

## **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the **Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on Friday, 26th February, 2021

### **PRESENT**

Councillor J Saunders (Chairman)  
Councillor C Bulman (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors M Addison, J Barber, M Beanland, J Buckley, P Butterill, S Handley, A Moran, L Smith and N Wylie

### **PORTFOLIO HOLDERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Councillor K Flavell, Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Mark Bayley, Head of Service: Education Infrastructure and Outcomes\*  
Jacky Forster, Director of Education and 14-19 Skills  
Steve Reading, Principal Accountant\*  
Ged Rowney, Interim Director of Children's Services  
Jo Williams, Head of Service: SEND Quality Development and Specialist Services\*  
Claire Williamson, Head of Service: Education Participation and Support\*

\* Attended for Minute No. 68 only

### **62 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **63 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

#### **RESOLVED –**

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 January 2021, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **64 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **65 WHIPPING DECLARATIONS**

There were no declarations of a party whip.

### **66 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION**

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

## **67 COVID-19 UPDATE**

The committee gave consideration to a verbal update on the current position in respect of Covid-19 and the work undertaken by the council to respond and recover from it, as well as what preparatory work had taken place following the Prime Minister's 22 February announcement that schoolchildren would return to classroom learning from 8 March.

Members asked questions and put comments in relation to;

- what guidance had been issued by government on the requirement for pupils to wear face coverings in classrooms and/or on school grounds;
- whether or how schools may enforce the government guidance on pupils wearing face coverings;
- how the council and its schools planned to try and encourage children and young people to follow social distancing guidance when commuting to and from school;
- how the in-school Covid-19 testing would be carried out;
- whether entire classes or year groups would be required to self-isolate for a certain period of time following the report of a pupil receiving a positive Covid-19 test result; and
- how the council had engaged with schools about adhering to and enforcing government guidance that parents should not enter school premises unless invited to do so.

The committee was also updated on the current national position in respect of vaccinations of foster carers, and noted that teachers of special schools had begun to be vaccinated.

### **RESOLVED –**

That the update be received and noted.

## **68 CHESHIRE EAST DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT**

Consideration was given to the council's Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan 2021/22 to 2024/25, which was due to be presented to Cabinet for decision on 9 March 2021.

Members asked questions and put comments in relation to;

- whether any work had been undertaken by the council and partners to understand why the number of Early Help and Care Plans (EHCPs) had increased;
- how Early Years services could be supported to combat the growing number of EHCPs in the borough and ensure longer-term sustainability within Children's Services;

- how engaged academy schools had been with the council to support its Access to Send Services Strategy;
- how the council had managed, or put in place provisions to manage, projected increases in demand on services; and
- whether service provision was equitable across the borough and what planned work had been put in place to address any inequalities identified.

**RESOLVED –**

- 1 That the update be noted.
- 2 That the documentation presented to committee, as well as the forthcoming Cabinet (9 March) papers, be circulated to committee members outside of the meeting.

**69 FORWARD PLAN**

Consideration was given to the council's Forward Plan of key decisions.

**RESOLVED –**

That the Forward Plan be noted.

**70 WORK PROGRAMME**

The committee reviewed its work programme.

**RESOLVED –**

That the work programme be agreed.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 12.04 pm

Councillor J Saunders (Chairman)