

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Committee**  
held on Tuesday, 18th June, 2019 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,  
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

## **PRESENT**

Councillor D Flude (Chairman)  
Councillor J Saunders (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors J Barber, J Buckley, C Bulman, P Butterill, S Edgar, K Flavell and  
M Warren

## **Officers in attendance**

Gill Betton, Head of Service: Children's Development and Partnerships  
Keith Martin, Head of Service: Cared for Children & Care Leavers  
Laura Rogerson, Headteacher, Virtual School for Cared for Children  
Jacquie Sims, Director of Children's Social Care  
Ruth Tucker, Deputy Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children  
Kayleigh Wilshaw, Service Manager: Cared for Children and Care Leavers  
Julie Zientek, Democratic Services Officer

## **1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED – That Councillor D Flude be appointed Chairman of the  
Committee for the Municipal Year 2019/20.

*Councillor Flude took the Chair.*

## **2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED – That Councillor J Saunders be appointed Vice-Chairman of  
the Committee for the Municipal Year 2019/20.

## **3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Bailey and M  
Beanland.

## **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2019 be  
approved as a correct record.

## **6 CORPORATE PARENTING UPDATE FROM ELECTED MEMBERS**

This was a standing item on the agenda, giving Members an opportunity to update other Members of the committee.

The next meeting would include a training session for Corporate Parenting Committee Members which would cover how Members could link to young people and the workstreams.

## **7 INPUT FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

The Acting Head of Service for Cared for Children and Care Leavers reported back from his regular meeting with the Chairman and the Shadow Committee of young people which took place a week prior to meetings of the Corporate Parenting Committee to give the committee a direct link with young people in care. Updates were given, including the work the Shadow Committee had done around shaping the direction of residential provision in Cheshire East.

## **8 RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

The Committee received the above report, which summarised recent recruitment activity and outlined a range of proposals to improve social worker retention.

In addition to the information contained in the report, and in response to questions from Committee members, officers stated the following:

- There was a flexible working policy. Social workers could hot desk and work at home.
- Salaries for social workers were being kept under review.
- There was a regular social work survey, which included what it was like to be a social worker in Cheshire East. Issues raised could be shared with the portfolio holder and a decision made regarding the relevant forum for further discussion.
- With regard to social worker caseloads, cases were allocated to managers but students were working them. Data regarding caseloads would be clearer in future. Workloads were slowly reducing and it was intended to reduce them further.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **9 THE HEALTH OF CARED FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE INTERIM REPORT: OCT 2018 - MARCH 2019**

The Committee received the above report, which outlined the delivery of NHS health services to children in the care of Cheshire East Council

during the period 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019. The report reviewed performance indicators, clinical work undertaken by the Wirral Community NHS Trust Cared for Children Health Team, service improvements and plans for further development.

Members requested clarification of the figures in Tables 2 and 3 (Review Health Assessments completed within due month), to be provided at a future meeting.

Members asked a number of questions and received confirmation that:

- There was communication via social media and an app was being developed.
- Review Health Assessments included information on visits to the dentist.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

#### **10 STRENGTHS AND DIFFICULTIES QUESTIONNAIRE AND SCORES IN CHESHIRE EAST**

Following a request at a previous meeting for further information regarding the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), Members received a presentation on the Use of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire with Cared for Children in Cheshire East.

The SDQ was a tool for screening emotional and behavioural problems in children and young people between the ages of 3 and 17. It was used by trained practitioners, was administered annually and ensured that young people were directed to the right support.

It was recognised that the SDQ had limitations, and future plans included development of the tool for the benefit of young people.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

#### **11 CHILDREN'S HOMES MOBILISATION UPDATE**

The Committee received the above report, which outlined the procurement process and provided an update on the mobilisation of the children's homes commission since contracts had been awarded.

In response to a question from the Chairman, it was reported that visits to children's homes by Corporate Parenting Committee Members would be confirmed at the training session.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

## **12 CLAREMONT HOUSE OFSTED REPORT**

The Committee considered a report of an Ofsted inspection of Claremont House which had taken place in April 2019. The inspection judgement had been good, and a letter had been sent to the children's home to congratulate them.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

## **13 REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee considered the Terms of Reference for the Committee.

Suggestions for amendments included replacing 'Children's Improvement Plan' with 'Children's and Young People Plan', including the Independent Review Officers' Annual Report in the list of annual reports scrutinised by the Committee, and clarifying that the Committee reports to the Council's Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – That an amended version of the Terms of Reference be attached to the Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2018/19 for consideration by the Committee at its next meeting, prior to endorsement by Cabinet.

## **14 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED - That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items pursuant to Section 100(A) 4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

## **15 CORPORATE PARENTING UPDATE**

The Committee received an update on national and local developments in relation to cared for children and young people and care leavers.

A resume of the following was given:

- Star Celebrations update
- TOGETHER co production
- TACT: Language that Cares
- Member training update
- Investing in Children Award
- New Children and Young People's Plan 2019-21
- Cared for Children's Achievements
- Department of Education Letter re Adoption in Cheshire East
- Care Hubs (Bespoke) Project update

- Section 31 grant determination letters
- Distress signals
- Ofsted's new inspection framework for schools

RESOLVED - That the update be noted.

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and concluded at 5.45 pm

Councillor D Flude (Chairman)