

Children and Young People Committee: Minutes

Date: Tuesday 17 January 2023

Time: 2.00pm – 6.40pm

Venue: Red Kite Room, New Shire Hall, Alconbury Weald PE28 4YE

Present: Councillors D Ambrose Smith, A Bradnam, A Bulat, C Daunton, B Goodliffe (Chair), J Gowing, S Hoy [to 18.22pm], J King, M McGuire, K Prentice [to 17.53pm], A Sharp [to 17.10pm], P Slatter, M King, S Taylor and F Thompson.

Co-opted Members:

Canon A Read, Church of England Diocese of Ely
Dr A Stone, Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia

118. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hay, substituted by Councillor Gowing.

Councillor McGuire declared an interest at Item 8: Cambridgeshire Outdoor Centres as a former employee at Grafham Water. Minute 125 below refers. Councillor McGuire took part in the debate, but did not vote on this item.

119. Minutes – 29 November 2022 and Action Log

The minutes of the meeting on 29 November 2022 were approved as an accurate record, subject to the correction of the meeting date.

The action log was reviewed and an update was requested on the Wisbech School development. **Action required**

120. Petitions and public questions

Two public questions were received. These were from Matt Robinson and Sarah Edis and related to agenda item 4: Great Gidding Church of England Primary School. The questions were heard under that agenda item.

There were no petitions.

Decisions

121. Great Gidding Church of England Primary School

Officers stated that the Council had a proud history around its small schools and aspired to keep schools in local communities and to meet parental preference unless

educational outcomes would be impaired. Great Gidding Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary was the smallest school in the county. Pupil numbers at the school had dropped from 75 to 47 in the last 10 years, and 75% of the pupils on roll in October 2022 lived outside the school's catchment area. Demographic forecasts were reviewed annually and were generally accurate to within 6%, and the current demographic forecasts for Great Gidding indicated that it was not viable in the longer term. Data around new housing developments, catchment and live birth data had all been taken into account in reaching this conclusion. Officers judged that the Council could not wait to act until the school was unviable or this would impact negatively on the children attending. The governing body had looked at many options over the years to secure the school's future, including joining another school or joining the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust, but none of these options had been successful. The school was trying to recruit a headteacher, but had so far been unsuccessful. A highly respected interim headteacher had been brought in, but this was placing pressure on staff to deliver a full curriculum. When the roll dropped below 40 pupils the school would need to move from three class to a two-class structure, and there were concerns around the impact of this on educational outcomes. An Ofsted inspection had taken place in November and the outcome of this was pending publication, but a number of challenges had been identified that would require a follow-up visit.

Officers referenced the positive feedback about the school they had received, and were mindful of the potential impact on the local community. If the committee approved the consultation on the potential closure of the school, all parents would be offered the opportunity to meet with officers. Officers judged that there were sufficient places available elsewhere if a decision to close the school was taken, and that should this be the case support to parents could include looking at the provision of transport in accordance with the Council's statutory duties. Officers emphasised that the Council was not permitted to subsidise the school. If the consultation was agreed, the results of the Stage 1 consultation process would be brought back to the committee to be considered. Officers were also working on a wider strategy in relation to small schools.

Two public questions were heard. A copy of the questions submitted and the Chair's response are attached at Appendix 1.

In presenting his question, Matt Robinson questioned how the decision could be justified on anything but economic factors. He expressed concern that children would be adversely impacted anyway if Great Gidding closed, and described how much the school offered to the local community. He did not believe that there were any spaces available locally, and felt that a desktop exercise around capacity was not adequate. He felt there had been a lack of engagement and was distressed and frustrated by this. Mr Robinson accepted this was a difficult decision, but felt that consulting on possible closure would make the school's situation worse as it would discourage prospective parents. He expressed disappointment with the situation, and felt that closure of the school should be the last option to be considered.

In response to questions of clarification from committee members, Mr Robinson:

- Commented that Great Gidding had not been his chosen school, and he had not known it existed. His child was in a mixed age class which he saw as positive as

they were thriving and growing their skills. He expressed concern that his child would get lost in a big school.

Sarah Edis was not present. Her question was read out by the Democratic Services Officer and the Chair responded. A copy is at Appendix 1.

Councillor Gardener addressed the committee as the local member for Alconbury and Kimbolton. He welcomed the Chair's confirmation that no decision had been taken around the future of Great Gidding school. If approved, the consultation period must allow parents and stakeholders views to be collected and considered, and only then could a decision be made. He welcomed officers' planned attendance at Great Gidding Parish Council meeting in February. Rural schools were part of the fabric of the local area, and should only be closed as a last resort. He questioned where Great Gidding's pupils would go if it was closed as local schools were over-subscribed and the new primary school in Sawtry was not opening until September 2024. Should a decision be taken, after consultation, to close Great Gidding primary he questioned whether this should be aligned with the opening of the new primary school in Sawtry. This could offer the option of staff moving to the new school too, which would reduce redundancy costs. Parents would need to travel further if their children did not get places in Sawtry which would impact on their time and family income and on daily travel time. Parents valued the smaller size of Great Gidding school.

Councillor Bywater addressed the committee as the local member for Sawtry and Stilton. He commented that 20 children from Sawtry would be impacted if Great Gidding primary was to close and that ultimately this would be a political decision on how council tax was spent on education. He felt there would be other schools in the county facing similar issues. The report and proposed consultation had created a lot of uncertainty in the local community, and there was anxiety around where children would go, especially children with additional needs. If the committee did decide to close Great Gidding, he would prefer to see this aligned with the opening of the new primary school in Sawtry in 2024. Councillor Bywater felt the argument around mobile classrooms was weak, and asked whether there would be any clawback of grants and felt this should be factored into any decision. He asked what had been done to recruit school governors, and to share staff with other local schools, including a headteacher. He referenced parents' concerns around the availability of places in the relevant year groups elsewhere, and that this would over-subscribe other local schools. He called on the committee to consider all available options, and the impact on children, families and the local community.

Committee members expressed their thanks to Councillors Gardener and Bywater for their insights as local members. The Chair also welcomed the calls and emails which committee members had received from parents and local residents, sharing their views. She reiterated that no decision had been taken around the future of Great Gidding primary school.

Individual members raised the following issues in discussion of the report:

- Noted the reference at paragraph 1.4 of the report that, '*The Department for Education's (DfE) Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers: Opening*

and closing maintained schools expects all decision-makers to adopt a presumption against the closure of rural schools.'

- Stated that they had faced a similar decision previously as a councillor around whether to build a new school where an existing school building had been condemned and pupil numbers had dropped. The decision had been taken to build the new school with cross-party support, and it was now a viable and successful school.
- Asked at what pupil number a school was considered viable. The Director of Education stated that this was not an exact science. It would be based on factors such as the school building and children's needs and would be a bespoke decision depending on need and context. Generally, officers considered that educational outcomes could be impaired by a move to a two class structure, and so were bringing this to the committee's attention now before pupils were impacted.
- Noted that several small schools referenced in Item 6: Schools and Early Years Revenue Funding Arrangements 2023-24 – Appendix B had fewer than 60 pupils, and commented that they would have expected officers to have brought forward a group of such schools to be considered. They were not aware that the education being delivered now at Great Gidding was outside of the requirements of the DfE, and they would not be supporting a recommendation to consult on the potential closure of the school. The Director of Education stated one of these small schools was federated with another school with a shared management structure and that Guilden Morden Primary Academy was part of DEMAT, and that a level of subsidy was involved from DEMAT in supporting that school. The options of federating with another school or joining a multi-academy trust had not been forthcoming for Great Gidding.
- Asked whether it was possible to buy time until the new primary school opened in Sawtry in 2024 to look at this again. The Director of Education stated that officers were open to alternative options, and that was why they felt there was a need to have a dialogue and debate through a consultation process.
- Asked for more information about the 20 children from Sawtry attending Great Gidding. Officers stated that five had been unable to get a school place in Sawtry at the time, and 15 attended through parental preference.
- Asked about the cost of mobile classrooms. Officers suggested this should be detached from the question of educational outcomes, which was the focus of the current decision.
- Asked whether the forecast for Sawtry should be considered. The Director of Education stated that officers were satisfied that there were opportunities to offer alternative school places, and that scenarios such as capacity above the published admission number (PAN) could be explored if a consultation went ahead.
- Noted the difficult situation for school staff with school governors resigning and changes in headteacher, and asked whether school staff would be included in a consultation if it went ahead. Officers stated that the interim headteacher had

spoken to teachers and support staff when the committee report had been published and that a session would be arranged with them if the consultation went ahead.

- Expressed the view that timing was crucial, as the committee was being presented with a suggestion that one school might close before another one opened. They asked whether this timing was set in stone. The Director of Education stated that a school would only be closed at the end of an academic year, and paragraph 3.5 set out the statutory timeline which would need to be followed should a decision be taken to close Great Gidding at the end of the current academic year. The committee could decide to defer this decision. A website had been set up with responses to frequently asked questions, and this would continue to be updated.
- Welcomed the conformation by the Chair that the closure of Great Gidding was not a foregone conclusion, but questioned why consulting on the closure of the school was the only option which had been presented to the committee for consideration. The Director of Education reiterated that the Council could not subsidise a school, and that it could not run at a loss. There were no options for Great Gidding of academisation or federation with another school. A briefing note could be provided on the options that had been explored to sustain the school or these could be explored as part of the consultation process if it was approved, if that was the committee's wish. **Action required**
- Asked about the extent of the proposed consultation, and whether an equality impact assessment (EqIA) would be completed. Officers stated that there would be wide consultation. An EqIA had already been undertaken, and if the committee decided to move to a consultation this would be refreshed and brought to the committee at the next stage in the consultation process.
- Commented that the use of mobile classrooms was referenced as a reason for closure, but elsewhere on the meeting agenda there were references to using them. The Director of Education stated that the educational imperative was the key factor, rather than questions around accommodation or transport costs.
- Asked about potential clawback in relation to environmental schemes. Officers stated that if the consultation was agreed by the committee, they would explore the implications in relation to the energy scheme with the relevant team. They hoped that the decision to pursue that scheme demonstrated the commitment to doing everything possible to support the viability of the school. This information could be brought back if the consultation proceeded. **Action required**
- Asked whether Sawtry could be forced to increase its PAN and whether any conversations had taken place around this. Officers confirmed that some discussions had taken place with other schools around PAN, but that they did not want to pre-empt the committee's decision on whether to move to a consultation.
- Commented that they had advocated making the decision on whether to proceed to Stage 2 of the consultation process at a public meeting rather than delegating this to officers in consultation with Members at the last Spokes meeting, and asked whether this was why that recommendation had been changed. Officers stated that the Monitoring Officer had been consulted around process and had suggested it

would be appropriate to consider the outcome of Stage 2 of the consultation process in public.

- Asked why the governing body had resigned en bloc. Officers understood this related to concerns around the future of the school and difficulties securing a permanent headteacher appointment.
- Stated that the Diocese of Ely's predilection was never to shut a successful rural school. However, there were significant sustainability issues in relation to Great Gidding, and the diocese welcomed placing these in the public domain. Nationally, not all consultations resulted in closure, and parents' input was welcomed. In their view this was a funding issue as the consequence would be using money from one place to fund another. Small schools typically spent twice as much per pupil, and funding must be distributed equitably.
- Questioned how the DfE's expectation of a presumption against the closure of rural schools was fulfilled given that a consultation on closure was the only option being presented to the committee. The Chair stated that the point of a consultation process was to consult.
- Noted the public speaker's comment that by starting a consultation Great Gidding's situation would be made worse as prospective parents would not choose the school. The Chair stated the alternative would be for this issue to be debated behind closed doors, and that it must be a public decision.
- Expressed their belief that this was not a consultation and that the decision had already been made.
- Asked whether the Chair would accept an amendment to the recommendations to align looking at the situation at Great Gidding with the opening of the new primary school in Sawtry. The Chair stated that she did not feel the committee could take a decision to change the date without the outcome of the consultation information. However, at Stage 2 and Stage 4 of the process that issue could be considered. On that basis, she would not accept an amendment at this point.
- Noted the public speaker's assertion that their child thrived in mixed age classes.
- Asked to what extent this decision was driven by a need to fill Sawtry primary school.
- Thanked contributors for their enlightening contributions, commenting that no outcomes had been pre-determined and that the committee would listen to all views including from parents, staff, officers and beyond.
- Commented that the lack of senior leadership at the school due to the resignation of most of the governing body and the inability to recruit a permanent headteacher would in itself be a cause for concern for prospective parents.

It was resolved by a majority to:

- a) Consider the evidence presented in relation to the viability of Great Gidding Voluntary Controlled (VC) Primary School remaining open after the end of the current academic year 2022/23; and
- b) Agree to publicly consult on the potential closure of Great Gidding Church of England Primary School.

The Chair thanked the public for the views which had been shared with the committee, commenting that she looked forward to working with all on the consultation.

122. Finance Monitoring Report – November 2022

The committee reviewed the financial position for expenditure within its remit to the end of November 2022. A forecast overspend of £3,573k was reported, excluding the dedicated schools grant. There had been an increase in pressure on home to school transport costs and on children in care placement costs there was a forecast overspend of £500k due to increasing complexity in demand and market pressures. The committee was advised that the award of a translation and interpretation services contract approved in July 2022 had been delayed until July 2023 due to the provider revising their pricing schedule at the point the contract was to be awarded. The legal advice was that this was not compliant with public contract regulations and so the award of contract had been delayed.

In response to the report, individual members:

- Clarified that two of four Funding to Support Ukrainian Students payments had been received from government and that 75% of funding had been allocated to schools. In line with other authorities, 25% of the fund had been retained in order that other costs for these pupils – such as transport and exceptional need costs – could be met by the authority. This was consistent with current regulations. In future, it was hoped that other grants for Ukrainian refugees could be utilised for these payments.
- Noted that, since the Home to School Education Transport Strategy had been approved by the committee, the service had worked with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, employed additional capacity, developed programmes and implemented new initiatives to alleviate concerns and reduce the existing driver shortage. However, this remained an area of significant concern and officers intended to bring a report on this to a future meeting. It would also be included on the risk register.

It was resolved to:

- a) Review and comment on the report.
- b) Note is that the delegation to award the translation and Interpretation services contract will not now be exercised until 7th July 2023.

Key Decisions

123. Schools and Early Years Revenue Funding Arrangements 2023-24

The appendices to the report were published on 10th January 2023 and circulated electronically to committee members.

The Department for Education (DfE) had published dedicated schools grant (DSG) allocations for 2023/24 on 16th December 2022. The settlement figure for Cambridgeshire included a net increase in Schools Block funding as a result of additional investment through the national funding formula and a net increase in pupil numbers between October 2021 and October 2022. Some changes had been made to funding around the High Needs Block (HNB), including a new one year grant available for mainstream schools. It was a better settlement than expected, but it was not a solution and more schools would need to consider setting a deficit budget. All local authorities were required to move 10% closer to the national funding formula, which meant there was less local flexibility in how funds were used. The figures in the report set out the exact allocations for maintained schools, whilst the allocations for academies were still draft and might vary slightly. Some schools would see a year on year budget reduction, due mainly to falling rolls. These schools faced limited protection against deficit budgets and redundancies. The Early Years settlement had also been slightly better than anticipated and it was proposed to passport these increases directly to providers.

In response to the report, individual members:

- Clarified that, while all schools would be impacted by the direct funding formula, small schools would be the most affected by the reduction in flexibility to meet local need.
- Suggested that it appeared that Government funding distribution favoured collaboration between schools, and asked whether the committee should be doing more to encourage academies, federations and formal collaborative models. Officers stated that this decision would rest with a school's governing body rather than with the local authority, and that there were other models which might keep small schools and those with falling rolls viable.
- Noted that some parts of the county were seeing exceptional demographic growth whilst others were seeing a decline. This demographic information was shared with schools.
- Welcomed the offer of a briefing note on the change over time in pupil premium numbers. Action required.
- Noted the market-led approach to Early Years provision, and the Council's duty around sufficiency.

It was resolved to:

- a) Approve the formula factors and draft unit values to be applied in the local Cambridgeshire funding formula, for primary and secondary mainstream schools as set out in Appendix A (to follow).
- b) Approve the proposed hourly rates for Early Years settings as detailed in section 5.2.

124. Education Capital Strategy

Officers reported an unprecedented situation nationally in relation to education capital projects and the significant rise in construction costs. In response, a number of policy proposals were being made to make the best use of the limited public funding available. These included aligning all spending with basic need requirements and condition issues around safety; and deferring re-procurement of the consultant framework in order that market testing for best value could occur. It was also proposed that Cambridgeshire would seek to align with the DfE Schools Output Specification, which was generally recognised as best practice. Any proposals for betterment in excess of this specification would be brought to the committee for consideration. The Council would remain aspirational about its education spaces within the funding available.

In response to the report, individual members:

- Noted that there would be no significant changes to educational spaces arising from the proposals, but that a difference might be seen in the betterment of non-education focused spaces with them becoming more standardised. Officers confirmed that free schools would be subject to the same DfE specification.
- Established that SEND rooms in mainstream schools would be a bolt-on to the DfE specification, so would be brought back to the committee for decision, but officers were proposing that these should be retained to align with the SEND Sufficiency Strategy.
- Asked when the Council was proposing to adopt the new DfE guidance around building schools to a higher net-zero carbon standard, noting the additional costs associated with this. Officers stated that the Council had allowed for a 10% additional cost for schools built to a higher net-zero specification, with a focus on non-carbon heating sources and renewable energy on site. The DfE guidance was slightly wider and an 18% uplift in costs was anticipated, which represented a potential additional cost. Negotiations with developers for S106 monies would use the new DfE guidance so there would be a risk around balancing budgets and aspirations. The Vice Chair emphasised the need to follow the principles of triple bottom line budgets.
- Noted that the proposals would limit the number of new capital projects brought forward and asked who decided what constituted basic need and which projects should be brought to the committee. Officers stated that place planning officers would take a business case to the Capital Programme Board, where it would be assessed against the basic need criteria. Those which were approved would be

brought to the committee for consideration. Projects outside of basic need could still be brought forward, but there would need to be evidence of why they were needed.

- Noted that Waterbeach Primary School was being delivered by the Council with funding from Urban & Civic (U&C) via S106 monies, and that U&C were also part of the project team.
- Asked about the impact of Fenland District Council's interim policy to cap developer's S106 contributions to £2k per dwelling on the provision of school places. Officers stated that whilst the precise impact was not yet known, it was expected to be significant as this figure would be insufficient to fund actual costs.
- A number of members expressed concern that the DfE Specification determined that sprinkler provision in new build schools was only required when the risk assessment identified a risk of loss of life, or for special schools or school buildings over a certain height. This was a deviation from the Council's existing policy of including sprinklers in all new builds and substantial rebuilds, and they had real concerns about this. Concern was also expressed that this proposed change to existing policy had not been made clear in the report. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority advocated sprinklers in schools, and they asked if the Fire Authority had been consulted on the proposal and the outcome of the national review. Officers stated that the Fire Authority had not been consulted at this stage. Some members also commented that the cost of retrofitting sprinkler systems was more expensive than their inclusion in the original school design. There had been a national review of fire safety in public buildings, but final guidance was still awaited.

Officers stated that fire damage was largely an insurable loss, so while fires would increase insurance premiums the cost of fitting sprinklers was much larger – approximately 2-4% of the cost of each school project within the capital programme. Maintenance costs for sprinkler systems in academies would lie with the academy trust.

A number of members expressed their preference for an expectation that schools should have sprinkler systems. Some members also expressed concern about the uninsurable impact of a fire in a school building on children's education through a detrimental effect on premises and learning. The Assistant Director for Education Capital and Place Planning suggested that the committee could direct officers to adopt the DfE specification, with the exception of maintaining the existing policy on sprinklers. Alternatively, officers could bring any proposals which would omit a sprinkler system to the committee for decision on a case by case basis, with details of the associated costs.

Several members indicated their belief that the Council's current policy on the provision of sprinkler systems in schools was right, and that they could not support the proposals in the report.

A member sought reassurance that the committee's wish to be consulted on any case where it was proposed that a sprinkler system should not be installed in a school would be actioned. Officers confirmed this, stating that any such cases

would be brought to the committee either via an annual report or as they arose.
Action required.

It was requested that variations to existing Council policy were made more visible to the committee in future reports. Action required

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the arrangement for the future consideration of basic need projects.
- b) Approve the approach to the future benchmarking of capital costs and in the absence of reliable comparison data market test our own procurement arrangements to provide this.
- d) Defer a decision on the re-procurement of the Council's consultant framework for 18 months to allow for (b) above and acknowledging the reduced pipeline of future capital projects.

It was resolved by majority, by way of the Chair's casting vote, to:

- c) Approve the DfE schools output specification as the Council's baseline standard for design and that any variations other than those set out in section 2.3 of this report are agreed by the Capital Programme Board and the confirmation of this approach through a policy position.

A recorded vote was requested by five members of the committee on recommendation c):

Name	For	Against	Abstain
Cllr Ambrose Smith		x	
Cllr Bradnam	x		
Cllr Bulat	x		
Cllr Daunton	x		
Cllr Goodliffe (Chair)	xx		
Cllr Gowing		x	
Cllr Hoy		x	
Cllr J King		x	
Cllr M King	x		
Cllr McGuire		x	
Cllr Prentice		x	
Canon A Read			x
Cllr Sharp		x	
Cllr Slatter	x		
Dr A Stone			x
Cllr Taylor			x
Cllr Thompson	x		

The vote was tied. In accordance with the Constitution, the Chair exercised a second and casting vote. This vote was in favour of the recommendations.

125. Cambridgeshire Outdoor Education Centres

Councillor McGuire declared an interest at Item 8: Cambridgeshire Outdoor Centres as a former employee at Grafham Water. He took part in the debate, but did not vote.

The report marked the conclusion of the Cambridgeshire Outdoors Programme of Investment which had seen a £970k capital investment into Burwell House, Grafham Water Centre and Stibbington Outdoor Centre. Despite the impact of the pandemic, Grafham Water and Burwell House were forecast to break even or make a profit. In contrast, a £134k deficit was forecast for Stibbington Outdoor Centre and the buildings onsite were beyond their usable lifespan, requiring significant investment. If the closure of the Stibbington centre was agreed it was proposed that the Strategy and Resources Committee's approval should be sought to ring-fence the capital receipt to support the sustainability of Burwell House and Grafham Water.

In response to the report, individual members:

- Clarified that Grafham Water and Burwell House were operating at 90-95% capacity, while Stibbington Centre was at 55%.
- Noted that affordability for schools was an important feature due to competition with other providers.
- Asked why the Programme Board had been discontinued. Officers stated it had been set up to oversee the transition of responsibility for outdoor centres from the Place and Economy Directorate to the Education Directorate. This work was complete.
- Noted that officers would seek to diversify the offer at Grafham Water and Burwell House to offset the loss of Stibbington.

[Councillor Sharp left the meeting at 5.10pm]

- The Chair of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee expressed how children in care had benefitted from the broad and inclusive offer at Grafham Water.
- Noted that work would be carried out to assist those schools using Stibbington to access the other outdoor centres if it closed. Around 58% of Stibbington bookings came from out of county, and officers would work with centre managers to look at ways to prioritise recurrent or in-county bookings to manage the increase in demand.
- Were advised that a decision to keep Stibbington open would need to be offset by savings from elsewhere in the Education budget.

It was resolved by a majority to:

- a) Approve the closure of Stibbington Centre, retaining the operation of Burwell House and Grafham Water Centre for the provision of outdoor education day and residential visits from September 2023.
- b) Authorise the Service Director: Education to work alongside other colleagues to administrate the necessary consultation processes to enact this decision.
- c) If the closure is agreed, a proposal to be made to Strategy and Resources Committee for the earmarking of the capital receipt to support the investment and sustainability of Burwell House and Grafham Water.

126. Healthy Child Programme

The Healthy Child Programme (HCP) was funded through the Public Health grant and enabled children aged 0 to 19 to access the universal programme whether in school or not. The report proposed extending the agreement between Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge Community Services and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust for 12 months from April 2024 to March 2025 to discharge the statutory responsibility to provide an HCP whilst developing a new service specification and outcomes-based commissioning model. This work had been delayed due to the pandemic, and Government guidance was awaited around future expectations for the HCP.

In response to the report, individual members:

- Commended the internet resources available for parents as part of the Healthy Child Programme and encouraged other councillors to signpost individuals to these resources. A link to details of the Healthy Child Programme would be circulated to members outside of the meeting. **Action Required.**
- Learned that school nurses worked in teams across multiple schools. They were not responsible for mandated checks but conducted clinics, demand-led transition advice, health assessments, safeguarding work and worked with children with special educational needs.
- Noted that services for those aged 5-19 services was under development to address emerging needs.
- Noted the hope that the Integrated Care System would over time simplify this complex area of delivery.
- Noted that the HCP was an outcome-based model and asked for an update in 12 months' time on what had been achieved. Officers stated that children and young people's health outcomes overall in Cambridgeshire exceeded the national average, although this hid some areas of inequality. **Action required.**
- Acknowledged that this was a service with universal reach and personalised in response.

It was resolved unanimously by those present to:

- a) The provision of Health Visiting and Family Nurse Partnership Services, whereby Cambridgeshire Community Services and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust will exercise the health-related function to the Local Authorities for the duration of 12 months between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025; and
- b) The provision of School Nursing Services, whereby Cambridgeshire Community Services and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust will exercise the health-related function to the Local Authorities for the duration of 12 months.

127. Children and Young People's Home and Community Support Proposal January 2023

Officers sought approval for a dynamic purchasing system (DPS) and block contract for the commissioning of home and community support specifically for the 0-25 age group. The proposals followed an 18 month review of Home and Community Support Services and had been informed by engagement with parents and carers and with market providers. It recognised the increase in demand and complexity of demand and would help build sustainability and increase capacity. Block contracts better suited some providers as they offered guaranteed spend.

In response to the report, individual members:

- Learned that some providers, such as the Disabilities and Social Care Service, offered personal assistants who could assist the young person at home and school. In some circumstances, this benefitted the individual by providing them with more personalised and consistent support. This provision might be extended through the broader provision gained by the DPS which would increase the potential for agency service support via direct payment packages.
- Noted that the report referenced paying the national living wage, and asked how this sat with the Council's aspiration to pay the real living wage and whether all contractors would be required to pay the real living wage. Officers stated that this had fed into budget-planning for the next financial year. Capacity levels within the care sector remained stretched and it would be important for pricing schedules to be attractive to providers. They confirmed reference to the real living wage could be outlined in the tender documents.
- Noted an objective of the DPS was to broaden providers applicable for award in order to improve the geographical spread and specialist offer. This, along with a more straightforward contract specification tailored towards provision for young people, would enable smaller providers to access the contract.

It was resolved unanimously by those present to:

- a) Approve Cambridgeshire County Council being named in the tender process for a Home & Community Support Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), and thereafter to make call-offs from the DPS.
- b) Delegate authority to the Service Director for Commissioning, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Children and Young People Committee, to approve the award of the DPS on behalf of CCC.
- c) Approve going out to tender for two £50,000 block contracts for Home & Community Support.
- d) Delegate authority to the Service Director for Commissioning, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Children and Young People Committee, to award two £50,000 block contracts for Home & Community Support.

Decisions

128. Determined Admissions Arrangements for the 2024/2025 academic year

The Committee received a report setting out the proposed 2024/25 admission arrangements for schools for which the Council was the admission authority. There was a statutory requirement to consult on any proposed changes each year for a six week period, and to obtain committee approval for the proposed arrangements. No objections had been received in response to the consultation.

In response to a Member's question, officers undertook to establish why Coleridge Community College, rather than Bottisham Village College, was the secondary catchment school for the new Marleigh development. Action required.

It was resolved unanimously by those present to:

- a) Determine the co-ordinated qualifying scheme and admission arrangements for all schools for whom the Council, as the Local Authority, is the admission authority as published in the consultation documents for admission to school in 2024/25.
- b) Give its support to the proposal that a full and comprehensive review of the determined admission arrangements for all own admission authority schools is undertaken. This should include the published definitions of existing school catchment areas and admission policies for schools with a sixth form. Any issues, or concerns should be highlighted, recorded and shared with the respective admission authority for the school with a view to these being addressed immediately, where they are in breach of legislation, or as part of the annual consultation process for admission to school in 2025/26 which will commence in the autumn term of 2023.

The meeting adjourned from 5.53 to 6.05pm.

Councillor Prentice left the meeting at 5.53pm

Information and Monitoring

129. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership Board Annual Report 2021-22

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership Board Annual Report 2021-22 set out the Board's work during this period and had been subject to independent scrutiny by Dr Russell Wate QPM. Key highlights of the report included Sexual Behaviour and Safeguarding training (online) and a workshop on unconscious bias.

Officers agreed to provide details of the number of caravans in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire outside of the meeting. **Action required.**

The Chair stated that she was aware of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership Board's work as a member of the Board and emphasised the importance of partnership working.

It was resolved to:

Receive and note the contents of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership Board 2021-22.

130. Safeguarding Deep Dive Presentation

A review on the Integrated Front Door had been conducted by external consultants and the findings were shared with the committee. The Integrated Front Door comprised of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), the Emergency Duty Teams, the Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Hub and the Early Help Hub.

Identified strengths of the existing service included children not being left at risk of serious harm after most contacts; a supportive environment for staff; and early help contacts being rated mostly appropriate.

Recommendations included the redeployment of more senior social workers to Customer Services to reduce threshold recommendations made by service workers; removal of the Assessment Service's decision making powers for contacts; streamlining early help referrals from MASH to reduce processing delays; additional resourcing which could be used to support timely health checks; use of Liquid Logic to trigger timely and consistent agency checks; increased key partner presence at strategy meetings; introduction of a service provided by the Early Help Hub for families on the cusp of statutory intervention; changes to forms and form templates; and securing consistent consent recording. The review also highlighted that social workers were often not included in initial police enquiries.

It was thought that the inclusion of 'Learning from Contacts' on MASH Operational Board agendas would empower the service to reflect upon its own work in future.

In response the report, members:

- Clarified that some recommendations had been implemented, while those involving process changes would take more time.
- Were reassured that members could make anonymous referrals to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and that inter-agency information sharing was permitted in cases where there was a welfare concern.
- Acknowledged that issues faced by social care provision were national, and were exacerbated by it being a demand led service with national staff shortages in social workers and early help practitioners. The inclusion of an Education link and Operation Encompass in the MASH was exemplified as a success and improved partnership working was anticipated to further the service's ability to meet the recommendations of the social care inspection focus visit.

Due to technical issues the Review of Child Exploitation and Missing Children was deferred.

Councillor Hoy left the meeting at 6.22pm.

It was resolved to:

Receive and note the information presentation on key safeguarding areas of work.

Decisions

131. Children and Young People Committee agenda plan, training plan and appointments

A correction to the published papers was noted, in that Councillor Nethsingha was the vice-chair of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee.

A member referenced the length of the agenda and suggested that consideration be given to more frequent meetings. The Chair stated that there had been a number of key decisions which had needed to be taken this month. The committee had agreed earlier in the meeting to meet again in late February or early March to decide whether to authorise officers to proceed to Stage 2 of the statutory consultation process.

It was proposed by Councillor McGuire, seconded by Councillor Ambrose Smith, and resolved unanimously to appoint Councillor S King to the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). The Chair thanked his predecessor Councillor Prentice for his contribution to SACRE's work.

The Chair expressed the committee's thanks to school governors for their significant contribution to school life

It was resolved unanimously by those present to:

- a) Note the Children and Young People Committee Agenda Plan.
- b) Note the Children and Young People Committee Training Plan.
- c) Note the LA Governor Nominations/Appointments.
- d) Appoint Councillor S King to the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE).

(Chair)

Public questions on Item 4: Great Gidding Church of England Primary School

	Question from:	Question:
1.	Matt Robinson, local resident	<p>How can this decision be justified on anything but economic factors in contradiction to this committees decree that the children are the first and most important factor here, and especially in light of fact that almost all the schools in the local vicinity are at or above capacity, a desktop exercise determining that capacity exists in September when there is none now seems wholly and fundamentally flawed and frankly is a poor basis on which to meddle and impact so significantly on the future of our children?</p>
	Response from Councillor Bryony Goodliffe, Chair of the Children and Young People Committee	<p>The Council has concerns, on several fronts, as to the future viability of Great Gidding Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School. This includes the financial issues to which you refer, in addition to demographics which illustrate that pupil numbers living within the catchment area for the school are forecast to continue to be low in the coming years.</p> <p>To enable a balanced budget, it would be necessary to revise the structure of the school which is likely to have a negative impact on the ability to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum and compromise the educational offer and experience of the pupils on roll. A move to a 2-class structure will mean a significant impact upon the educational experience for the children.</p> <p>The statutory process for closing a school consists of four stages. The recommendation being presented to committee today is that officers initiate with immediate effect the first stage of this process. To ensure the committee can make an informed decision, it has been necessary to gather the information on the availability of the local school to support the children of Great Gidding. We believe there is sufficient capacity in a number of schools in the local area, but we will look to meet with parents, if there is agreement to proceed, to understand their preference for a school place. This information will then be used to work with existing schools to put in place additional capacity, if required. At this stage, we have not pre-empted either the decision to close or parental preference, but we will provide a suitable school place for every child. As I am sure you will appreciate, there are many factors to consider within this proposal, but I can assure you that the children and families on roll at Great Gidding C of E Primary School</p>

	Question from:	Question:
		are our utmost priority. The Council is fully committed to working collaboratively with the local community and will do our utmost to ensure your concerns are heard, and addressed, should we proceed to the consultation phase.
2.	Sarah Edis, local resident	<p>Has consideration been taken into the current planning applications for the village and its catchment areas?</p> <p>There are currently family houses proposed for Gt Gidding alone which could potentially bring more children to the village.</p> <p>Also considering the current demographic of the village we will certainly see more houses coming on the market in the future.</p>
	Response from Councillor Bryony Goodliffe, Chair of the Children and Young People Committee	<p>The Business Intelligence Service prepares two sets of forecasts. These are base forecasts, which only include existing children within the school's catchment area, and high forecasts which include the impact of housing developments. Officers have reviewed both of these forecasts prior to submitting the proposal.</p> <p>As the village is defined as a 'small settlement' within Huntingdonshire's Local Plan, no allocations are included. However, it does set out a role for a limited amount of sustainable development to contribute to social and economic sustainability. All developments within this location are small, and as a result, are expected to have little impact upon pupil numbers.</p>