

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

held on Monday, 25th January, 2016 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor Rhoda Bailey (Chairman)

Councillors B Dooley, D Flude, G Merry, A Moran and J Saunders

Apologies

Councillors L Jeuda and L Wardlaw

1 ALSO PRESENT

Councillor G Hayes – Deputy Cabinet Member.

2 OFFICERS PRESENT

Lucy Heath - Consultant in Public Health
Nigel Moorhouse - Director of Children's Social Care
Stephen Kelly - Senior Communications Officer
Peter Lambert - Head of Service –Cared for Children

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5 DECLARATION OF 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 0-19 HEALTHY CHILD PROGRAMME

The committee considered a report of the Director of Public Health relating to the 0-19 Healthy Child Programme Service.

Prior to October 2015 NHS England was responsible for commissioning Health Visiting and Family Nurse Partnership while local authority Public Health Departments were responsible for commissioning School Nursing services including the mandatory National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP). Responsibility for commissioning Health Visiting and Family Nurse Partnership services transferred to local authorities on 1st October 2015.

In March 2015 the Council commenced a competitive tender process to seek a suitably qualified and experienced provider to deliver 0-19 Healthy Child Services for the Borough. The tender was split into four lots as follows.

- Lot 1 – 0-5 Years Health Visitor and Family Nurse Partnership
- Lot 2 – School Health 5-19 Healthy Child Programme including the National Child Measurement Programme
- Lot 3 – Targeted Breastfeeding Support Service
- Lot 4 – Vaccinations and Immunisations Programme (this element of the tender was commissioned on behalf of NHS England who are the funders for this service.)

A key element of the tender specifications was the need to work in conjunction with the Council to bring about transformational change in order to maximise service delivery integration with Children's Services and to make best use of the School Nurses time.

It was anticipated that integration with Children's Services would lead to a more streamlined, holistic and efficient service for children and their families/carers.

On 1 October 2015 a new contract was awarded to Wirral Community NHS Trust which had been able to demonstrate extensive experience of and aptitude for delivering 0-19 services in Wirral and a commitment to collaborate with the Council to transform the services.

A 0-19 Healthy Child Programme Transformation Board had been established the aims of which, amongst other things, were to identify and implement opportunities to integrate service delivery.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be received;
- (b) That a progress report be submitted to this committee in 6 months time with a view to arrangements being put in place to monitor the performance of the new contract for 0-19 year old health services.

8 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children's Social Care detailing further progress made regarding improvements to the recruitment and retention of social workers in Children's Services.

Ofsted in its recent inspection report had noted the ambitious and thoughtful range of recruitment and retention initiatives introduced by the Council.

The current Recruitment & Retention Strategy for 2015-17 had four priorities:

- to recruit sufficient permanent high quality staff with suitable qualifications and experience;
- to retain existing employees by ensuring they have the right skills, equipment and support to carry out their roles effectively;
- achieve manageable social worker caseloads;
- increase engagement and communication with social work staff.

A new social media campaign had begun to support social worker advertisements on the Council's website which included an updated jobs microsite and a video entitled 'working in Crewe' which was shown to members of the committee.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be received and noted;
- (b) That the recruitment and retention activity that has already taken place to improve stability in the workforce be endorsed.

9 CARE LEAVERS

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Service Cared for Children which provided an update on the Cabinet response to the Care Leavers Task and Finish Group which reported in 2012. The aim of the 2012 review was to help care leavers make a successful and adjusted transition from care into sustainable independence and adulthood.

Since 2013, services for care leavers in Cheshire East had been driven by the Council's involvement in the New Belongings project as part of a north west cluster of authorities, aimed at creating better fully integrated, easily accessible services for care leavers.

The Committee was informed that New Belongings had progressed a number of actions during 2015, many of which overlapped the recommendations of the task and finish review.

The report included a schedule which outlined the specific actions approved by Cabinet in respect of each of the recommendations of the 2012 review and highlighted that only one recommending that 'practical life skills training' be provided for care leavers was outstanding but that it was expected to have been completed in February 2016.

RESOLVED – That the report be received and the progress noted.

10 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee reviewed its work programme.

RESOLVED – That subject to the following amendments, the work programme be approved:

- SEN –the Committee to keep under review the findings of a working group setup by the schools forum
- Corporate parenting committee – Annual report be considered

- Elective Home Education – new item

11 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee reviewed the current forward plan.

RESOLVED – that the forward plan be received and noted.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.50 pm

Councillor Rhoda Bailey (Chairman)