

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 15th January 2019

Time: 2.00pm – 3.50pm

Venue: Kreis Viersen Room, Shire Hall, Cambridge

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

Co-opted members: A Read and F Vettese

Apologies: Councillor A Bradnam (substituted by Councillor L Nethsingha)

Also present: Councillor L Harford

CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

191. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were noted as recorded above.

192. MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 4 DECEMBER 2018

The minutes of the meeting on 4 December 2018 were approved as an accurate record, subject to the following amendments:

- i. Meeting start time corrected from 2.00pm to 3.00pm;
- ii. Minute 185: Draft 2018/19 Capital Programme
 - a. The sentence 'A Member commented that they felt the second primary school planned at Wintringham Park was a good idea, but asked whether there had been consultation on this with other local schools.' deleted and replaced with, 'A Member commented that they were happy with the plans for Wintringham Park.'
 - b. The following correction to discussion of the proposed amalgamation of Eastfield Infant and Nursery School and Westfield Junior School, 'A Member commented that their understanding was that the infant school was not fit for purpose, but that the junior school was in an acceptable state of repair. On that basis they asked whether it would be feasible to expand the ~~infant~~ junior school.'

There were no declarations of interest.

193. ACTION LOG

The action log was reviewed. A Member commented that there was no reference to Spring Common Academy in the Capital Programme report going to the General Purposes Committee and asked when this would be revisited. The Service Director for Education undertook to follow this up with the Member outside of the meeting.

(Action: Assistant Director: Education Capital and Place Planning)

Updates on the remaining actions would be circulated outside of the meeting.

194 PETITIONS

No petitions were received.

KEY DECISION

195. RESIDENTIAL SHORT BREAKS FOR DISABLED CHILDREN - EXTENSION AND CONSULTATION (KD2019/022)

The current contract for Residential Short Breaks and Shared Care was awarded to Action for Children in October 2015. In August 2018 the Joint Commissioning Board approved a recommendation to recommission the service through a new procurement exercise and not to utilise the available 2+2 year contract extension period. This decision was based on a number of factors including the lack of geographical spread of the current provision, the need to future-proof the service within available funding and the lack of an integrated response to crisis situations. In order to provide sufficient time for a full and proper engagement with service users it was recommended to extend the existing contract by 12 months. The service was jointly funded with the local Clinical Commissioning Group which was reviewing current funding of the service. Officers were working with PinPoint (parent participation service) and Social Care to provide assurance to service users and staff.

The following points were raised in discussion of the report and in response to questions:

- The report stated that the current incumbent had struggled to deliver the contract on budget and in full. A Member asked when this difficulty had been identified given that the contract was entering its fourth year and why this had not been raised with the Committee before. The Executive Director for People and Communities stated that it was not unusual for children's and adults services providers to struggle. A range of supportive mechanisms had been put in place to support the contractor, but going forward the aim was to re-design the offer to better reflect service users' needs;
- Clarification was requested of what was meant in this context by 'direct payments'. Officers stated that these offered the option of children being cared for in their own homes whilst their parent/s had some time away, or being supported to attend clubs or activities away from the home;
- A Member commented that they were supportive of the recommendations, but that it would be important going forward to address both the quality and quantity of provision. Officers stated that there would be no deterioration in service provision. Service users would receive the same allocation of respite support, but delivered in more flexible ways to maximise capacity;
- The Vice Chairwoman commented that family members were not permitted to provide paid respite care under the arrangements in place in Norfolk. She felt that this meant that families lost access to a lot of potential carers and commented she would not want to see that option lost in Cambridgeshire;

- A Member asked how the quality of care funded through direct payments would be monitored. Officers stated that this would be explored as part of the consultation process and confirmed that the residential short break option would still be available to parents alongside the direct payment offer;
- A Member asked about the implications to the Council if the CCG should decide not to fund the proposed 12 month contract extension. Officers stated that should this be the case they would work in partnership with the CCG to review how it would meet its obligations. The Executive Director for People and Communities stated that her sense was that the CCG would want to think about how the service could be delivered through a more person-centred approach.

It was resolved to:

- a) agree to extend the contract for 12 months (to October 2020);
- b) delegate authority to the Executive Director for People and Communities to execute a contract extension;
(Action: Executive Director, People and Communities/ Democratic Services Officer)
- c) note the proposed consultation and engagement with families.

OTHER DECISIONS

196. FREE SCHOOL PROPOSALS

Standing item. No business to discuss.

197. ADMISSION ARRANGMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOLS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-21

The Chairman stated that consultation on the proposed arrangements had closed on 13 January 2019. Two responses had been received and these had been published that morning and circulated to all members of the Committee by email for information. Hard copies were available at the meeting.

A report had been brought to the Committee in November 2018 describing the proposed changes to admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled primary schools for the academic year 2020/21 and seeking the Committee's agreement to these forming the basis of the public consultation exercise. The Committee had approved this recommendation and the consultation had run from 19 November 2018 to 13 January 2019. This was longer than the minimum six week period required to take account of the Christmas period. The three proposed changes related to:

- children who had previously been in state care outside of England (new criterion 2);
- children of school staff (new criterion 6); and
- out of catchment children (old criterion 5)

The low response rate to the consultation exercise was disappointing, but the statutory process had been followed and officers now sought the Committee's approval for the proposed changes.

In discussion of the report and in response to questions:

- A Member welcomed the proposal relating to children of school staff which they felt would be particularly helpful for schools in rural areas where staff might live at significant distance from the school;
- A Member asked whether the criterion relating to children of school staff should be extended to all school staff rather than those who had been in post for more than two years. Officers stated that the two year minimum period was specified in the School Admissions Code and was a legislative requirement;
- A Member commented that a school trying to recruit a teacher could lose an applicant if their children could not be offered places at the school. To address this they suggested the criterion relating to school staff should be given higher priority in the list. Officers stated that this change could not be made for 2020/21 as it was not included in the public consultation exercise, but that this could be considered as part of the review of the arrangements for 2021/22;
(Action: Strategic Admissions Manager)
- The Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee noted that the criterion relating to Looked After children remained at the top of the list, but commented that she remained concerned that some schools might not be accepting these children. Officers stated that this happened rarely in Cambridgeshire, but that where it did officers were seeking and receiving Secretary of State support. Directions to admit had been obtained from the Secretary of State in recent months in relation to three Looked After Children living out of county;
- A Member asked what steps were taken to make sure that parents were aware when free home to school transport would and would not be available before they chose their preferred schools. Officers stated that this information was already provided to parents and their attention drawn to it, but the difficulty arose when a family could not be allocated their catchment school as transport capacity would not be known at that time. However, they undertook to look at whether it would be possible to make clear in offer letters when home to school transport would not be available;
(Action: Strategic Admissions Manager)
- A Member asked how much flexibility existed to support a child with special educational needs but no Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to get a school place. Officers stated that discussions between the Statutory Assessment team and schools would inform what school was named on an EHCP and a mechanism existed for in-year admissions to revisit which school was named on an EHCP. The wording was required by legislation, but officers would try to place in-year admissions with an EHCP into a local or catchment school through local protocols.

It was resolved to:

- a) approve and determine the proposed changes to admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2020/21 academic year.

KEY DECISION

198. SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA APPROVAL (KD2019/020)

The Chairman stated that, exceptionally, he had accepted the Schools Funding Formula Approval as a late report on the following grounds:

1. Reason for lateness: The Department for Education only released the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlement two weeks before the Christmas break. The finance team had been reviewing the datasets from the DfE since then and modelling the implications of the announcement and Schools Forum decisions. The output from this work needed to be reviewed and refined prior to completion of the report to Committee. It is important to be as up to date as possible as this will form the basis of the decision for the 2019/20 school budgets.
2. Reason for urgency: Approval is required for the authority to return its APT (Authority Proforma Tool) submission by the required deadline of 21 January. Therefore deferral to a later meeting was not possible without missing the DfE submission deadline.

This decision was published as an addition to the Forward Plan on 11 January 2019 under the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

On 17 December 2018 the Department for Education (DfE) had published the DSG allocations for 2019/20. The increase in the Schools Block for 2019/20 totalled £7.8m. Consultation with all schools was undertaken between 26 October 2018 and 30 November 2018 and presented to the Cambridgeshire Schools Forum to inform its decision to approve the transfer of £1.7m of the DSG from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. This transfer was supported by a reduction in the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) values which was the preferred approach of the majority of those responding to the consultation exercise. There was also a slight reduction in the Primary Low Prior Attainment rate. The additional costs set out at paragraph 4.3 of the report were greater than the £7.8m uplift in Schools Block funding and the options for managing this difference were set out at paragraph 4.4. Options 1 and 2 would both result in more schools having a reduction in their overall budget so officers were recommending Option 3: to hold the Minimum Funding Levels as they were in 2018/19 and set the funding cap at 1.6%. However, it was recognised that there was no ideal solution. The numbers of schools gaining and losing under the proposed arrangements were fairly similar to previous years. Those gaining the most tended to be the schools with guaranteed pupil numbers like new schools whilst those losing the most were mainly those with falling rolls. The Committee's decision would be reported to the Cambridgeshire Schools Forum at its meeting on 18 January 2019.

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

- A Member commented that the close correlation between pupil numbers and funding highlighted the implications for existing schools of opening new schools where there was no basic need;
- A Member sought clarification of whether it was for the Schools Forum to approve the transfer of funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block or whether the decision rested with the Committee. Officers stated that under the Regulations it was for the Schools Forum to decide whether to transfer funds from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block, but that it was for the

Committee to approve the funding formula for primary and secondary maintained schools;

- A Member asked about the impact of the proposals on smaller rural schools. Officers confirmed that these were the schools most at risk;
- Councillor Downes stated that he would be attending a meeting of the F40 Group the next day as the Council's representative and that, with the consent of the Committee, he would be continuing to press the Council's concerns. The Chairman thanked Councillor Downes for the considerable time he gave to representing the Council on the F40 Group and stated that, regardless of Members' political affiliations, the Committee was under no illusions of the challenge being faced;
- A Co-opted Member commented on the need to factor in the inflationary costs of running schools. Smaller schools in particular were less able to mitigate the impact of these costs than larger schools. They expressed thanks to the Local Authority (LA) for its work on this issue, but cautioned that whilst there was value in campaigning for change this must not be seen as an excuse for schools not to act to address the situation. It was their understanding that some schools were in discussion with the LA about closing due to these pressures.

Officers stated that Government funding bore no real relation to inflationary costs and that more schools could be expected to fall into financial difficulty if this did not change. The Chairman acknowledged this, but stated that it was important to be clear that the Council was not at the stage where schools would be closing.

- The number of schools requiring the Minimum Funding Guarantee in the current round had dropped from around 50 to around 40;
- A Member commented that after all of the work on the National Funding Formula (NFF) done by the Council and Schools Forum they felt it was appalling that schools would still receive less income per pupil. Should Option 3 be approved they felt it would be important to continue to protest that Cambridgeshire's schools would still not be funded at the DfE's minimum funding level. They were also concerned that the transfer of funds from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block affected every child's funding and about the implications for high needs provision if this transfer was not permitted in future. The Local Authority needed to plan now for this scenario. Officers stated that high needs funding was a key national as well as local issue;
- A handful of Local Authority schools in Cambridgeshire were reporting deficits of around £50k, but no maintained schools were reporting deficits significantly larger than this;
- A Co-opted Member asked whether any governing bodies of maintained schools were in discussion with the Local Authority about the viability of their schools over the next three years. Officers stated that no formal applications had been received. The Service Director for Education stated that he was not aware of any big issues with viability within the secondary school sector, although these were not maintained schools. Serious discussions were continuing within the F40 Group about budgets for the next three years and he offered a paper on this issue to a future meeting to provide more information.
- **(Action: Service Director for Education)**

The Chairman thanked the Head of Integrated Finance Services and his team for their hard work in preparing the proposals before the Committee.

It was resolved by a majority to:

- a) note the £1.7m transfer of Dedicated Schools Grant funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block approved by the Schools Forum;
- b) approve the Cambridgeshire schools funding formula, for primary and secondary mainstream schools as set out in Section 4 and Appendix 3 to enable submission to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) by the deadline of 21 January 2019.

INFORMATION AND MONITORING ITEMS

199. CAMBRIDGESHIRE EDUCATION OUTCOMES 2018

The report to the Committee set out the performance of Cambridgeshire's maintained schools and academies in the end of Key Stage assessments and tests for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Year 1 Phonics tests and Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 for 2018. GCSE results were provisional pending the expected release of updated figures from the Department for Education (DfE) at the end of January 2019. The report contained comparative national figures. There was still work to be done across most Key Stages and the Service Director for Education's report to Committee in November 2018 had set out the focus on how to improve these figures going forward.

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

Key Stage 4 (GCSEs)

- A Member commented that they understood that the position had been worse around 10-12 years ago, but that somehow schools had improved the outcomes of the Key Stage 4 cohort. They asked whether it was expected that improvements at the EYFS and Key Stages 1-3 would lead to further improvements in outcomes at Key Stage 4. Officers confirmed that this was the expectation and that there was a focus on ensuring outcomes reached at least national level across all Key Stages;
- A Member commented that it would be useful to know how Opportunity Area funding was being used in Fenland and East Cambridgeshire to support better educational outcomes. They suggested a presentation by the Opportunity Area Lead;
(Action: Service Director for Education)

Post 16

- A Member commented that the report showed a mixed picture with good outcomes at Key Stage 4, but a bumpy journey on the way. They expressed some surprise that A level results were below the national average and suggested the presentation of Post 16 data might in future give some context to the results, such as 'ranked xx out of xx'. Officers confirmed that outcomes amongst this cohort would continue to be monitored. This was the first time Key Stage 5 data had been reported in this way and its future presentation would be reviewed in the light of Members' comments. The next report would include more detail on destination data, but it was important to remember that the Post-16 cohort was self-selecting;

- A Member noted differences in the Post-16 offer around the county and commented that Post 16 transport was an issue as this might prevent young people from accessing their preferred Post 16 course;
- A Member asked about performance across time in a number of geographical areas. The Service Director for Education stated that all data was in the public domain and that he would be happy to direct Members to the information relating to areas of particular interest to them on request.
- The Service Director for Education offered a further paper focusing on Post 16 education;
(**Action: Service Director for Education**)

Fenland

- A Member commented that they had 10 grandchildren attending schools in Fenland and they found the situation depressing. They questioned when outcomes in Fenland would improve. The Service Director for Education stated that he had met with headteachers and senior leaders from 17 Fenland schools earlier in the day and identified a number of interventions. The response had been very positive and there was a recognition of the need for schools and the Local Authority to work together to drive forward positive change. However, whilst recognising the educational issues in Fenland, it was also important to take account of the wider context in Fenland and the challenges faced.
- The Vice Chairwoman commented that there were also positive stories to tell about education in Fenland, not least due to investments made in the area. This needed to be continued. The Service Director for Education was also being seen to hold individuals and organisations to account.

The Chairman thanked the Service Director for Education and his team for their hard work over the past 12 months and urged that this momentum should be maintained.

It was resolved to:

- a) note and comment on the findings of the report.

200. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT- NOVEMBER 2018

The Chairman stated that the position on those areas of the budget within the remit of the Children and Young People Committee remained unchanged from that reported to the Committee in December 2018 so he had agreed that officers need only provide a short update report on this occasion.

A Member commented that the number of pupils attending schools judged as Good or Outstanding (Special Schools) by Ofsted was now shown as red-rated, but their recollection was that this was usually rated green (paragraph 1.2). Officers undertook to provide advice on this point;

(**Action: Strategic Business Partner**)

A Member asked for current figures on Looked After Children. Officers stated that as of 14 January 2019 there had been 767 children and young people in the Council's care including 82 or 83 unaccompanied asylum seeking children. This was a slight decrease from the previous month, but still around 100 more than were being cared for by Cambridgeshire's statistical neighbours.

It was resolved to:

- a) note the report.

OTHER DECISIONS

201. AGENDA PLAN, APPOINTMENTS AND TRAINING PLAN

The Chairman proposed that some future Committee meetings should be held away from Shire Hall to facilitate wider public access. To this end it was hoped that the meeting on 12 March 2019 would be held at Fenland Hall, March. Some Members expressed reservations about the practicality of alternative locations and it was agreed that the position would be reviewed after meeting away from Shire Hall had been trialled. The Reserve Committee date of 12 February 2019 was not required and would be cancelled.

The Committee reviewed the agenda plan and a Member asked when further reports on whether the proposed amalgamation of Eastfield Infant and Nursery School and Westfield Junior School could be delivered with a £7m budget and the capital works at Spring Common Academy would be brought back to the Committee.

(Action: Assistant Director: Education Capital and Place Planning)

Members reviewed Committee appointments to internal advisory groups and panels and outside bodies and noted vacancies on the Cambridgeshire Culture Steering Group and the March Educational Foundation. The latter vacancy would be drawn to the attention of local Members if no member of the Committee wished to take this role on.

The Committee accepted the advice of Councillor Bill Hunt, the Member for Soham South and Haddenham, that there was no longer a need for county councillor representation on the Elizabeth March Charity in Haddenham. No further appointments would be made.

The Chairman stated that in his capacity as Committee Chairman he was routinely advised of School Governor appointments, but going forward these would also be reported to the Committee on a termly basis for noting.

It was resolved to:

- a) note the following changes to the Committee agenda plan:

March 2019:

- i. Remove the report on Medical Pupil Referral Unit;
 - ii. Consolidate the reports on Review of Children's Centre Changes and Developing Family Safeguarding in Cambridgeshire into a single Service Director's Report.
- b) note vacancies on two outside bodies: Cambridgeshire Culture Steering Group and March Educational Foundation. Local Members would be made aware of the March Educational Foundation vacancy;
(Action: Democratic Services Officer)
 - c) Confirm that county councillor representation on the Elizabeth March Charity, Haddenham was no longer required;

- d) note school governor appointments for the period September to December 2018;
- e) note the Committee training plan.

Chairman
(date)