

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

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

held on Monday, 25th September, 2017 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor Rhoda Bailey (Chairman)
Councillor S Pochin (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors B Dooley, I Faseyi, M Grant, G Merry, J Saunders, S Edgar and D Mahon

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Beanland, B Burkhill, M Deakin, D Flude and J Nicholas, and also Jill Kelly and Colette Garner.

12 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2017.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Beverley Dooley declared a non-pecuniary interest for agenda item seven, (Transport Update) as a Board member of Transport Service Solutions (TSS). Councillor Gill Merry declared a non-pecuniary interest for agenda item eight (Annual Report 2016/17) as the Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Committee.

14 WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no whipping declarations.

15 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

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

16 LSCB ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

Nigel Moorhouse, Director of Children's Social Care attended the meeting to present the Local Safeguarding Childrens Board (LSCB) Annual Report 2016-17.

Nigel advised the Committee that earlier this year the Children's Social Work Act was passed. Since then, Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LCSB) have

been disestablished, and there was a requirement for the partnership to establish new arrangements that would come into force in 2019.

The three main agencies: the Council, Health and Police would continue to work in partnership to safeguard children, however the strategy guidance moving forward has not yet been published.

The Committee sought clarification about the £73k underspend, Nigel advised that this was a reserve fund that subsidised work that partnership contributions could not cover. The reserve was a reducing reserve because of this.

Mark Palethorpe, Acting Executive Director of People, advised the Committee that there had been a roll out of training for staff within Cheshire East, that dealt with the early identification of issues, to advance understanding and awareness. This ensured that staff looked for signs of safety more holistically, this was a different approach to ensure that even if the member of staff was not a specialist, they would be able to recognise the need to register their concerns with relevant officers for tighter, more joined up working.

The Committee noted that the recruitment and retention was the best ever rate across the borough.

RESOLVED

That the report be received and noted

17 TRANSPORT UPDATE

Jacky Forster, Director of Education and 14-19 skills, attended the meeting to update the Committee following budget planning. The budget had identified that there were identified savings from a review of transport. This review had looked at three main areas:

- 1) Policy;
- 2) Efficient Travel Arrangements; and
- 3) Effective Governance of transport arrangements.

Jacky advised the Committee to consider the Policy aspect at this stage, because the next steps would be for Cabinet to make a decision to consult on changes to the transport policies in October.

Some community engagement had already started and some of the Committee members had been involved in walking some of the routes to schools as part of the phased engagement.

The Committee agreed that any walking route must be fit for purpose and this was incumbent on the Council.

The policy drafted for Cabinet had concentrated on just the statutory offer by the Council, it was recognised that the current offer included a lot of discretionary travel. There was also part of the policy that included exemptions and adding discretion into the policy where appropriate. Routes will be fit for purpose and robust before any decision is taken.

There will be further scrutiny post consultation of school age travel in January 2018.

Jacky added that the review is also considering procurement of vehicles with TSS, the Committee would be advised about this in due course.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be received and noted.
- (b) That a further update be scheduled for the 27 November 2017.

18 CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

Consideration was given to the Corporate Parenting Committee Annual Report 2016-17. The report had already been to Cabinet, because the Corporate Parenting Committee was an advisory committee to Cabinet.

Councillor George Hayes commented that there was much more Member involvement in Corporate Parenting which had demonstrated stronger Corporate Parenting within the borough.

Areas for improvement included the need to develop the enhanced voice of the child not only for themselves and their care packages; but in terms of the Committee work on overview and strategy.

The Committee noted that the data relating to those Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs) would show a truer annual figure if shown as a March-March figure as opposed to July-March.

Nigel Moorhouse, Director of Children's Social Care, answered questions from the Committee about accommodation for Care Leavers, he advised that the Council know where all the Care Leavers move on to although they do not always take up the offer of accommodation from the Council.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be received and noted;
- (b) That Councillor Hayes be thanked for his report and Nigel Moorhouse for his contributions to the discussion; and
- (c) That another Annual Report be brought to the Committee in September 2018.

19 2016-17 ANNUAL REPORT OF MEMBER FRONTLINE VISITS

Councillor George Hayes advised the Committee that the Head of Services responses on Page 91 gave a reassurance that issues are being challenged more regularly and thoroughly than previously.

Councillor Hayes, as the lead Member for Children's Services, has given a commitment to undertake frontline visits in order to see how policy, strategy and location changes are impacting positively, negatively or neutrally on frontline services.

Councillor Hayes has scheduled in meetings with Executive Directors to flag common themes that may emerge from different parts of the same service to ensure a holistic view in the round as opposed to in isolation.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and noted.

20 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES PERFORMANCE SCORECARD - QUARTER 1, 2017-18

Consideration was given to an overview of performance across the Children and Families Service for quarter 1 of 2016/17.

The Chairman noted that items with a negative direction of travel such as item 1.4- the number of repeat referrals, could in part be explained through items being missed at the first referral which had resulted in a re-referral.

The Committee considered the trends across the Scorecard.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be received and noted;
- (b) That the Committee receive Quarter 2 Performance in 3 months time.

21 FORWARD PLAN

Consideration was given to the areas of the forward plan which fell within the remit of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the forward plan be received and noted.

22 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the Work Programme.

The Committee noted that four All-Member briefings were being scheduled for Safeguarding both before and after Christmas.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Work Programme be received and noted;
- (b) That a separate meeting be scheduled for January to discuss budgetary overspend.

Councillor Rhoda Bailey (Chairman)