

# **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Children and Families Committee**  
held on Monday, 11th July, 2022 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields, Middlewich  
Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

## **PRESENT**

Councillor K Flavell (Chair)  
Councillor C Bulman (Vice-Chair)

Councillors L Anderson, M Beanland, J Buckley, D Edwardes, S Handley,  
I Macfarlane, L Smetham, L Smith, R Bailey, S Edgar and S Holland

## **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Deborah Woodcock, Executive Director of Children's Services  
Jacky Forster, Director of Education and 14-19 Skills  
Claire Williamson, Interim Director of Early Help and Prevention  
Deborah Nickson, Legal Team Manager (People) and Deputy Monitoring  
Officer  
Steve Reading, Principal Accountant  
Josie Lloyd, Democratic Services Officer

## **18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Addison, Cllr Hayes and Cllr Saunders.  
Cllr Bailey, Cllr Edgar and Cllr Holland attended as substitute members.

## **19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Bailey declared under item 10, Schools Catering Service External Review, that  
she is in a farming partnership although does not supply Cheshire East directly and is  
not aware of any supply to Cheshire East remotely.

## **20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2022 be approved as a correct record.

## **21 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION**

There were no public speakers.

## **22 ALLOCATION OF ADDITIONAL HIGH NEEDS DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT FUNDING**

The committee received the report which sought approval for the use of £1.8 million additional High Needs Grant provided by the Department for Education.

There was extensive debate and concerns were raised by some members, particularly regarding using the funding to offset overspend and the proposed percentage increase to Park Lane Special School and Springfield Special School which was felt by some to be too low.

Assurances were given that the recommendations in the report were in line with the government guidance and had support from the Schools Forum.

A motion was moved and seconded which sought to amend the permanent increase to the high needs top up rate from 2% to 3% for two of the lowest funded special schools, Park Lane Special School and Springfield Special School. The motion was declared lost.

### **RESOLVED (by majority):**

That the Children and Families Committee approve the allocation of the additional high needs funding as set out below:

1. Allocate £237,056 to maintained special schools, academy special schools, free special schools and the pupil referral unit (PRU).
2. Increase the budget for top up funding for education placements in independent special schools, non-maintained special schools, further education colleges and other local authority special schools by £176,270.
3. £670,000 to be used for additional support and invest to save proposals.
4. £755,249 to contribute to the current cost pressures of educational placements for our young people, both new and historic placements.

## **23 'OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL: STRONG SCHOOLS WITH GREAT TEACHERS FOR YOUR CHILD' THE EDUCATION WHITE PAPER AND DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY-INITIATED TRUSTS**

The committee received the report which set out the key aspects of the recent White Paper 'Opportunity for All: Strong schools with great teachers for your child'.

### **RESOLVED (by majority):**

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Notes the new policies in the white paper and in particular the implications for councils.
2. Provides support to explore the option of local authority-initiated trusts as outlined in the white paper through discussions with the Regional Schools

Commissioner and our maintained schools to shape the possible delivery model.

3. Agrees to submitting a 'Registration of Interest' to establish a new trust(s) which needs to be submitted by 31 July 2022. Proposals developed on the delivery model of local authority-initiated trusts will be brought back to a future committee for approval.

## **24 DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY HUBS IN CHESHIRE EAST**

The committee received the report regarding the proposal to develop family hubs across Cheshire East.

The committee thanked the team who had worked on the bid.

### **RESOLVED (unanimously):**

That the Children and Families Committee:

1. Note the approval of Cheshire East's Family Hubs Transformation Fund bid and the intention to provide an implementation plan update to a future meeting of the committee.
2. Approve a supplementary estimate for £985,289 and delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services to incur expenditure in line with the conditions of the Family Hubs Transformation Fund.

## **25 CARED FOR CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS STRATEGY 2022-26**

The committee received the report which set out the proposed new Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2022-26, previously known as the Corporate Parenting Strategy, to improve outcomes for cared for children and care leavers.

A query was raised regarding a reference to young people on apprenticeship programmes within the Council on page 66 of the agenda and whether this referred to all young people or was specific to cared for children and care leavers. As the Director of Children's Social Care was not present at the meeting, a written response would be provided.

### **RESOLVED (by majority):**

That the committee:

1. Endorse the Cared for Children and Care Leavers Strategy 2022-26.
2. Endorse the decision to take the pledges in the strategy to full Council on 19 October 2022, where members can pledge their commitments to cared for children and care leavers.
3. Endorse the decision to change the name of our Corporate Parenting Committee, further recommendations regarding the change of name will be brought to a future committee following consultation with children and young people.

## 26 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2022-26

The committee received the report which outlined the new Children and Young People's Plan for Cheshire East which set out the ambition of the partnerships to improve outcomes for all children and young people.

### **RESOLVED (unanimously):**

That the Children and Families Committee endorse the Children and Young People's Plan 2022-26.

## 27 SCHOOLS CATERING SERVICE: EXTERNAL REVIEW

The committee received the report which outlined a commissioned review into the Cheshire East schools catering service.

Members put forward a number of comments they wished to be considered, including:

- The importance of using local producers
- Ensuring good quality food in schools, particularly due to the cost of living crisis
- Ensuring the availability of free drinking water
- Offering separate vegetarian and vegan options instead of providing only vegan as a 'catch all'

### **RESOLVED:**

That the committee:

1. Notes the external commissioning of a review of the schools catering service through APSE which will take place during the autumn term 2022.
2. Notes that the outcomes of this external review are shared with committee in January for consideration of the future delivery model for the schools catering service.

## 28 SCHOOL ORGANISATION: ACADEMISATION OF SCHOOLS: FORWARD PLAN

The committee received the report which provided information on planned schools across the borough which were seeking to move to academy status and join a multi academy trust.

It was noted that this was a standing item brought to each committee meeting and that there had been no changes to the report since the previous meeting.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the committee receives and notes the summary table (Appendix 1) showing the status of academy conversions across Cheshire East schools.

## 29 WORK PROGRAMME

A query was raised regarding information on the progress of new schools in the borough and it was noted that briefing sessions would be run in the autumn. These briefings would also be open to all members who may wish to attend if relevant to their ward.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting commenced at 14.00 and concluded at 17.00

Councillor K Flavell (Chair)