

CABINET: MINUTES

Date: 23d October 2012

Time: 10.00am – 11.55am

Present: Chairman: Councillor N Clarke

Councillors I Bates, D Brown, S Count, M Curtis, D Harty, L W McGuire, T Orgee, M Shuter and S Tierney

Apologies: None

Present by invitation: Councillors J Batchelor, K Bourke, P Downes, J Powley, T Sadiq,

648. MINUTES: 2nd OCTOBER 2012

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2ND October 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor Orgee highlighted that in relation to both the Fenland and South Cambridgeshire Plans, that the district councils attention should be drawn to the points he had made at that meeting. These were in relation to the importance of including ducting for high speed broadband in all new buildings and also his suggestion as a remedy to the issues of roads not being adopted that the councils consider entering into a bond agreement with developers.

Action: Councillor Bates undertook to ensure the issues were raised by officers within the respective councils.

649. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

650. PETITIONS

None.

651. LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONTROLLED WASTE (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2012 AS AMENDED BY THE CONTROLLED WASTE (ENGLAND AND WALES) AMENDMENT REGULATIONS 2012

Cabinet received a report seeking its approval to a local policy to enable implementation of the above regulations giving authorities the power to choose whether to charge for disposal of waste from some non domestic properties to comply with the principle the polluter pays which was not currently always being appropriately applied. The policy had been drawn up taking account of issues raised by a Community Impact Assessment (included as Annex 1 to the report) and to ensure it was as flexible and responsive as possible and not impose undue costs to some who may have previously received a free disposable service and seeking to determine when and when not to charge, while also recognising that in the current financial climate the County Council could not afford to cover all disposal

costs. The report set out that it was proposed that the policy would include the following local mitigation measures:

- That, subject to agreement with partners, to reduce the impact to the district councils and their customers by introducing a reduced rate to proposed charges in the first year.
- Local exemptions for residential, care and nursing homes receiving a District Council Collection with free disposal prior to 6th April 2012, providing there had been no break in the contract.
- To reduce the burden on taxpayers and avoiding paying for commercial waste by providing a test to determine when premises used for public meetings were let mainly for commercial use.
- Processes being put in place to reach decisions on any ambiguities identified.

Councillor Bates wished to place on record how successful the partnership working the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership (RECAP) had been and was an example of excellent partnership working with all involved.

Issues raised at the Joint Waste Officer Group were still being assessed by officers and any need to make minor amendments to the policy would be undertaken in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Enterprise. It was noted that the local policy would be reviewed each year and if new legislation was enacted a revised policy would be brought back to Cabinet.

It was resolved:

- a) to agree the local policy on the implementation of the Controlled Waste Regulations (England and Wales) Regulations 2012; and
- b) to delegate the power to approve amendments to the policy to the Cabinet Member for Enterprise and the Executive Director for Economy, Transport and Environment.

652. ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL TOGETHER WITH EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE PROVISION TO SERVE EAST CHESTERTON, CAMBRIDGE

Cabinet received a further report on the proposal to bring back into educational use from September 2013 the site and buildings of the former Shirley Primary lower school, Green End Road, Cambridge, to provide a one form entry (FE) (210 place) primary school, as an Academy or Free School, with associated early years and childcare provision. The proposal was in response to the need to provide additional primary school places in the north of Cambridge City from 2018 and specifically in the Shirley Primary School catchment area from September 2013.

The report set out the comments received following the consultation undertaken which ran from the period of the last cabinet decision on 17th September to the closing date of 10th October. As the consultation had not ended until after the publication of the report on the current agenda, an updated appendix 4 with additional responses received, was tabled at the meeting. Reference was also made to the Public Consultation meeting and the petition with 27 signatures

received which had all been taken into account, with the detail as set out in the report.

It was highlighted that the most significant area of concern for local residents was around traffic management and indiscriminate parking, particularly in Green End Road and a neighbouring cul-de-sac, named 'Evergreens', based on the experience when the site previously operated as a school. Many of the respondents expressing such concerns were sympathetic to the need for a new school to serve the area, but wished to see some practical measures in place to reduce the potential increase in traffic. It was orally indicated that officers from Highways were already engaging with local residents on what remedial measures could be undertaken. The Leader of the Council emphasised the need for any mitigation measures to be in place by the time the school opened to meet residents concerns (e.g. if found necessary, installation of yellow lines, speed humps, parking spaces for parents etc) and wished to ensure that they were not carried out retrospectively.

Cabinet noted that a diverse range of views had been received on the type of school that would best serve the local community with the local community seeking a significant input into the process for assessing the proposals received from potential sponsors of a new Academy or Free School. As already indicated in the report received at the 17th September Cabinet meeting, the Education Act 2011 required the Council to seek sponsors to establish and run any new school it identified as an Academy or a Free School. While the process and the timescales for discharging this responsibility under the Act were agreed by Cabinet in April 2012, there was an opportunity to shorten the timescale for identifying a preferred sponsor to reflect the concerns of parents about not knowing the identity of the sponsor before considering or accepting a place for their child in the new school. As a result, the report proposed revised timetable in order to minimise, as far as possible, the period of uncertainty for parents as set out in paragraph 5.2.4 of the report, which included a report back to Cabinet on 29th January 2013.

Due to work commitments the local member for East Chesterton was unable to attend, but requested that his comments be reported including that he "...was pleased to see the County Council involving local members in the process, and building in flexibility to the admissions process so that parents can reapply once the sponsor recommendation is known without penalty."

Councillor Downes the Liberal Democrat Education spokesman spoke in support of the proposal, indicating that he had been involved in the detail. While he regretted the traffic implications associated with a school being so close to dense housing provision, he recognised the demographic imperative. He also supported the accelerated process to be used in this particular case. He commended Councillor Manning's efforts to broker discussion between residents and County Council officers on the areas of concern identified.

Cabinet Members in response included some of the following comments:

- Highlighting that while paragraph 3.7 of the report indicated that the need for a new school was not disputed by any of the respondents or participants in the public meeting, the pie chart produced on page 27 of the original appendix 4 on concerns raised in relation to traffic, trees and landscaping etc could give a

misleading impression of the level of opposition to the proposals. In reply it was indicated that the pie chart had only been produced to highlight the main type of issues for those residents expressing particular concern. As it was potentially confusing to readers there was a request for officers to ensure that future reports provided clearer information on the percentage total in favour and against proposals to help ensure greater clarity. The Leader also asked that officers look again at the consultation documentation to ensure it was easy to read / understand and did not include unnecessary technical language.

It was resolved to agree:

- a) to the use of the site and buildings in Green End Road, East Chesterton, Cambridge to provide a 210 place primary school with early years and childcare provision from September 2013;
- b) the shortened timetable set out in paragraph 5.2.4 for seeking a sponsor of the new school as either a Free School or an Academy under the relevant provisions of the Education Act 2011; and
- c) to undertake further consultation with local residents on the preparation and implementation of appropriate traffic and parking restrictions in the surrounding residential area to be implemented in a timely fashion.
- d) That officers review the consultation procedures documentation to ensure they were user friendly for the public and not written in unnecessarily technical language.

653. CAMBRIDGESHIRE HEALTH AND WELL BEING STRATEGY

Cabinet received a report attaching the full Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy developed by the Cambridgeshire shadow Health and Wellbeing Board and Network. The report set out details of the public consultation undertaken over a three month period between June and September. It was highlighted that the final version of the Strategy attached at Annex A of the report incorporated significant changes made as a result of the public consultation including:

- The introduction of a new priority six.
- Additional areas of focus.
- Greater emphasis on prevention throughout the strategy and the reiteration of the importance of physical and mental health throughout each priority.
- Consideration of the needs of specific groups throughout the strategy, including: Military and ex-military personnel and their families; informal carers and families; adults and children with physical or learning disabilities; young people transitioning to adult services; prisoners and offenders.
- Broadening the focus on: transport networks, with a particular focus on access for those living in rural communities; opportunities for physical activity and local community and environmental resources to support it; prevention of domestic abuse and support for victims; ensuring that housing developments include “lifetime” homes which meet the needs of residents including older people.

The Strategy identified the following six cross cutting principles:

- Reducing inequalities by improving the health of the worst off fastest.
- Focussing on prevention
- Using evidence based practice and responding to local information
- Developing cost effective solutions and improving efficiency
- Emphasising local action and responsibility
- Sustainability

and the following six strategic priorities:

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|------------|---|
| Priority 1 | Ensure a positive start to life for children and young people |
| Priority 2 | Support older people to be independent, safe and well |
| Priority 3 | Encourage healthy lifestyles and behaviours in all actions and activities, while respecting people's personal choices |
| Priority 4 | Create a safe environment and help to build strong communities, wellbeing and mental health |
| Priority 5 | Create a sustainable environment in which communities can flourish |
| Priority 6 | Work together effectively. |

Councillor Batchelor speaking as the Liberal Democrat spokesman for children and young people and adult social care, while welcoming the strategy, queried whether it was achievable. While he believed it was very well intentioned he believed it appeared to try to cover too wide a remit, at a time of continued diminishing resources and suggested that a vision without costed, affordable outcomes was akin to a fantasy and questioned how it would be paid for. In response Councillor Batchelor was asked which priorities he would drop, but declined to elaborate. As part of a response Councillor Curtis indicated that the best way to deal with health and well being was by an all encompassing plan which delivered a preventative strategy avoiding a traditional silo / individual service mentality. In his view priority 6 was arguably the most important, as achieving it, would help deliver the other five.

Councillor McGuire welcomed military / ex-military and their families as one of the specific groups identified, as in the past they were often forgotten about.

Cabinet welcomed the strategy as an easily understandable document that required to be widely distributed to the public, GPs other partners to ensure the approach to spending money on preventative / reablement policies was understood as a practicable way to help improve health, while making the best use of scarce resources.

It was resolved:

- a) To endorse the Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy which had been developed and approved by the Cambridgeshire shadow Health and Wellbeing Board; and
- b) To support the County Council's role in preparing a partnership Action Plan to implement the agreed strategic priorities.

**654. INTEGRATED RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR PERIOD
ENDING 30th SEPTEMBER 2012**

Cabinet received the Integrated Resources and Performance Report for the period ending 30TH September. The Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, Councillor Count, outlined particular issues for both revenue and capital budgets.

Cabinet noted that the current forecast year-end revenue overspend was £2.5m, which represented 0.68% of the total budget, and was a reduction of £589k from that reported for the previous month. It was indicated that 142 out of 198 capital projects were forecast to be on time and budget at year end with there being no major concerns to report. The majority of those projects not on time and budget were as result of expenditure rephrasing, while others were as a result of changes to total budget, as detailed in the report.

With regard to Key Performance Indicators, of the ten indicators within the Council's basket which had targets, three were currently on target, with some of the remaining ones currently very close to achieving their target. Attention was drawn to the two indicators which currently had no targets as set out in notes 1 and 2 to the table on pages 9 and 10, as well as the work being undertaken to develop them. In relation to the indicator titled 'the proportion of repeat incidents of domestic violence in supported cases' this had to be developed carefully in order to ensure it did not in itself lead to inappropriate results. In relation to the performance indicator showing red on the number of desks to staff (actual performance 1.03 compared to the target of 0.9) it was explained although the Council was successfully closing buildings, the workforce was also reducing. In relation to the other target shown as red titled 'the proportion of customer complaints received in the month before last that were responded to within the minimum response times' it was hoped to see an improvement in the next month's figures.

Councillor Sadiq, speaking as the Leader of the Labour group, suggested that in relation to the current lack of a target on the indicator titled 'the percentage of Cambridgeshire residents aged 16-64 in employment', there was a need for an annual target to assess the spend undertaken to support small and medium size companies (SMEs). He also suggested as previously discussed that there should be a target to assess youth unemployment as part of a state of the economy report. In relation to support for SMEs he believed there was a need to be able to track the money in order to ensure it was targeted to the areas that most required economic stimulus / growth. In response the point was made that creating targets for SME's was not straightforward in that the local area was now defined as the wider Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Zone and it was therefore more appropriately a LEP function rather than a County Council function. The Leader pointed out that the Council was not involved in social engineering in what was a free market economy, but that it was involved in taking measures to help remove barriers to local firms, making reference to the procurement strategy recently endorsed by Cabinet and approved by full Council. Councillor Bates also drew attention to recent planning applications agreed in the enterprise zone which would also help lead to job creation. Councillor Count highlighted that it was sometime difficult to categorise what should be classed as a local firm, and that any measures taken in relation to removing barriers to procurement could not be at the expense of achieving best value or favouring local firms by disadvantaging national firms, especially as the latter might often contribute more to the local economy.

Responding to the report, Cabinet Members made the following points:

- Welcoming the reduction in the projected overspend on the Adult Social Care budget, given the huge pressures that the Service faced.
- That while Adult Social Care was the biggest single issue faced by all County authorities, the current performance of 76.1% against a very ambitious target of 80% for indicator titled 'the proportion of people using social care services who had chosen how their support was provided' - was much better than the performance position nationally. Councillor Curtis cited the example of another comparator authority only achieving a rate of 20%.
- The Deputy Leader highlighted that in relation to the target for responding to complaints, it needed to be accepted that some complicated complaints took longer to deal with than the laid down target. In those cases it was imperative that initial acknowledgements were sent in good time, explaining the progress and likely revised timescale for a full response.

It was resolved:

Having analysed and commented on the resources and performance information set out in the report, noting the remedial action currently being taken.

655. HUNTINGDON WEST OF TOWN CENTRE LINK ROAD

This report listed on the agenda was no longer considered to be needed and had therefore been withdrawn.

656. PROPOSAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMARTLIFE

Cabinet received a report outlining and seeking approval for the proposed creation of a SmartLIFE Limited company to be jointly owned by the County Council and Cambridge Regional College (CRC).

It was explained that although to date SmartLIFE had been very successful and was at the cutting edge on renewable energy and low carbon growth, there was an ongoing revenue cost to the Council, while the potential for expansion in the current model was limited due to the restrictions placed on a local authority, as set out in the Local Government Act 2003 (section 93). (The Act limited commercial opportunities, stipulating that any powers to trade required to be exercised through a Company)

It was therefore proposed that the best approach would be to create a Joint Venture Company. The report summarised the key elements of a business plan that had been created, demonstrating the viability of such a venture. The intention was for officers to enter into detailed discussions with CRC to draft Heads of Terms and the associated necessary company documentation, for final approval at a future Cabinet meeting.

It was resolved:

- a) to approve the principle of the creation of SmartLIFE Limited as a company jointly owned by Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridge Regional College and the proposal to develop the SmartLIFE business; and
- b) to instruct officers, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, to develop Heads of Terms and other company documentation for further consideration and decision by Cabinet prior to formal creation of the company.

657. ESTABLISHING A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL FOR SOHAM EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Cabinet received a report of the outcome of the statutory process required under the Education Act 2011 to seek an Academy sponsor for the new primary school to serve Soham, East Cambridgeshire.

Soham was currently served by two primary schools, The Weatheralls Community Primary School and St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School who in response to increased pupil demand had already expanded their provision. Despite these measures, the demand for early years and childcare and primary school places in the town had continued to increase and was forecast to rise as a result of rising birth rates and housing development. As a result, officers had identified the need for a new primary school to open in September 2013, together with an expansion of early years and childcare provision.

In order to meet the opening date of September 2013, the school design and build process had been progressed with a public consultation event in February 2012 in advance of the submission of the planning application for the new school. This was well attended and provided a clear indication that there was strong, local support for the proposals from the local community.

The report set out details of the process undertaken to invite potential Academy sponsors to submit applications to establish and run the school by 24 August 2012. Of ten initial expressions of interest received, two applications, one from the Staploe Education Trust, (SET) (currently Soham Village College Trust) and another from the Lilac Sky Schools had been received by the submission deadline date. As Lilac Sky Schools had withdrawn their application, the process had continued with the assessment of the single application from the SET, with the report setting out the key features of their application.

In line with the process approved by Cabinet, a public meeting was held on 12 September 2012 at which representatives from SET presented their proposals, with the details provided as an appendix to the report. Following on from this, a joint officer and Member Assessment Panel had met on the 27 September 2012 to assess SET's application against the criteria as set out in the School Specification Document.

The Assessment Panel was unanimous in its conclusions that the proposal was

judged to be comprehensive and robust and SET had demonstrated that they not only met the core assessment criteria, but exceeded them in some cases.

Councillor Powley as the local member spoke in support of the proposals for the school, while also highlighting highways residents concerns in relation to the position of the school, as it was located close to a major roundabout on the A142. He highlighted the need to ensure appropriate road safety measures were put in place near the school and also made reference to the fact that Kingfisher Drive was still to be adopted. Councillor Harty indicated he was aware of the residents concerns and that they were being looked into.

The Liberal Democrat Education Spokesman, Councillor Downes spoke supporting the proposal, while also expressing his concerns in relation to the following two aspects of the process in establishing a new primary school:

- a) the cumbersome, bureaucratic process involved imposed by central government and the subsequent time and cost involved for both officers and members.
- b) The growing trend for secondary school head teachers involvement in setting up primary schools and whether they had the necessary experience, as well as the potential adverse effects on their main school responsibilities while they were involved in the process.

Councillor Downes indicated he was happy to work with the administration to continue to make representations to the Coalition Government to streamline the processes, of which he had already previously made representations to David Laws the Minister of State for Schools and the Cabinet Office. Councillor Downes support was welcomed. **Action:** Councillor Harty indicated that he was also happy to make such views known as he was due to meet David Laws in November. The Leader expressed a note of caution in relation to relaxing bureaucratic processes, as this sometimes could lead to more risk exposure.

It was resolved:

- a) Endorse the Staploe Education Trust being granted approval to establish and run the new primary school to serve Soham;
- b) That the Secretary of State for Education, as the decision maker in this case, is informed of Cabinet's endorsement of the Staploe Education Trust with immediate effect.

CHANGE IN THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA

LATE REPORT

The chairman agreed to change the order of the agenda to take item 14 on the late third despatch titled "Ofsted Inspection of Arrangements for the Protection of Children" as the next item on the agenda.

As the report was a late report for decision , circulated less than five working days before the meeting, the chairman agreed to take the report under the discretion given to him under Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Reason for lateness: The report had been embargoed by OFSTED until publication on their website at 10 a.m. Friday 19th October

Reason for urgency: In order to provide Cabinet with the outcome of the recent OFSTED inspection and to present to Cabinet the required Improvement Plan for approval.

658. OFSTED INSPECTION OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Cabinet received a report on the outcome of the OfSTED Inspection of Arrangements for the Protection of Children which had taken place between 10th and 20th September and sought comments on the improvement plan developed in response to the findings of the inspection

Cambridgeshire had been one of the first authorities nationally to be inspected under the new framework which has a different scope and methodology to previous Ofsted inspections of Children's Services. The inspection was carried out primarily through the scrutiny of casework and practice and had taken place at the midpoint of a major transformation of the model of social work practice in Cambridgeshire. The inspection judgement was that the overall effectiveness of Cambridgeshire's arrangements for the protection of children was inadequate. The detailed grading in each judgement area within the Ofsted framework was:

- Overall Effectiveness - inadequate
- Quality of Practice - inadequate
- Effectiveness of Practice - inadequate
- Leadership and Governance - adequate

The inspection report highlights a great many strengths in practice in early help and preventative services and in many key areas of social work practice. The report recognises the improvements that are taking place in Children's Social Care through the Social Work: Working for Families change programme and the introduction of the Unit Model. However the report also highlighted key weaknesses that had resulted in the "inadequate" gradings in respect of practice and therefore overall effectiveness. A specific issue in respect of a former temporary team was of significant concern. The inspectors were critical of the pace and rigour that was being given to the remedial actions to address the concerns. The overall finding that social work practice had been unacceptable within this team was not disputed. The inspectors also identified variability in practice elsewhere in the County and variability in recording.

The inspectors assessed the leadership and governance of services as being adequate and the Council's ambitious leadership was acknowledged, reflecting the Social Work: Working for Families transformation programme and the "determination to change traditional social work practice through the implementation of social work units". The inspectors noted the investment that was being made in staff. Senior managers were considered to have a good understanding of the strengths and areas of development of services and changed was described as being well led with staff morale being high. Performance management arrangements were found to be firmly in place.

The draft inspection findings were reported to all CYPS staff the day after the inspection finished to enable prompt action to be taken in drawing up an improvement plan and addressing the issues identified by the inspection. The report identified eight areas for improvement which were included within the improvement plan which is attached at Appendix 2. It targeted action at both the Ofsted identified actions and those issues identified by officers as impacting on the effectiveness of the Council's child protection arrangements. The inspection report contains five areas of improvement that require immediate action and the report set out a progress update against each of them.

The improvement plan included a range of focussed actions to improve the Council's arrangements for the protection of children. However, it was highlighted that the Council was also rolling out a major transformation through the Social Work: Working for Families programme and the inspectors had noted the improved responses to need that the social work units were making, the good standard of unit meetings, the clinician role was described as providing a valuable additional perspective and the systemic approach that has been introduced was seen as providing a strong focus on the child and family. The Inspectors also stated that "Action to implement the new systemic model of social work practice had already had an impact. As this programme was a key element of the Council's improvement journey and no change in direction is proposed.

Also highlighted was the detail of the Improvement Board which had been established to oversee the delivery of the improvement plan with the board due to meet the inspectors the next day. The intention was to report progress to the CYP Overview and scrutiny committee as well as an item being included at the next Members seminar in November.

The following Members spoke:

- Councillor Sadiq while praising the officers for the recognised successes in what was a very complex and difficult area, sought assurances that variability of practice would be dealt with and also that in relation to the temporary team which had been highlighted as having problems, that should a similar problem occur, managers would undertake earlier intervention measures. He also highlighted that he had previously expressed concern regarding whether there would be sufficient senior management capacity as a result of the executive director heading up a unified team involving both adult social care and children and young Peoples functions. He considered that this needed closer scrutiny, as with the continuing transformation agenda and people joining and leaving the Council he still required assurance regarding management capacity. In response the Leader indicated that it would be discussed further at the Group Leaders meeting later in the week while highlighting the need not to raise unnecessary fears. In response to being asked to explain the timeline of the team in question the Executive Director Children and Young People's services and Adult Social Care explained that the temporary team had been formed in May and when problems were raised in June steps were taken to disband the team, which had taken place by August. *(Note following the meeting: this date quoted was incorrect and should have been given as the team actually having been disbanded by July)*

- Councillor Bourke Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group made the point that protecting children was the top priority for the service and making reference to paragraph 15 of the report wished to receive assurance that the remedial action referred to address the failures, as highlighted in the paragraph, were being undertaken. He also stressed the fundamental importance of record keeping in relation to child protection. His Group would be looking closely to ensure that such problems did not reoccur and ensure the recognised poor record keeping identified was addressed. He supported the wide remit of the improvement plan, while also reiterating Councillor Sadiq's concerns regarding management capacity. He also highlighted his understanding that when the unit model was drawn up, that the intention was for each unit to deal with 30-35 children. He now understood some were dealing with as many as 50 children and that 45 appeared to be the average, which he believed was too many to be effective, coupled with the loss of many experienced staff, resulting in junior staff having to act up. He requested that Cabinet consider an amendment to the plan to review the capacity of all the social the units /social work teams.

In response to the issues raised, Councillor Curtis indicated that record keeping had been a long standing issue as a result of IT problems which had not yet been solved, but hoped that the report would ensure that the IT issues were finally addressed. In terms of the joint approach to Adult Social Care and Children and Young People's services, this was not an issue for Cabinet Members as this was becoming accepted practice in many other authorities and the continued roll out of the unit model would improve service delivery and child protection arrangements. It was confirmed that all staff had received training before becoming part of the unit model and therefore there had been an improvement in the quality / competency of staff when working within the revised structure.

Adrian Loades Executive Director Children and Young People and Adult Social Care and Niki Clemo, Service Director, Children's Social Care were thanked for the honesty of the report with the Leader indicating that he had been impressed by the fact that following the initial staff briefing that "although at the beginning staff had been downcast by the end they had been upbeat and ready to roll up their sleeves" to ensure the service moved forward and that the unit model approach should be a success.

The Leader of the Council indicated that he would not wish to see a team made up again wholly of outside agency /temporary staff and that if there were capacity issues it would be better to disperse existing staff to deal with issues. The Cabinet Member for CYPS was able to provide reassurance that as workloads were being reviewed on a weekly basis, due to this regular monitoring, if further temporary capacity was required, this could be undertaken through redeploying existing staff or the recruitment of agency staff working alongside permanent staff and would not involve the setting up team solely made up agency staff. The feedback received was that while teams were very busy, numbers were manageable.

It was resolved:

- a) to agree to consider and comment on the report arising from the Ofsted Inspection of Arrangements for the Protection of Children; and

- b) to consider and comment on the draft improvement plan and to agree that it set out an appropriate response to the Ofsted inspection report

658. CORPORATE PARENTING FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE'S LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Cabinet received a report informing it of the revised Corporate Parenting Strategy 2012 – 2015 and the terms of reference for the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board and Working Group. The overall aim of the strategy was to reinforce the corporate responsibility of the whole organisation, its elected members and staff and partner agencies, to achieve the goals for Looked After Children.

It was explained that Corporate Parenting needed to be a whole Council responsibility and all members, alongside the Lead Member and Director for Children's Services had statutory responsibilities for Cambridgeshire's Looked After Children to ensure they received the best possible service from all sections of the County Council. The Cabinet Member for CYP was looking for all Members of the Council to consider how they could fulfil their corporate responsibilities to champion the interests of Looked After Children in Cambridgeshire.

In terms of delivering better outcomes for looked after children and care leavers the report provided detail in relation to the following four key areas for Corporate parenting for the next three years:

- Education ensuring that looked after children fulfil their educational potential
- Promoting and providing Employment opportunities
- Promoting health and well being.
- Accommodation and Housing - preparation for independence and providing a safe and secure home

It was reported that the Strategy was being led by the multi-agency Corporate Parenting Partnership Board, chaired by Councillor David Brown, Cabinet Lead for CYPS. Implementation was to be through the Corporate Parenting Working Group via the Corporate Parenting action plan which was currently being developed. The Corporate Parenting Partnership Board would report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to the Children in Care Council ("Voices Matter") on a six monthly basis. The Terms of Reference for the structure, including reporting arrangements were- attached as appendix 2 of the report. The Cabinet Member for CYP supported the need for cross party representation on the board.

Councillor Downes spoke supporting what he considered to be an important strategy. In terms of advice received that it was not necessary for the board to include cross party representation he argued the case that allowing members from other parties would help provide different experience / viewpoints. He put himself forward for consideration to serve on the board due to his experience of having been the chairman of the scrutiny working party and member panel set up to look at the virtual school. The Leader of the Council whose gift it was to appoint to the board agreed to give the issue further consideration. Councillor Downes also raised concerns regarding national research suggesting virtual schools had not been effective which he did not believe was the experience in Cambridgeshire. In response he received reassurance that in Cambridgeshire it had been very

successful and there were no plans to change it and that it was still considered to have a key role going forward. However it was also important to accept that it should not be seen the only answer to looked after children. The key to success being the day to day involvement of schools, and this message needed to be reinforced to both maintained and academy schools.

Councillor Bates expressed concern that currently as written, the housing representative only had co-opted status and as he believed that housing was equally as important as education, asked whether the role could be revisited to give the member more status. The Cabinet Member for CYP agreed to look at the status of the Housing representative again.

The Leader expressed concern regarding paragraph 2.4 of the report stating that the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board would report to the overview and scrutiny committee on a six monthly basis, as it would not be appropriate for the Executive to dictate the Overview and Scrutiny's work programme. In response it was clarified that Overview and scrutiny had asked for the regular update.

It was resolved:

- a) To agree to endorse the Strategy and the terms of reference for the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board and Working Group.
- b) To agree to promote Corporate Parenting for Members by ensuring Members take up visiting roles for Looked After Children's Services; and
- c) That the Leader would give further consideration to widening cross party member involvement on the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board.

659. NARROWING THE GAP STRATEGY

This report sought Cabinet's approval to the Narrowing the Gap Strategy document attached as an appendix to the report. While children in Cambridgeshire generally attain well at school, there was an underlying pattern of lower achievement and slow progress for pupils in many of the more vulnerable groups, such as those with special educational needs or those in receipt of free school meals. Attainment for these vulnerable groups was often worse in Cambridgeshire than nationally, and in some cases dramatically so.

With narrowing the gap in education and health outcomes for the County's vulnerable children and young people being a key priority for Children and Young People's Services the Strategy and an associated Action Plan were integral to this priority. The Strategy outlined the activities that would be led by the local authority, and also proposes action that should be considered by schools, early years settings and post 16 providers. An Action Plan has been produced which focused on the role of the local authority in supporting attainment. It has been developed across Children and Young People's Services, with clear roles for each Service in CYPS and also Adult Learning services.

It was reported that targets had been set for the overall attainment of the following four priority groups in 2013 and 2014:

- Communication and language skills in the early years and at key stage 1 with a key focus on boys and children in receipt of free school meals (FSM)
- Young people who are looked after and young people who are in receipt of FSM, in years 9-11 (Key stages 3-4) to achieve their aspirations and to plan progression into Post 16 Learning.
- Progress and attainment of children who had English as an additional language
- Progress of children with special education needs (SEND) in mainstream schools and settings.

The over-arching target for this Strategy was to ensure that by 2015, attainment of children and young people growing up in Cambridgeshire within the above four priority groups attained at least as well, and in most cases better, than their peers nationally.

Councillor Downes spoke welcoming and giving his support to the strategy. Making reference to the introduction on page 4 of the document which set out the poor performance of the County regarding the attainment gap between pupils in receipt of FSM and their peers, he considered that it would have been helpful for analysis to have been provided to try to explain the scale and significance of the gap and what it was considered could be done to address it. There was also no attempt to ascertain the effectiveness of the interventions suggested or whether one teaching method which worked in one area would work in another area of the County. He did not believe that teachers in Cambridgeshire were not interested in challenging underperformance of children from low income backgrounds and wondered whether a reason might be that the most able children were so well supported that their raised attainment had contributed to widening the gap. In response to this point officers were able to state categorically that the gap was not due to high attaining pupils as they only contributed a small percentage to the overall total.

Councillor Downes concluded that with the growth of / numbers of schools converting to academies, the County Council could no longer require schools to do anything. He stated that many of the interventions suggested required money and he did not believe that the County Council had the money or the necessary power to fulfil such an ambitious programme.

Officers were asked to provide more detail in relation to the reasons for the gap as raised by Councillor Downes. In response it was explained that there was not one particular factor but a number, including changing demographics, complacency of aspirations in some communities that needed challenging, as well as in the past, some staff not having the necessary focus to accelerate learning. There was a need to share more widely different teaching techniques, that may have helped in one area and that could be applied in another.

In relation to the gap, Councillor Curtis wished to make very clear something that was silent in the report, namely the historical inadequate level of funding given to Cambridgeshire by successive Governments which had clearly impacted locally on the ability to provide adequate resourcing for the identified priority groups. Councillor Count also supported the contention that this was an area that still

needed to be pursued nationally in terms of seeking fairer funding for the County. He praised that fact that the targets being set were very challenging as the officers believed that they were achievable and that higher achievement targets could be set later.

Councillor Tierney supported what was an excellent strategy but from conversations he had had with teachers suggested that there was a need to champion the improvement of skills to help recognise those with talent early on. In response, Councillor Harty indicated that there was already a legal requirement to identify the gifted and talented in each school.

In response to a query from the Leader as to why the strategy was only for a two years duration when most strategies were five years, it was explained that this was to ensure swift and immediate action for rapid improvement and to then be in a position to set further more stretching targets in 2015-16. The timescale also reflected the turbulent time currently, with changes to Key Stage 2 and further changes expected from the Government in relation to Key Stage 4.

It was resolved:

To agree the Narrowing the Gap Strategy set out as an appendix to the report.

660. DRAFT CABINET AGENDA – 27th NOVEMBER 2012

The chairman agreed to take the draft agenda as a late item to enable Cabinet to receive a more up to date version as the Cabinet forward plan changed on a very regular basis and to also comply with the requirement for Cabinet to receive advance notice of reports expected for the next meeting to help facilitate forward planning.

Members noted the draft agenda for the Cabinet meeting to be held on 27th November.

Chairman
27th November 2012