

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 10th November 2015

Time: 2.00pm – 4.34pm

Present: Councillors D Brown (Vice-Chairman), P Brown, S Bywater, D Divine, P Downes, S Frost, D Harty, J Hipkin (substituting for S Van de Kerkhove), M Leeke, M Loynes, F Onasanya, J Whitehead (Chairwoman) and J Wisson

Apologies: Councillor S Van de Kerkhove, Mr P Rossi (Roman Catholic diocesan representative) and Mrs P Stanton (Church of England diocesan representative)

117. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

118. MINUTES 8th September 2015 AND ACTION LOG

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8th September 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairwoman.

The Action Log was noted.

119. PETITIONS

No petitions had been received.

120. ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL IN CLAY FARM, CAMBRIDGE

The Committee received a report which advised of the outcome of the process adopted by the Council to discharge the statutory requirement, under the Education Act 2011, to seek a sponsor for the new primary school at Clay Farm, Trumpington, Cambridge. The report explained that one proposal had been received by the deadline from the Cambridge Primary Education Trust (CPET). The report drew attention to a public meeting held on 15th September 2015 and outlined the recommendations of the joint Member/officer Assessment Panel, including areas where it was felt additional information and clarification was required, if the proposal was approved by the Regional Commissioner.

During discussion, Members:-

- Noted that the Council would work with the sponsor during the implementation phase to ensure that the areas of focus identified in paragraph 3.7 of the report were addressed.
- Received assurances that the sponsor had a good reputation and that there was no evidence to suggest that the areas identified in paragraph 3.7 were systemic.
- Were advised that the primary school would have 2 forms of entry but that it might be necessary to consider further expansion where required to reflect any additional development through the Local Plan.

It was resolved unanimously:

To endorse Cambridge Primary Education Trust as the Council's approved sponsor for the new primary school at Clay Farm, Trumpington, Cambridge.

121. ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL IN NORTH WEST CAMBRIDGE

This report was withdrawn in the light of a request from one of the potential sponsors for a review of the Assessment Panel's recommendation regarding the preferred sponsor for the new secondary school to serve the North West Cambridge and Darwin Green developments. It was proposed to re-schedule the item for consideration at the meeting of the Committee to be held on 8th December 2015.

122. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2015

The Committee considered the Finance and Performance report for Children, Families and Adults (CFA) outlining the financial and performance position as at the end of September 2015. Members were reminded that the report was for the whole of CFA services and as such, not all the services were the responsibility of this Committee.

The Strategic Finance Manager (Children's and Schools), referred to paragraph 2.1 of the report which indicated that, at the end of September, there was a forecast overspend of £1.377m. He reported that at the end of October the overspend had reduced to £896k, owing to reductions in the adult social care and mainstream transport budgets.

During discussion. Members:

- Welcomed the inclusion of the Guide to the Finance and Performance Report tables on page 57 of the report, but suggested that the presentation of figures in the forecast variance column was somewhat confusing since whilst underspends were indicated by a minus (-) sign, overspends were not delineated with a plus (+) sign.
- Noted that the main pressures on the Children's Services element of the CFA budget remained Looked After Children placements and Home to School Transport (Mainstream).
- Noted that the Finance and Performance report for the CFA was produced monthly and requested that the report should also be circulated to Committee Members on a monthly basis, rather than just to bi-monthly meetings. **Action required.**
- With reference to page 63 of the report, requested that, in future, a glossary be included to explain the Ofsted codes. **Action required.**
- Received a further explanation for the reasoning for the increased overspend in the Learning Directorate associated with the vacancy savings target.
- Noting that the proportion of pupils attending Cambridgeshire Secondary Schools judged good or outstanding by Ofsted was 45.3%, were informed by a Member of the latest performance against the target by district level which indicated that pupils at schools in the south of the County were achieving significantly higher levels of performance than those in the more disadvantaged north of the County. It was suggested that there was therefore a need to drill down below the County level performance results presented in the report.
- With reference to page 91, suggested that it was inappropriate to use the word "slippage" in the context of cost reductions achieved through value engineering.

It was resolved:

To review and comment on the report.

123. COMMITTEE REVIEW OF DRAFT REVENUE BUSINESS PLANNING PROPOSALS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES 2016/17 TO 2020/21

The Committee received a report which provided an overview of the draft revenue business planning proposals for Children, Families and Adults Services that fell within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee. The report highlighted the substantial financial difficulties faced by the Authority at a time where funding was reducing and costs were rising significantly, owing to inflationary and demographic pressures.

The Committee noted that this year the Council had adopted an outcome-led approach to business planning which was defined and described through the draft Strategic Framework approved by the General Purposes Committee on 20 October 2015. The Strategic Framework set out the outcomes that the Council would work towards achieving and the ways of working the Council would adopt in the face of prolonged and challenging budget pressures. The Committee was invited to endorse the initial proposals set out in the report for consideration as part of the Council's development of the Business Plan for the next five years. Draft proposals across all Committees would continue to be developed over the next few months to ensure a robust plan and to allow as much mitigation as possible against the impact of the savings. The proposals might therefore change as they were developed or alternatives found.

The Chairwoman explained how she intended to manage discussion on this item and referred to a document which had been tabled, showing the order in which it was proposed to discuss the various elements of the report.

The Vice-Chairman reminded the Committee that the Business Plan proposals were at a very early stage of discussion and that it might not therefore be appropriate to endorse them at this stage, as suggested in the recommendations of the report. He therefore gave notice that he intended to move an amendment at the end of the debate.

The Chairwoman invited discussion on the report as follows:-

(a) Corporate Financial Context

The Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services gave a general introduction.

(b) Strategic Context for Children and Young People's Services

Following introduction by the Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services, Members:-

- Sought further explanation as to why the number of Statements of Special Educational Need/Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) had dropped dramatically 12 months ago. It was believed this was related to the introduction of EHCPs at that time but it was agreed to provide the Member concerned with a written response. **Action required.**
- With reference to the proposal on page 113 to ask communities and families

to do more to support vulnerable people in Cambridgeshire, emphasised the importance of providing Members with guidance on the type of actions which could be taken by communities in support of this aim. It was essential that Members were provided with such guidance in order to enable them to lead and support their communities. It was noted that Members who were trying to develop such initiatives were confronted by potential barriers such as health and safety, data protection and disclosure and barring. In response, officers outlined the work being undertaken in support of the Council's Community Resilience Strategy and acknowledged the need to provide guidance to Members as suggested. However it was emphasised that there was no one blueprint for Cambridgeshire communities and it was important to work with a community to develop approaches that were appropriate for that community.

- In the context of the above point, noted the scope for the Council to trade services, however it was important not simply to seek to replicate the County's existing models in communities but to encourage more creative thinking at the local level. It was pointed out that districts and parishes needed to be aware of the options to buy in County Council services far earlier in the budget cycle in order that they could precept accordingly. The Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services accepted that this had been acknowledged as an issue in the current year and timetabling would be reviewed for future years.
- Acknowledged that finding the best way of working at the local level was a challenge, but noted that there was scope for local working through the existing locality teams.
- Noted the scope to reduce the County Council's inputs and overheads by increasing the use of personal budgets for families. Experience showed that use of personal budgets enabled families to have greater choice and control over their services and achieved better value for money.
- Sought information on the estimated number of staffing reductions in the context of the overall size of the workforce. It was agreed that a written response would be provided to the Member who had raised this question.

Action required.

(c) Business Planning Proposals for:

(i) Enhanced and Preventative Services

The Service Director: Enhanced and Preventative Services introduced the revised service proposals in this area.

During discussion, Members:

- Noted that Burwell Parish Council was meeting with officers to discuss possible continued support for the Connections Bus. This was an example of a service which local councils might wish to continue to fund, although it was recognised that to achieve economies of scale, a number of councils would need to participate in such initiatives. It was confirmed that for services such as the Connections Bus, where officers were aware of the communities using the service, they could initiate discussions with the relevant local councils regarding the impact on the service and future options.
- Expressed the view that too many disparate services had been

included in the Community Impact Assessment for Early Help (pages 222 – 224 of the report) and asked that the services be separated in the next iteration of the Business Plan. **Action required.**

- Asked whether the reduction in the number of Children's Centres might impact on other services using those centres, for example, locality teams. In response, it was reported that a risk based approach was used to develop the proposals and that officers had sought to retain as much early help as possible within the constraints of the budget pressures.
- Noted that it was not possible at this stage to indicate how many Children's Centres might close and their location, as discussions remained on-going with partners on other ways in which services might be delivered.
- With regard to proposals for Speech and Language Therapy, were assured that the core service would continue to be provided. The reduction related to the additional drop in services provided for families with special educational needs. It was recognised that some children using the service were referred for more specialist services and discussion was taking place with health partners regarding the service adjustments necessary to ensure the continuation of this early intervention.

(ii) Children's Social Care Services

The Service Director: Children's Social Care introduced the proposed service changes within his area of responsibility. The proposals for Looked After Children (LAC) were also considered at this point in the meeting.

During discussion, Members:

- Noted proposals to reduce the number of children taken into care in the County; the cost of provision and the length of time children were in care for. A report on the LAC Strategy would be submitted to the Committee's meeting on 8 December 2015.
- Sought clarification as to whether the LAC proposals would include an associated change to the criteria for determining whether to take children into care. In response, it was emphasised that there would be no change to those criteria. Instead it was intended to introduce measures to reduce the number of children coming in care, including more targeted interventions and to reduce the costs of children in care, such as by greater use of foster carers, rather than expensive residential placements.
- In response to a question, were advised that more looked after children came into the County than went out of the County. Out of County placements were generally of a specialist nature.
- Noted that Government funding was received in respect of unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
- With reference to comments in the Community Impact Statement at page 202, received an assurance that the proposals would not result in the Council breaching its statutory duties but were advised of the likelihood that complaints and legal challenges would increase as services were reduced.
- Noted that where estimated savings were shown for service reductions

they should all be preceded by a minus sign (-). It appeared that the minus sign had been omitted in places.

(iii) Learning Services

The Service Director: Learning outlined the key service changes proposed for the Learning Directorate.

During discussion, Members noted the proposal to increase traded income by selling school advice services to schools. Some Members felt that schools, particularly Academies, would wish to buy in such services. Other Members expressed reservations as to whether schools would be able to afford the services, noting that no inflationary uplift was being applied to Government funding in the next financial year and that therefore schools would effectively be operating with reduced resources.

(iv) Home to School Transport

The Service Director: Learning provided a summary of the changes proposed for Home to School Transport (Mainstream).

During discussion, Members:

- Noted that the Local Authority had a duty to facilitate access to further education and learning for students aged 16 to 19, but that this did not extend to providing financial support. The subsidies currently provided by the Council were discretionary.
- Were advised that extensive consultation would be needed on the proposal to cease providing financial support for new students over the age of 16 starting a new course from 1 September 2016, including those living in low income households.
- Noted that a report with further detail on the proposal to cease provision of financial support would be submitted to the Committee's meeting on 8th December 2015.
- Asked about the length of the proposed consultation and were advised that the consultation period would be a maximum of 3 months, but might be shorter than that. If the proposal was approved by the Committee in December, the consultation would need to commence as soon as possible thereafter and would need to be extensive in nature.
- Sought information on the bursaries that were available to eligible young people and noted that up to £1,200 per student per year was available for students aged 16 to 19 to help with education-related costs, including travel.
- Were informed that bursaries were funded by the Education Funding Agency and paid directly to the post 16 education providers. The Local Authority therefore did not retain records relating to take-up of bursaries etc.
- Acknowledged that most students would not be able to benefit from a bursary.
- Requested that the report to the Committee in December contained further information regarding bursaries. **Action required.**
- Noted that most of the proposed savings would accrue from the Local Authority removing subsidy for students to travel on commercial bus

- services, rather than the Authority ceasing to provide transport itself.
- Sought further details about proposals to make routes safe for walking and noted that there were a small number of routes that could be reviewed; that these would be subject to a cost benefit analysis and would not be taken forward if it would cost more to make the route safe than to meet the transport costs.
- Requested that the report to the Committee in December should also investigate the scope for encouraging students to cycle to college, such as by provision of cycling allowances or subsidised or free bicycles, whilst acknowledging that such an initiative was likely to be of more benefit in urban areas. **Action required.**
- Commented that young people were now required to remain in education or training until the age of 18 and expressed concerns that ceasing financial support to students aged 16 to 19 might impact most seriously on disadvantaged students and those living in rural areas.
- Expressed a general level of concern about the proposal to remove financial support for post-16 students and to the need to give further detailed consideration to the proposal when receiving the report in December.

The Service Director: Strategy and Commissioning then outlined proposed service changes in respect of Home to School Transport (Special).

During discussion, Members:

- Noted that the proposed change to post-16 funding policy, would also apply to parents of post-16 children with a disability meaning that families would be expected to make contributions to the costs of transport.
- Were advised of the intention to expand the use of personal budgets so that parents could make their own decisions on how best to arrange for the transport of their children to and from school.
- Noted that the report to Committee on 8 December 2015 would also cover proposals for Home to School Transport (Special).

(v) Strategy and Commissioning

The Service Director: Strategy and Commissioning advised the Committee of the proposed areas of reduction within her area of responsibility.

During discussion, a Member sought information on the likely impact of the proposed staffing reductions in the Strategy Service and Information Management Systems and it was noted that the impact was likely to be upon other staff, rather than the public. In particular, there would need to be a greater degree of “self-service” by staff. The proposal was also linked to the proposed efficiencies to be achieved from the implementation of the new management and information system in CFA.

(vi) Cross CFA savings

The Service Director: Strategy and Commissioning highlighted the proposed savings in relation to support functions across CFA as outlined in the report.

The Service Director: Learning, expanded on the proposals to reduce the level of support and advice provided by the Early Years Service.

(vii) Fees and Charges

The Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services presented the proposed schedule of fees and charges for those services falling within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee. He noted that most of the traded services related to the Learning Directorate and commented on work underway to ensure that the charges recovered the costs incurred in providing the service.

It was suggested that it might be helpful to officers if Members could identify two of the savings identified that they would most wish to be avoided in the event that additional funding became available to the Committee as part of the budget setting process. However, on reflection, Members concurred that it would be premature to have such a discussion at this meeting and that it might be more appropriate for the December meeting when further detailed reports concerning specific service reductions would be submitted to the Committee.

The Vice-Chairman noted that recommendation (c) of the submitted report invited the Committee to agree business planning proposals for submission to the General Purposes Committee. He suggested that the Committee was not in a position to agree the proposals at this meeting. An amendment was accordingly proposed and duly seconded, to delete "agree" and insert "notes the current" in recommendation (c). Upon being put to the vote the amendment was carried.

A further amendment was proposed by Councillor Downes and duly seconded by Councillor Leeke, to insert an additional recommendation as follows:-

"To request the General Purposes Committee to consider the implications of increasing the Council Tax by 5%."

Upon being put to the vote the amendment was carried, with 5 Members voting in favour and 7 abstentions.

It was resolved:

1. To note the overview and context provided for the 2016/17 to 2020/21 Business Plan draft revenue proposals for the Children, Families and Adults Service.
2. To comment on the draft revenue savings proposals that are within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee for 2016/17 to 2020/21.
3. To note the current business planning proposals for submission to the Council's General Purposes Committee as part of the Council's overall Business Plan.
4. To consider the proposed levels of fees and charges, as set out in Appendix G, for the CFA Services that are in the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee for 2015/16 to 2019/20 and endorse them.
5. To request the General Purposes Committee to consider the implications of increasing the Council Tax by 5%.

124. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN; APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND COMMITTEE TRAINING PLAN

The Committee received a report which:

- (a) Presented the agenda plan for the Children and Young People Committee, as set out in Appendix A;
- (b) Invited reports back from representatives on outside bodies; and
- (c) Presented the updated Committee Training Plan, a copy of which was attached at Appendix B to the report.

Members:-

- Noted the expectation that, in view of the volume of business scheduled for the meeting of the Committee in January 2016, it would be necessary for the Committee to meet on the reserve date of 9th February 2016.
- Were reminded that the item on Establishment of a New Secondary School in North West Cambridge had been deferred earlier in the meeting and would now be added to the agenda plan for the meeting of the Committee to be held on 8 December 2015.

It was resolved:

1. To note the agenda plan and the anticipated need to use the reserve Committee date on 9th February 2016.
2. To note the Committee's Training Plan, as set out at Appendix B.

Chairwoman