	116				Fair	
	2.2	Total number with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) aged 0-25		3521	4011	4160	4337	4479				Fair	EHCP - Education & Health Care Plan

Directorate	Indicator	Indicator name	Polarity	22/23 outturn	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	23/24 outturn	Benchmark National (most recent available)	Benchmark Stat N'bour (most recent available)	Corporate Plan Aim	Acronym
Education	2.21	Rate of children with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) NB as rate of 0-25 yr old (105,819)		3.9%	3.8%	3.9%	4.1%	4.2%				Fair	EHCP - Education & Health Care Plan
	2.22	Total % Pupils in CEC Maintained/State-funded with SEN Support. DfE / census measure from Jan census		9.4%	9.4%	9.4%	9.9%	9.9%		12.6%	12.1%	Fair	SEN - Special Educational Needs DfE - Department for Education
	2.23	Number of children and young people with an EHCP open to social care (NB includes care leavers)		372	324	372	372	385				Fair	EHCP - Education & Health Care Plan
	2.24	Number of children with an EHCP with an EHA		250	253	250	278	208				Fair	EHA - Early Help Assessment
	2.25	% of requests for Educational Psychologists (EP) advice completed within 6 weeks	High is Good	74%	84%	85%	89%	91%				Fair	
	2.26	Special Educational Needs – Education, Health and Care Plans completion within 20 weeks including exceptions (cumulative yr)	High is Good	65.3%	40%	49%	62%	71%		58%	66%	Fair	
	2.27	Average number of weeks for EHC Plans to be issued (snap shot at quarter end to which it relates)	Low is Good	21.7	23.2	21.7	20.1	18.7				Fair	EHCP - Education & Health Care Plan
Strong Start, Family Help and Integration	3.12	% of all open Early Help Assessments led by Cheshire East Prevention service staff		55%	59%	55%	48%	55%				Fair	
	3.13	% 0-2 yrs engaged at children centres (most vulnerable i.e. CIN/CP/Cared for that have attended 3 or more times in the last 12 months)	High is Good		36%	33%	38%	32%				Fair	CIN - Child In Need, CP - Child Protection
	3.14	% eligible children taking up 2 year old offer (termly figure only)	High is Good	73%	79%	75%	72%	N/A		74%		Fair	
	3.15	% children taking up 3 and 4 year old offer (termly figure only)	High is Good	99%	99%	99%	99%	N/A		94%		Fair	
	3.16	Number of Families meeting the Supporting Families (previously family focus) criteria where outcomes have been successfully concluded (accumulative fig)	High is Good	297	297	297	50	167				Fair	
	3.17	Number of young people accessing the youth support service	High is Good		2148	2176	2393	3467				Fair	
	3.18	Number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) individuals [yr. 12-13]	Low is Good	200	190	200	207	140				Fair	NEET - Not in Education, Employment or Training
	3.19	% of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) individuals [yr. 12-13]	Low is Good	2.60%	2.50%	2.60%	2.70%	1.70%		2.80%		Fair	NEET - Not in Education, Employment or Training

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Children and Families Committee Work Programme 2023-24

Report Reference	Children & Families Committee	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Corporate Plan Priority	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item
CF/31/22-23	18/01/2024	School Catering Review Outcomes	To consider the options appraisal for school catering	Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration	No	Yes	Open;#Fair	No	Yes
CF/08/23-24	18/01/2024	Third Financial Review of 2023/24 (Children & Families Committee)	This report outlines how the Council is managing resources to provide value for money services during the 2023/24 financial year. The purpose of the report is to note and comment on the Third Financial Review and Performance position of 2023/24 and approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.	Director of Finance & Customer Services	No	No	Open	Yes	No
CF/10/23-24	18/01/2024	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2024/25 - 2027/28 Provisional Settlement Update (Children & Families Committee)	All Committees were being asked to provide feedback in relation to their financial responsibilities as identified within the Constitution and linked to the budget alignment approved by the Finance Sub-Committee in March 2023. Responses to the consultation would be reported to the Corporate Policy Committee to support that Committee in making recommendations to Council on changes to the current financial strategy.	Director of Finance & Customer Services	Yes	No	Open	Yes	No

Children and Families Committee Work Programme 2023-24

Report Reference	Children & Families Committee	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Corporate Plan Priority	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item
CF/29/23-24	18/01/2024	Cheshire East Sufficiency Strategy for Cared for Children 2024-25	<p>The Statutory Guidance for Sufficiency (s22 of the Children Act, 1989) sets out a requirement for Local Authorities to work with key partners to be in a position to secure, where reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for children in care in their local authority area which meets the needs of children and whose circumstances are such that it would be consistent with their welfare for them to be provided with accommodation that is in the local authority's area ('the sufficiency duty').</p> <p>The sufficiency duty requires local authorities to do more than simply ensure that accommodation be 'sufficient' in terms of the number of beds provided. They must also have a regard to the benefits of securing a number of providers and a range of services. Fundamentally, the accommodation available must meet the needs of children cared for by Cheshire East Council.</p>	Director of Commissioning	Yes	No	Fair	No	No

Children and Families Committee Work Programme 2023-24

Report Reference	Children & Families Committee	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Corporate Plan Priority	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item
			This updated Strategy details current needs across the Borough, documents progress made to deliver the plans within the current (2021-2023) Strategy and our plans to meet emergent needs in 2024-25 and beyond.						
CF/41/23-24	18/01/2024	Together Strategy 4 year plan	To inform committee of the 4 year integrated strategy to deliver the together vision and achieve excellence for our children and families as described in the 2023/24 MTFS.	Executive Director of Children's Services	No	Yes	Open	Yes	No

Children and Families Committee Work Programme 2023-24

Report Reference	Children & Families Committee	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Corporate Plan Priority	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item
CF/20/23-24	12/02/2024	Speech and Language Therapy	The Paediatric Speech and Language service (SALT) – The Council has a duty to provide speech, language and communication (SLCN) services to children under the Children's and Families Act 2014 Part 3. This is for children with a EHCP Part F (Education), but also with a need for early identification, prevention and support. The service pathways are linked to the health provision including access to health clinics and a need for service continuity within education and community settings. The Council needs to review and recommission this service, preferably in-conjunction with our health partners to provide a service that will be fit for the future and that rises to the increasing demands for better identification of children's needs within the community.	Director of Commissioning	Yes	Yes	Fair	No	No
CF/57/22-23	12/02/2024	Children centre remodelling	To remodel the purpose of some children centre sites.	Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration	TBC	TBC	Fair	Yes	No
CF/36/23-24	12/02/2024	Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/25 including schools and early years funding formula	To approve the planned use of the different elements of the Dedicated Schools	Director of Education, Strong Start and Integration	Yes	No	Open	Yes	No

Children and Families Committee Work Programme 2023-24

Report Reference	Children & Families Committee	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Corporate Plan Priority	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item
			Grant for 2024/25 in terms of schools, high needs, early years and central blocks. To include specific approval of the schools funding formula and early years funding formula						
AH/22/2023-24 & CF/18/23-24	08/04/2024	Substance Misuse Service	To provide information about the proposed substance misuse service model and for a decision to re-commission the substance misuse service	Director of Commissioning	Yes	Yes	Fair	No	No
AH/09/2023-24	08/04/2024	Direct Payments Policy	To seek approval for the Direct Payments Policy following consultation	Director of Commissioning	Yes	Yes	Fair	Yes	No
CF/01/24-25	03/06/2024	Service Budgets 2024/25 (Children & Families Committee)	The purpose of this report is to set out the allocation of approved budgets for 2024/25 for services under the Committee's remit, as determined by Finance Sub Committee	Director of Finance & Customer Services	No	No	Open	Yes	No
CF/44/23-24	03/06/2024	Councillor Frontline Visits Annual Report	The report provides an update to committee on the themes, strengths and issues raised through councillor frontline visits to the Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS), Child in Need and Child Protection (CIN/CP) Teams, and the Children with Disabilities Social Work Team and Short Breaks	Director of Children's Social Care	No	No	Fair	No	No

Children and Families Committee Work Programme 2023-24

Report Reference	Children & Families Committee	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Corporate Plan Priority	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item
			Team over the last 12 months.						