

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Committee**
held on Tuesday, 23rd January, 2018 in Committee Suite 2/3 - Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor A Kolker (Chairman)

Councillors M Deakin, B Dooley, L Durham, S Gardiner, M Grant, L Smetham,
M Warren and S Edgar

Officers in attendance:

Gill Betton – Head of Children's Development and Partnerships

P Lambert – Head of Cared for Children

Nigel Moorhouse – Director of Children's Social Care

Cherry Foreman – Democratic Services Officer

31 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

That Councillor Andrew Kolker be elected Chairman for the meeting.

32 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Butterill, D Flude, O Hunter and G Merry.

33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

34 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2017 were approved as a correct record.

35 FILM - CARE LEAVERS CASE STUDY

The Committee saw a short information film on the support provided for Cheshire East care leavers on their move to independent living. It covered the role of the Ignition Panel which was made up of a range of partners drawn from housing and social landlords, YMCA, P3, Supported Lodgings, Commissioning and Leaving Care, Voice for Children and private providers.

The assistance included financial budgeting and support to find accommodation and a permanent housing tenancy. Members were most impressed at the help and support provided at this time and as an ongoing feature for care leavers up to the age of 25 years.

36 SUFFICIENCY STATEMENT FOR CARED FOR CHILDREN 2018-19

This draft Sufficiency Statement set out Cheshire East's provision for cared for children, children on the edge of care or custody and care leavers. The shared ambition set out the aims and aspirations of the services and agencies involved across the care services and of the children and young people in their care into adulthood.

The Corporate Parenting Strategy set out five outcomes for measuring progress and it was against these that all those involved in the care of children and young people were working as hard as possible to ensure they felt supported, encouraged and hopeful. Each outcome had priorities and detailed what needed to be achieved; the voice of the children and young people themselves was central to the Strategy and informed the Sufficiency Statement.

The Sufficiency Statement included achievements from 2017 and plans for 2018. Members asked for clarification regarding some areas of support provided for care leavers, including the involvement of housing providers; it was reported these were now more closely involved than previously and the benefits of this were already being seen in their approach to new tenants.

Members were informed that crisis support had been identified as an area that could be improved upon. Currently there were two teams but discussions were ongoing with them to explore how they could work together to provide a better service.

In considering the placing of children into foster care by external agencies Members sought assurance that they were all fully monitored to ensure children were properly safeguarded. This was given and in addition it was confirmed that quality assurance visits were undertaken by the Council's commissioning service in conjunction with Voice for children. Whilst some national agencies were used Members were advised they all operated on a regional basis and the placing of a child a great distance away would rarely be considered. Children remained part of the care system up to the age of 25 and even if they moved away by choice every effort was made to maintain the contact and to ensure they received the same quality of care in their new location as they would in Cheshire East.

RESOLVED

That the draft Sufficiency Statement be noted.

37 CORPORATE PARENTING UPDATE

Consideration was given to this report which provided a summary of national and local developments in relation to cared for children and young people and care leavers.

A resume of the following national developments was given:

- DfE Consultation: Children and Social Work Act – Corporate Parenting, local offer and support to age 25
- Change in case law regarding Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards
- Changes to special educational needs and disabilities tribunals

- Care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery

Local developments included:

- Work on the Corporate Parenting Strategy
- Proposed framework for engagement with the Corporate Parenting Committee
- Participation with children and young people
- Appointment of new Looked After Children Designated Nurse
- Visit from National Implementation adviser for care leavers
- Updates on Ignition and Signs of Safety
- Support for teams from the Lead Practitioner

A detailed discussion took place on work to review the Corporate Parenting Strategy and in particular the role of, and relationship with, elected members. Amongst a number of suggestions Members were invited to submit pen pictures of themselves so cared for children and care leavers could get to know more about them as corporate parents, and to undertake frontline visits to social work teams and where appropriate to meet children and to share resources and knowledge as part of a continuing process of development. Members were also asked to respond with their feedback and suggestions of how else Members and the services could engage more efficiently.

With regard to the participation of children and young people, and their relationship and input into this Committee, it was reported that the Head of Service and the Portfolio Holder were currently attending meetings of 'My Voice' and their representatives would be invited to come to a meeting of the Committee in the near future with a view to challenging the Committee on what they wanted and how those needs were being met.

RESOLVED

1. That the updates be noted.
2. That a standard template for a 'pen portrait' be devised and circulated to all members of the Committee for completion.
3. That a further report on involvement with the teams and on member development be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

38 CORPORATE PARENTING SCORECARD Q2

Consideration was given to the Scorecard for the second quarter of 2017/18. An explanation was given of changes in respect of the time taken for initial health assessments. It was recognised that an increase in the number of cared for children had impacted on a number of the measures reported but these had been acted upon and improvements would be seen in Q3 following changes agreed with both health and social care.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

39 INPUT FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

It was reported that the Head of Service and the Portfolio Holder were now attending meetings of the Shadow Board. The Forward Plan of work of this Committee had been looked at by the Shadow Board and the suggestions of the pen portraits had been welcomed. The Shadow board had also prepared its own forward plan and was considering how it could involve a greater number of participants.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

40 FUTURE MEETING DATES

RESOLVED

That approval be given for meetings in the next municipal year as follows:

Tuesday 3 July 2018
Tuesday 18 September 2018
Tuesday 13 November 2018
Tuesday 22 January 2019
Tuesday 19 March 2019
Tuesday 23 April 2019

All meetings would begin at 4.00 pm.

The meeting commenced at 4.05 pm and concluded at 5.20 pm

Councillor A Kolker (Chairman)