

# **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

## **Minutes of a meeting of the Children, Families and Adult Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

held on Tuesday, 10th February, 2015 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,  
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

### **PRESENT**

Councillor P Hoyland (Chairman)  
Councillor A Moran (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors R Domleo, I Faseyi, G Merry, J Saunders

Jill Kelly and John McCann

### **Apologies**

Councillors D Flude

### **1 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **2 ALSO PRESENT**

Councillor Rachel Bailey – Cabinet Member for Safeguarding Children and Adults  
Councillor Rhoda Bailey – Deputy Cabinet Member

Ian Rush – Chair LSCB

### **3 OFFICERS PRESENT**

Tony Crane – Director of Children's Services  
Fintan Bradley - Corporate Manager - Education Strategy  
Kate Rose - Head of Children's Safeguarding Unit  
Mark Bayley - Corporate Manager - Standards & Learning

### **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **5 DECLARATION OF A PARTY WHIP**

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

### **6 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME**

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

## **7 LOCAL CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING BOARD - AND SAFEGUARDING ISSUES**

Kate Rose, Head of Children's Safeguarding Unit (LSCB) gave a presentation on safeguarding children and young people in Cheshire East.

In particular Kate referred to:

- the recent launch of the Council's neglect strategy;
- a new multi agency screening tool for early identification;
- a new process to directly involve children and young people in child protection – advocacy, strengthening families;
- the domestic abuse hub which had been placed within ChECS and Independent Domestic Violence advisors within the Children in Need/ Child Protection teams
- the re-tendered substance misuse contract;
- Introduction of standards of practice for core groups.

Ian Rush, Chair of the Local Children's Safeguarding Board explained the role of the LSCB, his responsibilities as an independent chair and his personal accountability to the Chief Executive.

The purpose of the LSCB was to co-ordinate the safeguarding of children activities of partner agencies. In so doing, the board worked closely with the Head of Children's Services and Portfolio holder.

The independent chair brought an element of objectivity to strategic partners. Ian informed the committee that across Cheshire East those partners were very collaborative, and that there were good working relations between all the Cheshire LSCBs.

Ian explained that the current inspection framework was skewed towards the local authority and that a key challenge in future would be to widen the inspection framework across all partner organisations.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the presentations be received;
- (b) That the Annual report of the LSCB be submitted to this committee in future.

## **8 SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (SEN) UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Manager Education Strategy which provided an overview of the current work within Special Education Needs (SEN) and Inclusion, including progress made in relation to the implementation of the Special Education Needs and/or Disability (SEND) reforms arising from the Children and Families Act 2014.

The Children and Families Act 2014 (Part 3) introduced a series of reforms to the system of support for children and young people with SEN and/or disability. The reforms came into force on 1st September 2014, with the exception of statutory requirements relating to children and young people detained in youth custody.

Key Changes to Special Educational Needs and/or Disability Framework from September 1<sup>st</sup> 2014 included:

- New requirement for Local Authorities, health and care services to commission services jointly for SEN and disability;
- Local Authorities to publish a clear, transparent 'local offer' of services;
- More streamlined assessment process, co-ordinated across education, health and care and involving families throughout
- New 0-25 Education, Health and Care Plans(EHC) for those with more complex needs;
- New statutory protections for young people aged 16-25 in Further Education
- A new duty on health commissioners to deliver the agreed health elements of EHC plans;
- The option of a personal budget for families and young people with an EHC plan.
- SEN Support replaces School Action and School Action Plus in the Code of Practice

A SEND multi agency group had been created to oversee the main area of SEND development work. The group had produced an initial draft of a Joint Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This would then lead onto the development of a SEND policy which would provide an opportunity for Members of this committee to become involved.

RESOLVED-

- (a) That the report be received;
- (b) That Councillors Gill Merry and Irene Faseyi be nominated as representatives of this committee to assist the Corporate Manager Education Strategy in producing an SEN policy over the next 6-8 weeks.

## **9 OFSTED INSPECTION**

The Chairman referred to an informal briefing which had been provided for Members of this Committee on the recent Ofsted inspection on 13 January 2015 and suggested that a formal report should be brought to the Committee as soon as possible.

RESOLVED - That the Director of Children's Service be requested to submit a formal report on the recent Ofsted Inspection to a future meeting.

## **10 'CLOSING THE GAP' KEY STAGE 4**

Mark Bayley Corporate Manager - Standards & Learning gave a presentation which provided an analysis of the key stage 4 results in Cheshire East for 2014.

In summary, in the category 5+A\*-C , Cheshire East had risen in the national ranking by 49 places (72 to 23<sup>rd</sup> ) with 91% of schools being ranked good or outstanding.

However, Mark explained that as from 29<sup>th</sup> Sept 2013, only a student's first entry for a GCSE exam now counted in their school's performance tables and it was therefore more difficult to achieve 5+A-C. In addition:

- 1 No qualification would count for more than one in the performance tables whereas in the past, some BTECS were equivalent to 4 GCSEs;
- 1 Summer 2014 saw the return to linear exams meaning that all pupils would from now on be sitting their exams at the end of the two year course; therefore, there would be no more Modular GCSE courses.

Consequently it was now recognised that year on year data comparisons were not possible. In addition, it had now become more challenging for vulnerable learners to achieve certain attainment measures.

Tony Crane informed the Committee that the Council had been approached by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) to take part in a project to raise attainment levels in the borough and increasing the involvement of Overview and Scrutiny Members in the process was a key part of the project.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be received;
- (b) That the involvement of this committee in the CfPS project to improve school attainment be welcomed.

## **11 CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE) TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

The Committee considered an interim report of the CSE task and finish group which had been set up by the committee in November 2014.

The Chairman informed the committee that the work of the task and finish group was not yet complete. However, he was able to report that to date, members of the group had been reassured that the policies and procedures in place within Cheshire East Council and across its partner organisations were good and that evidence suggested that there had been no cases of systematic CSE in Cheshire East. In summary the initial comments of the group were:

- here were concerns about aspects of the taxi/private hire driving licence arrangements that had been raised by the police. The task and finish group had undertaken to raise these concerns with the appropriate officers within the Council for these matters to be taken up at a regional and national level.
- The task and finish group had been impressed with the strong partnership working arrangements afforded by the co-location of key staff from ChECS, the police, and the child protection team at Dalton House Middlewich and expressed a wish that those arrangements should be enabled to continue when the staff were re-located to Sandbach in the near future.

- The independence of the LSCB chair needed to be clear and the group welcomed the fact that the Chair of the LSCB now had direct structured access to the Chief Executive
- Education and health teams should have direct input in to the ChECS service and police and funding should be put in place to allow the Education Welfare officer to sit with this team as a matter of priority and immediate consideration be given to making sure that cover was made for sickness and holidays.
- Efforts should be maintained to ensure that training and practice are followed through at grass roots level across key partnerships especially schools, surgeries and hospitals. The group sought assurances about how this information was cascaded through organisations and monitored for effectiveness on the ground, especially as many of the partner organisations now operated as commissioners and therefore relied upon contractors to ensure delivery.
- There was evidence of good practice and communication between agencies but in some cases this appeared to have occurred because of the individuals involved rather than as a result of a formal requirement. However, the group had concerns about potential weaknesses especially in respect of those agencies which operated across boundaries between Cheshire East and Greater Manchester, especially Stockport and Trafford to the north and Staffordshire authorities to the south. Contacts needed to be formalised at both senior and grass root level.

#### RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be received;
- (b) That the initial conclusions of the task and finish group be supported;
- (c) That the task and finish group be authorised to continue to complete its work up to and beyond the annual meeting of Council in May 2015

## 12 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee reviewed the work programme.

The Chairman informed the Committee that he recently met with the Director of Children's Services and Interim Head of HR about the initial steps to involve the committee in the work programme item relating to the HR policies connected with children social services and suggested that the Committee should tackle this subject by means of a one off 'select committee' possibly in March.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be received;
- (b) That subject to appropriate witnesses being available, the item relating to HR policies be dealt with on 10 March 2015;
- (c) That the annual report of the LSCB be added to the work programme;
- (d) That a progress report on safeguarding be brought to the Committee in 6 months time;
- (e) That arrangements be put in place to receive a briefing from CfPS before May 2015 on the raising school attainment project.

### 13 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the latest version of the forward plan.

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan be noted.

The meeting commenced at 1.30 pm and concluded at 4.03 pm

Councillor P Hoyland (Chairman)