

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Scrutiny Committee**
held on Tuesday, 11th March, 2014 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor S Wilkinson (Chairman)

Councillors S Corcoran, H Davenport, W Fitzgerald, D Newton, R West,
J Wray

Jill Kelly

97 ALSO PRESENT

Ian Rush – Chair LSCB

Councillor Rachel Bailey - Children and Family Services and Rural Affairs
Portfolio Holder

Councillor Rhoda Bailey – Cabinet Support Member

Councillor Phil Hoyland – Chairman Children and Families PDG

Councillor Ken Edwards – Vice Chairman of Children and Families PDG

98 OFFICERS PRESENT

Tony Crane – Director of Children's Services

Kate Rose - Head of Integrated Safeguarding Unit

Mark Bayley - Principal Manager, Quality Assurance

Anne Gadsden - Monitoring & Intervention Manager

Mark Nedderman – Senior Scrutiny Officer

99 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2014 be
confirmed as a correct record.

100 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

101 DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of the existence of a party whip.

102 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present who wished to speak.

**103 CHILDREN'S AND ADULTS' SAFEGUARDING ISSUES-
CHILDREN'S BOARD PRIORITIES AND ROLE IN IMPROVEMENT**

Councillors Phil Hoyland and Ken Edwards attended the meeting and addressed the Committee in respect of this matter.

Ian Rush, Chairman of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) attended the meeting and explained the role of the Board and its links to the Improvement Board which had been set up in response to Ofsted recommendations in connection with the Council's arrangements for the protection of children.

The LSCB was an independent body made up of professionals representing all agencies involved in child protection. The work of the Board was open and transparent and subject to informal scrutiny from the statutory partners and formal scrutiny through this committee.

Although the work of the LSCB was distinct from that of the Improvement Board, there was a considerable amount of collaboration between the two boards.

The LSCB met every two months and its aim was to ensure that the Child and Young people's protection system in Cheshire East was working effectively and improving.

Kate Rose reported that in terms of the local child protection arrangements, approximately 112 families involving about 204 children were currently subject to Child Protection Plans.

Kate then gave a brief overview of the Councils activities in relation to:

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE);
Neglect;
Child Protection and domestic abuse.

Kate informed the Committee that the Council had not had any serious case reviews for over 3 years.

In relation to priorities, the Council had remodelled its services by putting in place arrangements to pool budgets by 2015 in order to provide a comprehensive service to manage all levels of risk through two community bases in Macclesfield and Crewe. Some of the interim measures already in place included placing Independent Domestic Violence advocates (IDVA) with the CHECs (Cheshire East Consultation Service) and within Accident and Emergency departments in local hospitals.

One area of concern that had been noted through the CHECS service was the high incidence of queries raised by schools on Friday afternoons.

Tony Crane then introduced a report which updated the committee on the Children's Improvement Plan.

As part of the Council's engagement with Ofsted, 3 monitoring visits had been completed focusing on key issues within the improvement plan.

Ofsted had focused on the following themes:

- Identification and management of risk and potential risk at the point of referral to Cheshire East's Consultation Service (ChECS);
- Effectiveness of assessment in ensuring that children receive the right level of help at the right time;
- Implementing effective audit arrangements;
- The quality and consistency of child in need planning

In summary, Tony explained that the Council was making good progress, but the Council was still not in the position it wished to be in i.e. good or outstanding.

One of the main improvements had been in respect of the recruitment and retention of social workers and with the assistance of the Children and Families PDG, a number of changes had been made to the package on offer to social work staff.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be received and noted;
- (b) That the matter concerning schools referring queries through the CHECS service on Friday afternoons be referred to the Children and Families Policy Development Group;
- (c) That Ian Rush be thanked for attending the meeting

104 ANNUAL EDUCATION REPORT

Councillors Phil Hoyland and Ken Edwards attended the meeting and addressed the Committee in respect of this matter.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children's services providing an overview of educational outcomes for young people across Cheshire East.

Although there had been a significant shift to sector led schools, the report suggested that the role of the Council remained crucial in providing support and challenge for those schools where rates of improvement needed to be accelerated.

Overall, Cheshire East schools were performing well compared to the national average for the majority of key indicators. However, there was one exception in connection with key stage 4. Significant work had been undertaken over the past 6 months to establish a coherent strategy for raising achievement across the Borough and particularly to address the gaps in performance. The highlighted gaps in performance were partly attributed to the slowing of improvement in some schools resulting from more diverse education arrangements.

In response to the concerns raised about the performance and the need to close gaps in performance, the Committee acknowledged the crucial role that school governors played in challenging the performance of schools.

There had been a national push for authorities to give focus to performance of pupil premium students but the Council now acknowledged that further efforts should be made to stretch gifted children to raise overall performance.

RESOLVED That the report be received.

105 **WORK PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT**

The committee reviewed the work programme.

RESOLVED - That the following items be included on the agenda for the next meeting:

Green Waste
Scrutiny of ASDVs
Adult Safeguarding quarter 2 report

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.20 pm

Councillor S Wilkinson (Chairman)