

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 19th January 2016

Time: 2.00pm – 4.26pm

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

Apologies: Councillor J Wisson, Mr P Rossi (Roman Catholic diocesan representative) and Mrs P Stanton (Church of England diocesan representative)

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Chairwoman noted, with sadness, the recent death of Councillor Steve Van de Kerkhove who had been a member of the Children and Young People Committee since its inception. The Committee stood in silence in memory of Councillor Van de Kerkhove.

138. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Committee members. However under item 6 (Bottisham Multi Academy Trust's Proposed Sponsorship of the Netherhall School) Councillors Shuter and Taylor, who were speaking as local members, declared non-statutory disclosable interests in the item and having made representations, left the meeting

139. MINUTES 8th DECEMBER 2015 AND ACTION LOG

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

The Action Log was noted.

During discussion on the Action Log:-

- Item 123 – it was requested that the written explanation to Councillor Leeke on why the number of Statements of SEN/ECHP had dropped 12 months ago should be circulated to all members of the Committee. **Action required.**
- Item 129 – Councillor Bywater commented that he had not yet been provided with a written explanation on why there had been an underspend on the budget for Early Years Access Funding in 2011-12. **Action required.**
- Item 132 – it was requested that the briefing on Trinity School be circulated to all members and substitutes of the Committee. **Action required.**

140. PETITIONS

No petitions had been received.

141. REVIEW OF POLICIES AND WORKING PRACTICES IN RESPONSE TO DEMOGRAPHIC PRESSURES

The Committee received a report which set out proposed policy revisions to inform the specifications for new schools and the expansion of existing schools. The revisions were proposed in order to ensure that the Local Authority (LA) was best able to fulfil its statutory duty to provide sufficient early years and school places in response to demographic changes. Members' attention was particularly drawn to the table in paragraph 6 of the report which summarised the current position and the proposed policy provisions in response to demographic pressures.

During discussion, Members

- Emphasised that the revised number of school places shown should be regarded as the maximum and not the norm.
- Noted that paragraph 2.1.5 of the report suggested that the case for two sites each able to accommodate a 4 form of entry (FE) school would be more palatable for developers, but commented that the LA should be more concerned with what was right for the local community, the school and its pupils.
- Suggested that the proposal in paragraph 2.1.6 should be amended by the substitution of the word "could" for "should".
- Expressed a preference to retain the wording in the existing policy (paragraph 1.6) in so far as it referred to considering size on a case by case basis and to new schools having defined catchment areas informed by the LA's Sustainable Travel Strategy.
- Indicated some reservation at the proposal for the first primary school in any new community to serve the 2 – 11 age range given the difference in size and age between the youngest and oldest pupils in that range.
- Expressed concern at the proposal to increase the maximum primary school size from 3FE to 4FE referring to research which indicated that children with special educational needs and those from disadvantaged backgrounds performed less well in large schools.
- Commented that there was no ideal school size and that the appropriate size depended on the location, local community and internal organisation of the particular school concerned. There could be benefits in developing larger schools, however it was important for appropriate advice to be obtained when designing a school, both on structure and organisation, in order to overcome any disadvantages of operating a larger school. For example, it was possible through good design and internal organisation to overcome the concerns expressed earlier regarding the mix of the youngest and oldest children in a primary school on the same site.
- Noted that the new policy was intended for future new schools and school expansions and that Ermine Street Academy at Alconbury Weald, due to open in September 2016, which had been planned as a 3FE school, would not be affected.

In response to Members' comments, the Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services emphasised that the policy was designed to provide the LA with more flexibility in the provision of school places. The number of places specified in the policy was not intended to set new standards and to automatically provide 4FE in primary schools, rather it was intended to prescribe the maximum number of places in order to provide greater flexibility in responding to local circumstances and pressures. It was believed that many of the disadvantages identified with operating larger schools could be addressed by good design and planning. The Executive Director confirmed that, in

updating the policy document, officers would have regard to the comments raised by Members during discussion.

As an amendment to recommendation (d), it was moved and duly seconded that the words “up to a maximum of” be deleted. Upon being put to the vote the amendment was carried.

It was resolved, with one abstention:

to endorse the recommended policies set out in sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 (summarised in section 6) to:

- (a) establish new primary schools with up to 840 places;
- (b) expand existing primary schools to up to 840 places;
- (c) establish the first primary school in a new community/development for 2-11 year olds;
- (d) establish/expand a secondary school up to 1800 places; and
- (e) provide ancillary facilities for mainstream pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) as part of the design specification for new schools.

142. SCHOOLS FUNDING 2016/17

The Committee received a report which advised of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations published by the Department for Education (DfE) on 17 December 2015 and sought approval of the local funding formula for primary and secondary schools as set out in the table at Appendix A to the report.

With reference to paragraph 2.2 – 2.4 of the report, the Strategic Finance Manager (Children’s and Schools), reported verbally on discussions at the meeting of the Cambridgeshire Schools Forum on 15th January 2016 in relation to the use of new Income Deprivation affecting Children Index (IDACI) data. The DfE had issued revised IDACI datasets in December and some schools had been adversely affected by the changes. The Schools Forum had voted in favour of applying, subject to DfE approval, the previous year’s IDACI data with a view to providing a smoother transition for those schools most adversely impacted by the revisions. A disapplication request had accordingly been submitted for permission to apply the previous year’s IDACI data for those schools most adversely affected by the changes. The Committee was requested to endorse the proposed approach to the use of the previous year’s IDACI data, as recommended by the Schools Forum and subject to the approval of the DfE.

During discussion:

- In response to a question, officers confirmed that whilst the Schools Forum had voted to use the previous year’s IDACI data, ultimately it was a decision for this Committee and was subject to DfE approval.
- It was confirmed that whilst funding levels for schools had been protected, no provision had been made for an inflationary uplift, resulting in a real term decrease in school budgets.
- The Strategic Finance Manager (Children’s and Schools) was commended on his professional support to the Schools Forum

The Chairwoman, sought and gained the consent of the Committee to the inclusion of the following addition at the end of the recommendation set out in the report:

“and, in particular, to endorse use of the previous year’s Income Deprivation affecting Children Index (IDACI) data, subject to Department for Education approval.”

It was resolved:

to approve the local schools funding formula, prior to submission to the Education Funding Agency (EFA), **and, in particular, to endorse use of the previous year’s Income Deprivation affecting Children Index (IDACI) data, subject to Department for Education approval.**

143. BOTTISHAM MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST’S PROPOSED SPONSORSHIP OF THE NETHERHALL SCHOOL

The Committee received a report regarding the funding strategy for Bottisham Multi Academy Trust’s (BMAT) proposed sponsorship of The Netherhall School in Cambridge. In introducing the report, the Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services advised that the financial projections contained in the paper originally published had been updated. A copy of the report containing the updated figures had been circulated.

The Executive Director highlighted the background to the proposal, noting that The Netherhall School had been judged as “Requires improvement” following the Ofsted inspection in 2014. The Local Authority (LA) had commissioned Bottisham Village College, judged “outstanding” by Ofsted, to provide support for The Netherhall School. The support had been highly effective with a positive impact on both standards of education and the school’s financial position. In January 2015, the Governing Body of The Netherhall School had voted to become a sponsored academy and subsequently BMAT had been selected as the preferred sponsor. As part of their due diligence exercise, Bottisham had raised concerns with the LA about potential liabilities going forward and intensive discussions had taken place since then. The amount of liability had decreased from that shown in the original report and the projected deficit had now reduced from £200k to £34k at the time of conversion. The projected deficit for 2016/17 and 2017/18 was £650k depending on final student numbers. Funding of £500k had been approved by the DfE resulting in an estimated funding gap of £134k - £184k. The LA was responsible for writing off the school’s deficit at the point of conversion (estimated at £34k) leaving a final gap of between £100k and £150k. It was proposed to meet the funding gap from a combination of in year revenue underspend and reserves given the improvement in Children, Families and Adults outturn position. It was further proposed to retain £50k depending on the final number of students on the roll in the October 2016 census. Officers were confident that this proposal would secure the future of The Netherhall School and the finances of both the school and the LA.

The Committee then received representations from two Local Members:

- Councillor Shuter

Councillor Shuter spoke both as a Local Member and a Director of BMAT and expressed his strong support for the proposals in the recommendations. He emphasised the hard work and effort that the Executive Principal of BMAT, the Acting Principal of The Netherhall School and their teams had put into turning around both performance and the finances of the school. Councillor Shuter referred to the most recent Ofsted inspection report that highlighted the improvements in pupil achievement and in closing the attainment gap, since the school had been working in partnership with the new sponsor. He accepted that

pupil numbers were challenging but, given the growth agenda, was confident that numbers would rise. Councillor Shuter expressed his confidence that this was the right way forward for the school and urged the Committee to set aside any ideological views on the principle of academy conversions and to support the recommendations in the report.

In response to questions from Members, Councillor Shuter:

- Commented that parents appeared to be supportive of the proposal.
- Noted that parents of children at Bottisham Village College, whilst originally having some reservations, now also seemed supportive of the proposal.

Having noted his non-statutory disclosable interest, Councillor Shuter then withdrew from the meeting.

- Councillor Taylor

Councillor Taylor spoke in her capacity as a Local Member, noting also that she was a parent of a student at The Netherhall School. Councillor Taylor highlighted the improvements in performance and closing the attainment gap as evidenced in the Ofsted report. She further commented that parents had demonstrated their confidence by supporting the proposed conversion to academy status under the sponsorship of BMAT. Whilst recognising the need for the LA to make best use of public funding, Councillor Taylor urged the Committee to approve the recommendation in order to continue the progress at The Netherhall School and to secure its future success.

Councillor Taylor then responded to questions from Members. In particular, she confirmed that parental engagement at Netherhall appeared very effective, both on the proposed academy conversion and also more generally.

Having noted her non-statutory disclosable interest, Councillor Taylor then withdrew from the meeting.

Kate Evans, Executive Principal of BMAT then addressed the Committee. Mrs Evans:-

- Highlighted the challenging nature of the task faced by Bottisham when first providing temporary leadership to The Netherhall School, with a projected deficit of £1m for March 2016, rising to £1.9m in 2018.
- Explained how BMAT had responded to the financial challenges by implementing cost saving strategies and restructuring to reduce the deficit.
- Commented on the outstanding leadership provided by BMAT evidenced by the success achieved in improving educational performance and closing the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils in the school and other pupils nationally.
- Emphasised BMAT's commitment to seeing through the transformation of The Netherhall School.
- Recognised the need to increase school numbers.
- Suggested that it was not reasonable for the Trust to bear the costs of the deficit accrued prior to conversion.
- Spoke of her confidence that The Netherhall School would develop into an outstanding school.

During questions:-

- A Member referred to the opening of the Trumpington School and the potential impact on pupil numbers at Netherhall. In response, Mrs Evans explained the anticipated approach to increasing pupil numbers, including developing relationships with primary schools and working on transition arrangements. It was acknowledged that a favourable Ofsted judgement would also assist in increasing pupil numbers.
- An explanation was sought for the proposed increase in the deficit to £650k over the next two years. Mrs Evans pointed out that this was due to legacy of lower pupil numbers. Once pupils had been placed in a secondary school it was unlikely that they would change schools and thus the current cohort needed to work their way through the school and a focus was therefore needed on seeking to increase pupil numbers transitioning the school from primaries.
- With reference to paragraph 2.1, Mrs Evans noted that whilst it had been an original aspiration to enhance senior leadership capacity, benchmarking had indicated a need to reduce staffing expenditure and restructuring had therefore taken place.
- The Strategic Finance Manager (Children's and Families) confirmed that two separate disapplication requests had been made to the DfE; the first to allocate up to £500k of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) carry forward to support the school and the second to request the allocation of up to a further £500k. The DfE had approved the first request but not the second. It was confirmed that if the first tranche of DSG had not been used to support the school it would have been retained in a contingency to meet other DSG demands arising through the year.
- It was confirmed that BMAT had received funding for their role in supporting The Netherhall School but that this did not fully compensate for the work undertaken.

During discussion, Members:

- With reference to paragraph 2.13, received confirmation that the Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services, had delegated authority to review CFA earmarked reserves but that any decision falling outside his delegated thresholds would need to be referred to the Children and Young People Committee.
- Noted that the final payment would depend on the number of students on the roll in the October 2016 census. There was a sliding scale of thresholds and officers had budgeted on the basis of the upper limit of the threshold and were therefore confident the sum earmarked would be sufficient.
- Suggested that this approach could be used as a template to support failing schools in future. In response, the Executive Director commented that, whilst the Council retained a school improvement service, its approach now was generally to seek to broker arrangements between schools to drive up performance.
- Concurred that there was a need to seek to increase parental engagement in the education of their children. It was agreed that officers should look at how the Council might better support parental engagement, reviewing research and best practice, as appropriate. **Action required.**
- Remarked that the projected funding gap appeared to have decreased from £300 - £350k to £134 - £184k since publication of the original report and sought an assurance that there would not be further changes in the projections. In response it was explained that the original figure represented the deficit as at September 2015. The figures now presented represented the most up to date projections and officers were confident in the projection for the deficit as at the point of conversion.

- Noted that the liability would remain regardless of who sponsored the school and would be the responsibility of the LA if it remained a maintained school.
- Expressed concern that the Committee's decision should not represent a precedent for other schools.

An amendment was moved and duly seconded to insert the words "without setting a precedent for other schools" after the word "agree" in the first line of the recommendation. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment was carried.

It was resolved unanimously:

to agree, without setting a precedent for other schools, the additional spend of between £100k and £150k of budget to secure Bottisham Multi Academy Trust's (BMAT) sponsorship of The Netherhall School, in addition to the estimated £34k that the Local Authority (LA) is required to spend to clear The Netherhall School's deficit at the point of conversion to a sponsored academy.

144. ALL AGE CARERS STRATEGY 2016 - 2020

The Committee received a report inviting consideration of the All Age Carers Strategy 2016 – 2020, a copy of which was set out at Appendix A to the report. The strategy set out the Council's approach to supporting carers in Cambridgeshire. In introducing the report, the Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services explained that the scope of the strategy had been extended to include parent carers and young carers.

The strategy had been considered and supported at the meeting of the Adults Committee held on 12 January 2016.

Noting the indication within the Strategy that young carers were likely to have lower attendance and attainment than their peers, a Member asked whether this was also the case for peers from the same deprivation background. The Executive Director understood this to be the case but agreed to confirm this and report back to the Member in question. **Action required.**

The Chairwoman indicated that it would be helpful for the Committee to receive a report on young carers and, in particular, the identification of young carers. **Action required.**

The Chairwoman sought, and gained, the agreement of Members to vary the first recommendation to indicate the Committee's support for the direction of travel within the Strategy.

It was resolved to:

1. Support the direction of travel in the All Age Carers Strategy 2016 – 2020.
2. Delegate authority to the Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services to approve the strategy, which has also been presented to the Adults Committee, following discussion with the Chairman of the Adults Committee and the Chairwoman of the Children and Young People Committee.

145. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – NOVEMBER 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 November 2015. The report was for the whole of CFA services and as such, not all the services were the responsibility of this Committee.

The Executive Director, Children, Families and Adults Services reported verbally that at the end of December there was a projected underspend of £88k across the whole of CFA.

It was reported that officers were reviewing the presentation of performance in respect of Looked After Children with a view to presenting figures relating to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children separately. Members were reminded that Government funding was available for the support and care of such children.

It was resolved:

To review and comment on the report.

146. SERVICE COMMITTEE REVIEW OF DRAFT REVENUE BUSINESS PLANNING PROPOSALS FOR 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 also provided a summary of the latest available results from the budget consultation.

The Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services introduced the report, highlighting that the overall impact of the Local Government Finance Settlement had been to worsen the impact on the Council by approximately £5m. Officers were working through the implications of this reduction, but it was understood that there would still be scope to reverse a limited number of the savings proposals. There had also been clarity on public health funding with confirmation that the ring fence for such funding would be retained but that funding for public health would be reduced. This was likely to have some impact for Children and Young People's services, most notably the Personal Health and Social Education service.

The Executive Director then reminded Members of the savings proposals, as set out in paragraph 5 of the report submitted to the Committee on 8th December 2015 (a copy of which had been re-circulated to Members).

With reference to paragraph 2.9 of the report now submitted, the Executive Director highlighted those savings which it was proposed could be reduced or removed.

During discussion:

- It was confirmed that the cost of providing support for The Netherhall School did not impact on the savings proposals now before Members and would be met from revenue underspends and reserves as outlined earlier in the meeting.
- In response to a question as to the scope for retaining the rural youth work provision, officers reported on discussions on-going with partners with a view to retaining Connections bus services. Reference also was made to the proposal to put in place youth and community co-ordinators who would have access to a small

commissioning budget.

- A Member highlighted a reference in the report to the statutory expectation for the delivery of carers advice and support to sit with schools, rather than the Local Authority and questioned if this was an additional burden falling upon schools. Members were advised that schools were aware of their statutory responsibility in this area and it was noted that some schools were working collaboratively on delivery of careers advice and guidance.
- It was noted that vacancies arising in Children's Centres would not be filled in order to contribute towards the savings target.
- It was acknowledged that the paper circulated to members of the Committee on bursaries for FE students had been valuable and, as previously agreed by the Committee, the Council should promote a campaign so that young people were aware of the availability of bursaries.
- Members noted that whilst the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children could not be separated from other looked after children in the statutory key performance indicator, it was intended to do this for the purposes of the performance management report.
- A Member commented that that slippage on a capital project in his division was due to the lack of tenders from electrical contractors.
- The Committee was reminded that the main savings proposals for Children's Centres were earmarked for 2017/18 thereby allowing time for exploring alternative ways of working and the scope for greater alignment and integration with a range of other County Council and partner services, as well as options for income generation. It was suggested that an early update should be presented to the Committee on progress in this area and procurement proposals and following officer advice, agreed that an item should be added to the Committee agenda plan for May 2016. **Action required.**

As an amendment to recommendation b) it was moved by the Chairwoman and seconded by Councillor Leeke, that the word "endorse" be deleted and replaced by "agree to forward". Upon being put to the vote, the amendment was carried on the casting vote of the Chairwoman.

It was resolved to:-

1. Note the overview and context provided for the 2016/17 to 2020/21 Business Plan proposals for the services, updated since the last report to the Committee in December.
2. Comment on the draft revenue savings proposals that are within the remit of the Children and Young People Committee, including the suggested reductions in savings listed in sections 3.6.3 to 3.6.5 and agree to forward them to the General Purposes Committee as part of consideration for the Council's overall Business Plan.
3. Note the changes to the capital programme in paragraph 4.1 and endorse them to the General Purposes Committee.
4. Note the ongoing stakeholder consultation and discussions with partners and service users regarding emerging business planning proposals.
5. Endorse the proposed Key Performance Indicators as part of the Strategic Framework, alongside the 2016-21 Business Plan.

147. 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.

With respect to the agenda plan at Appendix A, Members:-

- Were reminded that the Committee had agreed to add an item on Children's Centres to the agenda plan for the meeting of the Committee to be held on 24th May 2016.
- Noted that the item on "Review of Primary Provision in Cambridge" had been moved from 8th March to 24th May 2016.
- Were informed of the addition of "Proposal to Expand Fordham CE Primary School" to the agenda plan for the meeting on 24th May 2016.

The Committee received updates from Councillor Downes on his attendances at meetings of the Cambridgeshire Music Hub; the Accelerating Achievement Group and the School Improvement Board. With respect to the Cambridgeshire Music Hub, Councillor Downes highlighted the pressures facing the development of music in the County and following discussion, the Committee agreed to request the submission of a report on the Cambridgeshire Music Service to a future meeting. **Action required.**

Members noted that meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel and the Child Poverty Group would be held in February.

With respect to the training plan at Appendix B, the Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services undertook to liaise with Heads of Service with a view to identifying dates for training highlighted in the plan. **Action required.** In the meantime, Members were encouraged to contact lead officers if they wished to attend any of the training identified in the plan or if they wished to suggest any further subjects for training.

It was resolved:

1. To note the agenda plan as set out at Appendix A and the oral update provided at the Committee meeting.
2. To note the oral updates from representatives on outside bodies.
3. To note the Committee's Training Plan, as set out at Appendix B.

148. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was resolved to exclude the press and public from the meeting during the consideration of the following report on the grounds that it was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as it refers to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

149. PROCUREMENT OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND ADULTS SERVICES

The Committee received a report regarding the outcome of a recent procurement exercise for the Information Management systems to support the Children, Families and Adults Directorate.

It was resolved:

1. To delegate to the Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services, in discussion with the Chairwoman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee, the final decision of the contract to award to the contractor identified in the submitted report for a Local Authority Early Years and Education Management System.
2. To agree the contract award to the contractor identified in the submitted report for the Children's Case Management and Social Care System and the Adults Social Care System.
3. To note the planned implementation of the new systems over the period 2016 to 2018.

Chairwoman