CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 14 November 2017

Time: 2.00pm – 3.55pm

Present: Councillors S Bywater (Chairman), P Downes, L Every, A Hay, S Hoy (Vice Chairwoman), L Nethsingha, S Taylor, D Wells, J Whitehead and J Wisson

Co-opted member: A Read

CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

49. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no apologies for absence. Mr Read declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item 6: Establishment of a new area special school at Alconbury Weald in his capacity as the Chief Executive of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust, a partner in the bid made by the Spring Common Academy Trust.

50. MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 10 OCTOBER 2017 AND ACTION LOG

The minutes of the meeting on 10 October 2017 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

The Action Log was reviewed and the following updates noted:

Minute 32 - Educational Outcomes
The Executive Director clarified that this related to funding potentially available to East Cambridgeshire and Fenland through the Area Opportunity Fund. An extensive data exercise was taking place to look at the challenges faced in these areas in order to target resources most effectively. A Member emphasised their view that a detailed study was required of a small number of schools to identify what was being done differently in those schools which were obtaining the best results in reducing the gap in attainment between those in vulnerable groups and their peers. Another Member stated that a detailed piece of research on this was currently being undertaken in Littleport Community Primary School. The Executive Director stated that there was a lot of information already available on this issue within the Council and beyond. She would task the new Service Director for Education to provide a report in March 2018 on what was currently known about the causes for this gap in educational attainment, how this was most effectively addressed and to identify if any further work was needed. (**Action**: Service Director: Education)

Minute 45 – Home to School Transport: Meadowgate School
The Head of Service: 0-19 Place Planning and Organisation stated that she would be meeting Meadowgate School parents the following week and that until this conversation had taken place the achievement of this savings target had been put on hold. The Vice Chairwoman would be informed of the date of this meeting in case she wished to attend in her capacity as the local member. Between seven and eight families were potentially affected and these would be considered on a case by case basis.

Minute 45 – Appointment of the new Service Director: Education

The Executive Director stated that Jonathan Lewis had been appointed as the new Service Director: Education across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough following an appointment panel in October 2017. Mr Lewis would be taking up his post at the end of January 2018, but there would be a handover with the current Director who was retiring at the end of December.

51. PETITIONS

No petitions were received.

DECISIONS

52. FREE SCHOOL PROPOSALS

Standing item. No business to discuss.

53. EXPANSION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PROVISION IN KENNETT

The Area Education Officer stated that proposals for a new garden village in Kennett had been included as a housing allocation in the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan which was approved on 5 October 2017. This consisted of 500 new homes with the potential for further expansion in the future. It was anticipated that the development could receive approval in summer 2018 with work commencing on site early in 2019. Usually in such cases the additional need for places would be met by expanding the existing school or opening a new free school, but in this case neither option was considered appropriate. The existing primary school was located on a small, constrained site and could not be expanded sufficiently to meet the anticipated demand for additional places. However, to build a new school solely to meet the needs of the new garden village would result in two very small primary schools being located within the village of Kennett. Officers judged that the best educational solution would be to have one larger primary school which served the whole community rather than two smaller schools with a more limited curriculum offer and concerns regarding their financial viability. The proposed site for the new school was larger than currently required and so offered scope for further expansion in future if the development grew beyond 500 homes.

Officers stated that the proposed scheme could have a cost to the Local Authority as there would be a gap between the amount of Section 106 funding which could be requested and the cost of expanding and relocating the existing provision. Section 106 funding could only be requested for that part of the scheme which provided extra places and not for the relocation and improvement of the existing school. However, the existing school site did have a value and once the relocation was complete this could potentially be returned in full to the Council. Funds would also be sought from the Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA) to address the sub-standard facilities of the existing academy primary school as funding improvements to the buildings of academy schools was one of its responsibilities.

On this basis officers deemed the most appropriate educational solution would be the provision of a new primary school offering 210 places on a site allocated by the developer as part of the planning application. The age range of the school would remain at three to eleven years with expanded early years provision also being made available.

The following questions and comments arose in discussion of the report:

- A Member questioned whether the Staploe Education Trust (sponsor of the existing Kennett Community Primary School) had agreed to transfer 100% of the value of the current asset to the Council if the proposals were agreed. Officers confirmed that this was the case and that the Trust acknowledged the enhanced value of the lease they would receive on the larger site proposed within the new development;

- A Member noted that allocation of the money returned to the Council following disposal of the site would be a matter for the Commercial and Investment Committee and that it would not necessarily be directed to children's services;

- A Member stated that they were pleased to note that the proposed development included affordable housing and that the infrastructure needed to support the new community was being put in place in good time and offered the capacity for further expansion in future if required. This would offer both new and existing residents the type of seamless transition which had not always been seen in the past;

- Officers confirmed that Councillor Schumann supported the proposals in his capacity as the local Member, but that he had chosen not to speak on the issue at the Committee as he was also a Director and Trustee of the Staploe Education Trust which sponsored Kennett Community Primary School.

It was resolved to:

a) approve the proposal to relocate the Kennett Primary School (KPS) onto the site secured within the new housing development and expand it by an additional 105 places to provide 210 places (1 form of entry (1FE))

b) support the application to be made by the Staploe Education Trust to the Office of the Regional Schools' Commissioner for the relocation and expansion of the Kennett Primary School; and

c) agree that the site of the existing primary school should be declared surplus to education requirements once the relocation of the school to its new site has been completed.

54. ESTALISHMENT OF A NEW AREA SPECIAL SCHOOL AT ALCONBURY WEALD

Mr Andrew Read declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in this item at the start of the meeting (minute 46 refers) and left the meeting room for the duration of this item.

The Strategic Policy and Place Planning Manager stated that, in accordance with Council policy, a joint Member and officer Panel had met on 2 October 2017 to assess each potential sponsor's application against the criteria set out in the School Specification document. Subject to the Committee's endorsement, the Panel's recommendation would be sent to the Regional Schools Commissioner and their Headteacher Board for consideration. The final decision rested with the Secretary of State for Education.

This application and that for the establishment of a new primary school at Wintringham Park, St Neots (minute 55 below refers) had offered the first opportunities to test the new practice of inviting all potential sponsors to run stands at a public meeting where

the public and officers could meet them and discuss their proposals, instead of making individual presentations as had been the format previously. The event included an introduction by officers and a plenary session at the end with the opportunity to ask further questions. The new format had been well received by both the potential sponsors and the public as a more relaxed and productive way of sharing information.

The following comments were offered in discussion of the report and in response to questions from Members:

- A Member questioned why the evaluation sheet did not include individual scores. Officers stated that the main points would be included in the covering report, but that it was not the Council's practice to make this specific information public;

- Four Trusts had submitted applications, of which three had been short-listed. The Spring Common Academy Trust had submitted a strong application and their representatives' performance at the Member and officer Panel had also been strong;

- Spring Common Academy Trust was currently a single academy trust, but had Department of Education approval to become a multi-academy trust;

- Spring Common Special School was rated Outstanding by Ofsted;

- A Member questioned whether Place Plus funding methodology would cover the Local Authority's costs. Officers confirmed that they did not anticipate any shortfall;

- Appendix 5: Members noted that the Assessment Panel role descriptions for Councillors Bywater and Sanderson had been transposed.

It was resolved to:

a) endorse the Spring Common Academy Trust as the Council's preferred sponsor for the special school to serve Alconbury Weald and the surrounding area.

55. ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL AT WINTRINGHAM PARK, ST NEOTS

The Committee received a report setting out the outcome of a the process to seek a school sponsor for the first primary school to serve the Wintringham Park development and the existing Loves Farm community. The process had begun in February 2016, but had been paused due to planning issues relating to the wider site. It had been agreed that the bids received at that stage would be considered when the planning issues were resolved. The Diamond Learning Trust Partnership had submitted a strong bid which included a focus on improving the achievement of vulnerable groups.

The following points arose in discussion of the report and in response to questions from Members:

- Officers confirmed that this proposal would attract Section 106 funding;

- It was hoped that the Regional Schools Commissioner's recommendation would be known by the end of November 2017;

- A Member noted the strong representations which the Committee had received earlier in the year from parents in Loves Farm regarding the provision of additional primary school places in the local area and sought confirmation that they had been fully engaged. In her capacity as the local Member, Councillor Wisson confirmed that there had been lots of local involvement in the process and that officers had kept residents well briefed on the proposals. A positive relationship had been established between residents and officers and there was a general acceptance locally of why additional capacity at the proposed new primary school at Wintringham Park had been pursued in preference to expanding the capacity of the Round House Primary Academy.

It was resolved to:

a) endorse the Diamond Learning Partnership Trust as the Council's preferred sponsor for a primary school to serve Wintringham Park and the existing Loves Farm community.

56. PLACEMENT SUFFICIENCY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN INCLUDING THE HUB (NO WRONG DOOR) DELIVERY

The Service Director for Children's Services and Safeguarding set out the proposed Sufficiency Strategy for the provision of services for Looked After children and care leavers for the Committee's consideration and approval. It was a statutory requirement for the Local Authority to have a Sufficiency Statement based on the number and profile of children and young people in its care to enable it to secure, as far as reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for them within the local area. This remained an area of some challenge within Cambridgeshire. The number of Looked After children within the Council's care had increased and there was considerable pressure on placements. This reflected a national trend.

The Hub (No Wrong Door) service delivery model was designed to try to meet the needs of some of those children and young people with the most complex and challenging needs. This was achieved by providing consistent multi-disciplinary support in a range of settings including their own homes, foster care placements, supported accommodation and the hub children's home. The model was working effectively in Yorkshire and included enabling foster carers and young people to get to know each other before a placement began.

The following points arose in discussion of the report and in response to questions from Members:

- A Member had requested in advance of the meeting that the report short be costed. Officers confirmed that detailed work on the costs associated with Looked After children was being undertaken and this would be reported in the context of the wider business planning process at the Committee's December meeting;

- Officers stated that they were looking to relocate the residential element of the Hub in Wisbech to Hill Rise in Huntingdon, which offered a more central location;

- The Hawthorns site was no longer being used as a residential setting, although part of the accommodation was used for supervised contact visits. Future use of the site would be considered in the context of the wider estate;

- It was likely that the Victoria Road site in Wisbech would continue to be used as a base for some non-residential services;

- The former children's home at Hill Rise could be brought back into service at a reasonable cost if required and would provide accommodation for up to four children or young people;

- Officers stated that they did not use the terminology of 'No Wong Door' in their interactions with children and young people;

- Appendix 2.2: It was noted that this should read 'move-on' flats;

- A Member commended officers on the proposals and commented that they were glad to see the route being proposed. However, despite constant efforts over time to reduce the number of children and young people requiring the Council's care it had not yet proved possible to achieve this. The Member felt that there was not enough money to meet the actual level need and felt that the Committee should press for more money in the system;

- Officers stated that the number of foster care placements in Cambridgeshire was broadly comparable to other local authorities. However, within that number Cambridgeshire made greater use of independent foster carers at around 61% of placements compared to an average of 30-40% in other local authorities. The average cost of an independent foster care placement was around £800 per week compared to £350-400 per week for in-house foster care provision. Officers were actively seeking to increase the number of in-house foster-carers, but noted that this process would take time;

- Members noted that Cambridgeshire now had a considerably higher number of Looked After children than its statistical neighbours. Officers were confident that this was not due to children being taken into care when this was not required, but reflected the longer period of time on average being spent in care leading to higher overall numbers. Officers would be looking to redress this pattern during the next two years to bring the figure closer in line with the County's statistical neighbours. The Executive Director stated that it was accepted that this would remain an on-going budgetary pressure in the short-term, but that all options were being explored including the possibility of seeking transformation funding;

- A Member stated that they had some reservations about the hub model and would be interested to see how it was working in Yorkshire;
  (**Action**: Service Director: Children's Services and Safeguarding)

- A Member noted the concurrent fostering to adoption arrangements described to the Committee earlier in the year by Coram Cambridgeshire. Officers stated that permanent foster carers and those seeking to foster with a view to adoption were usually two distinct groups. The permanency offered by adoption was recognised as the best option where this was available;

- A Member stated that they had found the report excellent and that as a member of the newly constituted Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee they looked forward to drilling down into the detail of the information. Their own research suggested the position in the past had been less positive, but that officers were now well-placed to

bring forward the strategies necessary to address the challenges which the Council faced. There would be a lot of work for the new Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee to do in this area on behalf of the Committee and they looked forward to working closely with officers in taking this forward.

The Service Director for Children's Services and Safeguarding expressed his thanks for the Member's positive comments and passed on his own thanks to Fiona MacKirdy and Sam Nash who had done much of the work on the report. He welcomed the role to be played by the new Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee in helping to project the voice of Looked After children and young people and foster carers within the Council to compliment Committee's role in overseeing the strategic policy;

- Officers confirmed that independent foster carers living within Cambridgeshire might choose to foster children or young people on behalf of any local authority, but that in-house foster carers would only care for children being placed by Cambridgeshire County Council;

- A Member emphasised the need to attract all types of people to fostering and to make people aware of the opportunities which existed and that the Council offered a comprehensive support package to foster carers in addition to the financial support provided;

- A Member noted that the 21 day target for initial health assessments was not always being met and asked why this was the case. Officers stated that the administrative processes behind this were being looked at, but common causes for the delay included parents withholding consent for the assessments where no interim care order was in place or practitioners giving priority to their own Authority's children when Cambridgeshire children were placed out of area;

- A Member commented that they would welcome an update report at some stage on how the Hub was progressing, including recruitment issues. The Chairman asked that an update report should be brought to the Committee in six months' time.

It was resolved to:

a) consider and approve the Sufficiency Strategy and note progress towards implementation of The Hub;

b) add an update report to the Committee's Agenda Plan for six months' time (May 2018).

57. 2018-19 SCHOOLS FUNDING UPDATE

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Integrated Finance Services which provided an update on schools funding arrangements for 2018/19 following publication of the Department of Education's (DfE) national funding formula (NFF) for schools and high needs. Officers had consulted extensively with Members, the Cambridgeshire Schools Forum and individual schools during the DfE's initial consultation on the NFF. A further consultation document on schools funding in 2018/19 had recently been sent to all Cambridgeshire schools and proposals would be submitted to the Schools Forum in December 2017. A final report be submitted to the Children and Young People

Committee in January 2018 and the local authority was required to submit final figures to the DfE by 19 January 2018. Members noted that:

- The new NFF contained more funding nationally for schools and pupils with high needs, but whether it represented a fairer distribution of funds was a more subjective issue. Cambridgeshire expected to see an increase in funding of around £7.9 million in 2018/19, subject to final confirmation based on pupil census data;

- The arrangements saw the creation of a new Central Services Block which the DfE expected to diminish over time as historic commitments unwound. The Key Stage 4 unit rate for secondary schools had reduced, but there was a minimum funding guarantee in place. There was also a reduction in the lump sum paid to both primary and secondary schools from £150k to £110k, but some protection was offered through calculation of the minimum funding guarantee baseline;

- The new arrangements were being introduced as a soft formula in 2018/19 and 2019/20 which continued to allow local authorities some flexibility, but all members of the F40 Group were moving towards implementation of the NFF in this period to ease the transition to the proposed introduction of a hard formula from 2020/21, subject to primary legislation;

- Cambridgeshire had previously included a Looked After children factor in its funding calculations. This was no longer available, but an increase of £400 per pupil was going into the Pupil Premium Plus grant;

- Subject to consulting all schools and the approval of the Schools Forum it would be possible to transfer up to 0.5% of the Schools Block budget in 2018/19 to offset pressures of the High Needs Block;

- Officers had provided detailed briefing sessions on the new arrangements to members of the Committee, the Cambridgeshire Primary Heads Group and the Cambridgeshire Secondary Heads Group and would be attending the Members' Seminar in December 2017 to offer a further briefing to all Members.

The following points arose in discussion of the report and in response to questions from Members:

- A Member asked for clarification of the future arrangements for funding for Looked After children. Officers stated that the Pupil Premium Plus payment was made to the Local Authority and was allocated by the Head of the Virtual School on receipt of a satisfactory plan for how the money would be spent. The money was allocated on a termly basis and followed the child if they changed school. Its use was monitored by the Virtual School;

- A Member commented that there had appeared to be some reluctance at the Schools Forum meeting the previous week to consider moving the full 0.5% of the Schools Block budget in 2018/19 to the High Needs Block if this was recommended by officers. Should the Local Authority wish to transfer the funds without the approval of the Schools Forum it would need to appeal direct to the Secretary of State for Education. Officers were not aware of any previous instances of local authorities taking this course of action;

- A Member noted the potential impact of changes to pension arrangements and questioned whether the planning horizon was sufficiently long. Maintained schools were required to provide a three year budget plan and officer support was available with this. The Chairman noted that the possibility of a two year strategy had been raised at the last Schools Forum meeting;

- The consultation on schools funding arrangements in 2018/19 had been sent to all schools in the county and they were being encouraged to return it, but there was no mechanism to comply them to respond. Members agreed that it would be helpful for the Chairman to write to all schools urging them to respond to the consultation process;

- A Member commented that it was disappointing that the increase in funding to Cambridgeshire was not greater and that the county still remained relatively poorly funded in comparison to other local authorities.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to the Head of Integrated Finance Services and to the Strategic Business Partner and their teams for their time, effort and commitment on this vital issue.

It was resolved:

a) to note the content of the report and the requirement to approve the Cambridgeshire schools funding formula at the meeting in January 2018;

b) that the Chairman should write to all primary and secondary schools in Cambridgeshire to remind them of the closing date for the consultation on school funding arrangements for 2018-19 and to encourage them to respond.

58. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2017

The Strategic Business Partner reported a worsening position to the end of September 2017 with a forecast overspend across the People and Communities Directorate of £4,388k. This compared to a forecast overspend of £3,739k at the end of August 2017. Pressures on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Placements budget, the Looked After Children Transport budget, the Children in Care budget and the Looked After Children Placements budget remained significant. There had been no material change to the Key Performance Indicators currently shown as red. The Executive Director stated that she had held a detailed planning meeting the previous day with her Service Directors and the finance team to review all aspects of the Directorate budget. This would inform the budget report and presentation which the Committee would receive at its meeting in December 2017.

A Member noted the savings which had accrued from staff vacancies to the end of the second quarter in the Children's Services and Safeguarding team (paragraph 2.2 refers) and sought an assurance that this had not led to a drop in service in this vital area. The Executive Director stated that there was no policy or practice of holding vacancies to reduce costs. This saving represented some gaps which had occurred whilst vacancies were filled, but agency staff were used where needed to fill these gaps.

It was resolved to:

a) review and comment on the report.

59. AGENDA PLAN, APPOINTMENTS AND TRAINING PLAN

Members reviewed the Committee agenda plan, appointments and training plan. An early training session on place planning and multipliers was requested to inform Members' consideration of a report on this subject at the meeting on 5 December.
(**Action**: Democratic Services Officer)

It was resolved to:

a) note the appointment of Councillor D Wells to the Committee in succession to Councillor A Costello;

b) note the following changes to the Agenda Plan:

- Key Decision 2018/004: Review of Cambridge City Primary School (moved from January 2018 to July 2018)
- Annual Corporate Parenting Report – to be added annually to the November meeting;
- Estimating Demand for Education Provision (Revision of Multipliers) – to be added annually to the December meeting;
- Integrated Commissioning Arrangements for Children's Wellbeing – renamed 0-19 Child Health Services, Emotional Wellbeing and Behaviour and moved from December 2017 to March 2018;
- NEW ITEM: May 2018 - Sufficiency Statement Update: Impact of No Wrong Door and impact on Looked After Children numbers and costs.

c) note the following appointments to the new Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee established by Council on 17 October:

- Cllr Costello
- Cllr Every
- Cllr Hay
- Cllr Bradnam
- Cllr Richards

d) to appoint Councillor L Every as Chair of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee for the remainder of the 2017/18 municipal year;

e) to appoint Councillor A Hay as Vice Chair of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee for the remainder of the 2017/18 municipal year.

f) to review Appointments to Internal Advisory Groups and Panels and Partnership Liaison and Advisory Groups;

g) to appoint Councillor L Joseph to the Accelerating the Achievement of Vulnerable Groups Steering Group

h) to note the appointment of Cllr John Gowing to the Outcome Focused Review on Education ICT.

i) to review and comment on the Committee training plan

INFORMATION AND MONITORING

60. PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES STAFFING STRUCTURE

The Executive Director submitted an update on the staffing structure in the People and Communities Directorate in response to Members' continued interest in this issue. The report was informed by on-going work being carried out by each of the Service Directors on their own teams.

It was resolved to:

a) note the current People and Communities staffing structure and the levels of line management.

61. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee will meet next on Tuesday 5 December 2017 at 2.00pm in the Kreis Viersen Room, Shire Hall, Cambridge.

Chairman
(date)