

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Committee**
held on Tuesday, 14th November, 2017 at R1 & R2 - Westfields, Middlewich
Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor G Merry (Chairman)
Councillor D Flude (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors P Butterill, B Dooley, L Durham, M Grant, O Hunter, A Kolker,
J Saunders, L Smetham and M Warren

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Gill Betton – Head of Children’s Development and Partnerships
Nigel Moorhouse – Director of Children’s Social Care
Kerrie Birtles - Head of Service: Cared for Children & Care Leavers
Nicola Axford - Service Manager: Virtual School
Jacky Forster – Director of Education and Skills
Gaynor Hawthornthwaite – Democratic Services Officer

23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Deakin.

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

25 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2017 be approved as a correct record.

26 VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEADTEACHER'S ANNUAL REPORT 2017

Nicola Axford, Service Manager: Virtual School, gave a presentation to the Committee on the Virtual School Head teacher’s 2017 Annual Report and drew attention to:

- Context and Operation
- Key Outcomes 2017
- Strengths of the Virtual School
- Challenges for the Virtual School
- Planned Solutions
- Future developments

In considering the report, Members of the Committee made a number of comments on the continued support for cared for children including access to

Pupil Premium. There were questions about the make up, operation, strengths, challenges, funding and future developments of the Virtual School.

Ms Axford was thanked for the support the Virtual School has provided and for the very informative report.

RESOLVED

That the presentation be noted.

27 CORPORATE PARENTING UPDATE

The Committee received an update in relation to cared for children and young people and care leavers and noted the following headlines:

National Developments

A new adviser to support young people as they leave the care system has been appointed as part of the government's drive to improve the lives of vulnerable children. Mark Riddell, MBE, has been appointed as the National Implementation Adviser for care leavers. Dates have been set to meet with Cheshire East Council.

Update on Homelessness Reduction Act

The Act will come into force on 1st April 2018 and will place new duties on Local Authorities and other public bodies to identify, support and refer households at risk of homelessness.

Local Developments

Children in Care Council Update

During the last month the young people attending the Children in Care Council have been involved in a range of key activities alongside informal activities designed to support their personal, social and educational development.

Pre-event consultation for the Game Changer conference in Blackpool

Some of the young people were also involved earlier in the year in the planning of the event, that took place in Blackpool on Saturday 4th November.

Takeover Day 2017

This has been scheduled for 24th November when the group members will be working alongside Nigel Moorhouse and Mark Palethorpe.

Star Awards

Young people have been involved in the Star Awards event planning, putting forward ideas and giving feedback on the last few details of the event. A care leaver was involved in the judging panel this year.

Planning for Corporate Parenting Committee

Young people have discussed the key issues affecting them ahead of the November Corporate Parenting Committee. The young people looked at the theme of Education in preparation for the upcoming session.

Visit from Head of Service

The young people organised a session and invited Kerry Birtles, the new Head of Service, along so that they could spend some time getting to know each other. Kerry also discussed with the young people what their key concerns were and the group decided on some areas of work that they will cover in the coming months, such as the Pledge and the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

National Adoption Week 2017

This took place from 16th – 22nd October and included a successful campaign for Cheshire East along with the other local areas as part of 'Adoption Counts'.

Update on Teenage Pregnancy and Parents

Care Leaver Mothers

Motherwell is a charity for women run by women, promoting positive health and wellbeing, by offering a range of educational services, holistic therapies and mental health support.

Research Project

This is a 3 year project which will be carried out by the Head of Abuse Studies at MMU Crewe and will research the correlations in childhood experiences of abuse and implications that this has on parenting.

Positive Parenting Groups

The first Positive Parenting Group was held in July 2017 at Oak Tree Children's Centre in Crewe.

North Locality Positive Parent Group

This will be an informal peer support group with the plan to bring services to their group, as and when identified by the young people or identified by staff as a need, around their parenting and health issues.

South Locality Positive Parenting Group

One day a month the south based care leaver mothers can access the children's centre and have their own group. On this day they can also access health advice and support from services already based within the centre.

Care Leaver Fathers

Research Project, Care Leaver Fathers

A research project into male care leaver fathers and their experiences and interactions with social care in relation to their own children is currently underway.

Direct one to one support and group support for Care Leaver Fathers via Dads Stuff

This has been assigned to all Personal Advisors to refer - The current group in Sandbach is a busy group and this is being extended across other areas in the authority.

Resource Folder

A resource folder has been set up covering a variety of topics.

Update on Children's Home Position

The commissioning process for the redesign of Cheshire East's residential homes for children in care was completed at the end of 2016-17 and a contract was awarded to BetterCare Keys, a national children home provider, to run from 1 April 2017. The aim is to provide a more flexible range of children homes and to increase the capacity to care for more children within the borough. Currently there is a 3 bed Children's Home operational in Crewe. Other options to commission an additional 11 beds as planned and agreed by Cabinet in October 2016 is being looked at.

RESOLVED

That the presentation be noted.

28 LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD (LSCB) 2016/2017 ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee received and noted the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) 2016/2017 Annual Report, which covered the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 and highlighted the activity, progress and challenges faced by Cheshire East LSCB and also set out the achievements made in 2016-17 and the areas where improvements continue to be made.

In considering the report, Members of the Committee made a number of comments and asked questions about the review of the 2015/2016 priorities, the key priorities for 2016/18, improvements and the access services, support and advice that are in place for children and young people and their families.

Mr Moorhouse was thanked for presenting the report.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

29 HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017

The Committee received and noted the 2016/2017 Health Annual Report which highlighted areas for further service improvement and priorities for 2017-2018.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

30 INPUT FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Kerry Birtles provided the Committee with an update following the last meeting of the Shadow Board for Young People when the following areas relating to services were discussed:

- Bad things about Education
- Good things about Education

- What would help improve things

It was noted that generally the feeling was that all the young people at the meeting had good support at school and even though there were a few negative points, the conversation on the whole was positive.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and concluded at 5.25 pm

Councillor G Merry (Chairman)