

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE: MINUTES**

**Date:** Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2014

**Time:** 2.00pm to 4:40pm

**Present:** Councillors P Ashcroft (substituting for Cllr Clapp), D Brown (Vice-Chairman), P Brown, S Bywater, D Divine, P Downes, D Harty, G Kenney, M Leeke, M Loynes, F Onasanya, T Orgee (substituting for Cllr Wisson), M Rouse, S van de Kerkhove and J Whitehead (Chairwoman)

Diocese of East Anglia Representative – Mr P Rossi

**Also present:** Councillor I Bates

**Apologies:** Councillors P Clapp, J Wisson and F Yeulett

### **25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **26. MINUTES – 29<sup>th</sup> JULY 2014**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairwoman.

### **27. PETITIONS**

No petitions had been received.

### **28. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE CAPITAL BUSINESS PLAN PROPOSALS**

The Committee considered a report on the planned programme of capital investment in educational provision for children and young people aged 0-19 over the period 2015-16 to 2019-20.

The Committee noted the following points:

- the prioritisation of schemes would be reviewed across the whole programme by the General Purposes Committee in October, before firm spending plans were considered by Services Committees in November. These would then form part of the overarching Business Plan for full Council to consider in February;
- the Council's statutory responsibilities to provide a school place for every child living in its area of responsibility, and the rolling capital investment programme it ran to ensure there were sufficient places for the expected number of children;

- how the Council had anticipated a Basic Need allocation by the government of around £36M for 2015-2017, but had been allocated just £4.4M, and how it planned to address this shortfall and review its capital programme. The review of the capital programme included four schemes that were effectively being deferred, changes to primary school investment in March (spreading the investment over a longer period), and two schemes in Fordham and Burwell where further option appraisal work would be carried out to see if there were alternatives to meeting the additional capacity required.

Arising from the report, Members:

- discussed their concerns regarding the DfE's shortfall in funding, noting that the DfE had allocated all of its current round of funding, with the exception of a national reserve to deal with growth pressures. Members commented that there was such compelling evidence that there were overwhelming growth needs in Cambridgeshire. It was agreed that lobbying on this issue needed to be sustained, and officers were asked to arrange a meeting with the county's MPs, so that Members could raise their concerns on this issue;
- discussed the competing pressures on Section 106 funding, i.e. between schools and other infrastructure;
- commented on the particular population pressures in Huntingdonshire, and discussed the expansion of Cromwell Park School in Huntingdon, and the options available for expansion at that site. Officers advised that a report on education provision for Huntingdonshire would be presented to Committee early next year;
- noted that £36M was the anticipated Basic Need funding allocation for the whole county for 2015-17, and that the Council had secured just an additional £3.06M to its £4.4M allocation, on the basis that Cambourne Village College had originally been incorrectly categorised by the DfE as a Free School;
- discussed the issue of inconsiderate parking by parents, which was a problem for most schools, and noted the work that had been done and was being done to address these problems. Members were advised that some Cambridgeshire primary school children had recently made a music video about poor parking by parents, which had achieved very positive coverage nationally:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxvjT21Ujuw> The Committee asked for their congratulations to be passed on to the children involved in this project;
- confirmed their support for the four schemes being removed from the programme. Three were to establish new schools or expand an existing school in response to planned housing growth as follows:
  - i. A primary school to serve the Ermine Street (Northbridge) development in Huntingdon scheduled for 2016-17
  - ii. Expansion of either Upwood or Bury Primary school in response to proposed development at RAF Upwood in Huntingdonshire scheduled for 2016-17
  - iii. A primary school to serve the proposed Wintringham Park development on the eastern edge of St Neots, Huntingdonshire to be built in two phases, the first phase was scheduled for 2017-18 and the second for 2019-20

The fourth scheme was for the Blue School in Cambourne to remain and expand on its current site for the time being;
- Indicated their support for the planned expansion of All Saint's Aided School in March to be replaced with an expansion of places at the town's Maple Grove Infant School and, subsequently, at its partner junior school, Westwood. This has the

benefit of providing a better match between catchment demand and places and also of spreading the cost of investment over a longer period.

It was resolved to:

a) note the up-to-date position with regard to Cambridgeshire's Basic Need capital allocation for the two year period 2015-16 and 2016-17 and the changes made to the Children and Young People's rolling programme of capital investment in the light of this allocation;

b) approve the revised planned programme of capital investment for the period 2015-16 to 2023-24.

## **29. CHILDREN'S CENTRES: EXEMPTION FROM CONTRACT REGULATIONS FOR THE DELIVERY OF FIVE CHILDREN'S CENTRES**

The Committee considered a report on a proposal to extend the contracts of two voluntary sector providers of Children's Centres for twelve months until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

Children's Centres have been provided by a varied mix of providers, including Local Authority managed centres, nursery schools, primary school and voluntary sector organisations. Romsey Mill and Ormiston Families were voluntary sector providers who have been responsible for delivering Children's Centres in Romsey Town, March and Chatteris since the Centres were first established. Ormiston Families was awarded the contract in 2008 following a competitive tendering exercise, and a service level agreement was established between the authority and Romsey Mill in the same year. Since March 2014, Romsey Mill's contract has been extended to include the delivery of Cherry Hinton Children's Centre and Ormiston Families to deliver Whittlesey Children's Centre to 31/03/15. Approval was being sought to extend Romsey Mill and Ormiston Families' contracts to deliver these Children's Centres for a further year, i.e. up to 31/03/16. The background to the reasons for this extension were outlined in the report and explained fully by officers. Officers also advised of the potential legal risk from competitors challenging the process not going to competition, but the risk was considered to be minimal in view of the intention to release the contracts for competitive tender in April 2015.

Arising from the report, Members:

- one Member commented that he was usually averse to contract extensions, but in this case he felt the circumstances merited an extension;
- noted the background to the Expression of Interest that had been submitted, and how the Community Right to Challenge operated, by enabling voluntary and community bodies, charities, parish council and groups of two or more local authority staff to express an interest in running services the Council provides, within certain timeframes;
- noted that officers worked proactively with the voluntary sector, investigating, cultivating and developing those relationships, particularly in those areas where there was a strong voluntary sector;

- a Member observed that the Community Right to Challenge was potentially an expensive process for the Council. Officers agreed that it could be, but the Council had a legal responsibility to regularly accept and explore Expressions of Interest, and there was limited scope for local authorities to counter the Community Right to Challenge.

It was resolved to:

approve a contract exemption with respect to the following Children's Centre contracts:

1. The extension of Romsey Mill's existing contract to deliver Children's Centres in Romsey and Cherry Hinton for 1 year from 1st April 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016;
2. The extension of Ormiston Families' existing contract to deliver Children's Centres in Whittlesey, March and Chatteris for 1 year from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016.

*With the agreement of the Committee, the Chairwoman agreed to take the following item out of sequence:*

### **30. TOGETHER FOR FAMILIES (TROUBLED FAMILIES) PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered a report providing an overview and update on the development of the Together for Families programme to date, and to outline Phase 2 of the national troubled families initiative.

Officers explained how the Together for Families (TFF) project worked, by providing the families with the most problems with focused support in a wide range of areas. For the highest need families, a lead professional works with the families, to look at addressing a wide range of issues e.g. education issues, crime and anti-social behaviour issues and worklessness. 920 families meeting the criteria had been identified in the county, and lead professionals worked with 95% of those families. The income generated so far from the government for participation in the first phase of this project, and the anticipated income from the second phase, were noted. Moreover, the real value in the programme had been the benefit to the families who had been helped through the programme, and the reduction in future costs to various agencies with dealing with issues from these families, not only the County Council but partners, including the Police and Health sector. The TFF approach had the full support of Cambridgeshire's Public Services Board, who saw it as a way in which future public sector services could be 'rewired' to deliver more effective and less costly services. The Troubled Families Unit nationally has also been very pleased with how Cambridgeshire has run the programme.

A short film was shown, in which the father of one of the families involved in the first phase of TFF outlined his family's experiences, and how they had benefitted as a result of their involvement with the Family Intervention Partnership. Members also noted that lessons had been learned from the Phase One, and the government had adapted the second phase of the programme accordingly. A particular focus in the second phase was the data collection relating to the cohort of families. The second phase also

supported the Council's direction of travel in terms of prevention, early help, building on the Common Assessment Form (CAF) process and targeting the right families at the right time.

Arising from the report, Members:

- welcomed the development but asked if there sufficient resource for the data handling requirements of the second phase. It was noted that the officer previously employed in that post was shared with another project, but for Phase Two a whole-time dedicated officer would be recruited to support the programme;
- discussed the relationship between the Locality teams and the TFF programme. Officers confirmed that there was no intention was to dismantle Locality teams and then effectively reconstruct them through this Programme;
- in response to a question, noted that the objective was a 100% success rate with the families on the programme, but there was also a target to meet the threshold of 65% by October as a minimum, and these targets were considered quite stretching. Again, the greater impact was the improvement in the lives of the families involved in the Programme, and avoiding costs elsewhere in the system – it was estimated that every £1 spent on the Programme resulted in savings of £3.40 by the relevant agencies;
- noting from the short film of one father's experience, including the regret about the support coming to an end, a Member asked if there was any tapering of the support or follow-up/maintenance options. Officers explained that the timescales were explained clearly to the families so they were not surprised when the programme came to an end. Whilst there was some option for follow-up work, this was not usually necessary;
- asked if it would be helpful for Councillors to contact the Together for Families team if they became aware of families who may benefit from the project. Officers confirmed that they would be happy to receive such information and appreciated that Councillors were in touch with their communities and had valuable local knowledge, although they would not be able to share any information about such families with Councillors;
- noted that the team was still experiencing problems with data sharing, especially from two housing providers. A Member pointed out that housing associations often had Councillors on their Boards or advisory groups, and those Councillors could assist in raising this issues with the relevant housing providers. It was also noted that the Children's Trust was looking at the issue of data sharing;
- discussed the community budget approach and noted the positive response of the Police and City Council – the programme benefitted a wide range of partner organisations in terms of savings. Officers agreed to share a report on the fiscal benefits of investment in the programme, but stressed that the overriding benefit was the better outcome for troubled families in the county;
- congratulated Alison Smith and her colleagues for their valuable work in this programme. It was agreed that a document with a breakdown of the families by location, etc, could be circulated to the Committee **ACTION: Alison Smith.**

It was resolved to:

approve the current direction of travel of the Together for Families programme in Cambridgeshire.

### 31. EXPANDING PRIMARY SCHOOL PROVISION IN WISBECH

A report was presented on the work undertaken to secure the expansion of primary school provision in Wisbech, and to seek the Committee's support for a proposal by the Brooke Weston Trust for the opening, in September 2016, of a new 420 place primary school as a Free School, to be co-located with the Thomas Clarkson Academy (TCA). It was noted that the Brooke Weston Trust was already the sponsor of TCA, which served Wisbech and the surrounding rural area.

An amended recommendation was put forward by the presenting officer, to address the concerns raised by the Wisbech Partnership that schools were not directly involved in the consultation process regarding the proposed Free School, although it was noted such consultation with other local schools was not obligatory:

*"subject to evidence of further consultation with local primary partner schools by Brooke Weston trust a statement of the County Council's support for the proposal is included within the trust's bid documentation to be submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) prior to the 10 October 2014 deadline".*

It was noted that:

- Free Schools were subject to the same Ofsted inspection process as other schools;
- only a Free School, Academy or Voluntary Aided School could be established;
- if the Academy route was taken, would be open to a competition;
- the Council did not have the results of the consultation, which had been carried out by the Brooke Weston Trust.

Arising from the report:

- a number of Members commented that given the deprivation in Wisbech, it was important to not delay the process, but for the Committee to support the bid proposal so that the new school would be in place by September 2016, to meet the urgent local need;
- a Member expressed reservations about the wording in parts of the questionnaire, specifically "...a Primary Free School... will increase choices available in the town." which implied competition and divisiveness, when this was not desirable. He also expressed concerns as to whether the Free School would only employ qualified teachers, whether or not they would be following the national curriculum, and whether the School would be working in collaboration with other schools in the town. A number of other Members supported these points;
- a Member commented that schools would always be in competition, and applauded the good progress made by TCA, and felt that having the primary school on the same site would be an advantage;
- a Member noted that whilst endorsement by the Council was not required, the DfE did take into account whether an Authority supported or opposed such applications.

A number of Members expressed strong reservations about endorsing the application for the Free School when they felt vital information was lacking, specifically they did not know the views of parents, other consultees and local schools. Whilst acknowledging that the timescales were tight, it was suggested that these issues could be investigated by either an ad hoc task and finish group, or be delegated to the Executive Director,

working with the Chairwoman and Vice-Chairman. They pointed out that this would also have the benefit of flagging up to the Trust the interest of County Councillors. A Motion was proposed, and on being put to the vote, was lost. The Committee then voted on the substantive Motion, which was carried by a majority (10 votes in favour, 4 against and 1 abstention).

It was resolved to:

1. support the bid proposal by the Brooke Weston Trust for the opening of a new 420 place primary school in Wisbech to be co-located with the Thomas Clarkson Academy;
2. subject to evidence of further consultation with local primary partner schools by Brooke Weston Trust, a statement of the County Council's support for the proposal is included within the trust's bid documentation to be submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) prior to the 10 October 2014 deadline.

### **32. ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL IN GODMANCHESTER**

The Committee considered a report on the outcome of the process adopted by the Council to discharge the statutory requirement, under the Education Act 2011, to seek an Academy or Free School sponsor for the new primary school to serve the Bearscroft Farm development and the wider Godmanchester community. The report sought the Committee's endorsement of the Godmanchester Community Education Trust as the Council's preferred sponsor for this new primary school, subject to the Trust being granted approval by the Secretary of State for Education as an academy sponsor.

Following the invitation for potential sponsors, proposals had been received from the Godmanchester Community Education Trust and the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust. Representatives from both potential sponsors attended a public meeting, where they presented their proposals and responded to detailed questions. Subsequently, a joint Member/officer Assessment Panel met and assessed each application. This Panel recommended the Godmanchester Community Education trust to the Committee as the Council's preferred sponsor, noting that the sponsor was not currently an approved academy sponsor. The outcome of the Trust's application to become an Academy sponsor would be known later in the month.

A Member who had attended both the public meeting and the assessment panel commented that these processes were extremely thorough and rigorous, and he contrasted the way that this process had been undertaken, compared to the Free School application that the Committee had considered in the previous agenda item.

It was resolved to:

1. Endorse Godmanchester Community Education Trust as the Council's preferred sponsor for the new primary school to serve Godmanchester, subject to the Trust being granted approval by the Secretary of State for Education as an academy sponsor; and
2. Endorse the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust as an alternative sponsor for the new primary school to serve Godmanchester in the event that the

Godmanchester Community Education Trust is unable to secure approval from the Secretary of State for Education as an academy sponsor.

### **33. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT - JULY 2014**

The Committee received a report setting out financial and performance information for Children, Families and Adults as at the end of July 2014. Members noted that the overspend in the placement budget for looked after children had reduced by £300K, although a pressure of £500K remained, as external placements would exceed those budgeted for. The projected overspend on the Home to School Transport budget had increased by £398K, mainly due to (i) the retendering of routes not achieving the savings anticipated and (ii) the deferral of two proposed safer route reviews. The Executive Director outlined the reasons for the overspend in the use of agency staff, which was for essential posts only in Children's Social Care, and how it was being addressed.

It was further noted that since the last report, there had been a £12M slippage in the capital programme, which was a timing issue due to a number of schemes being delayed for a variety of reasons, including the primary school for Northstowe, the Southern Fringe secondary school, plus £5M slippage due to re-profiling of secondary school demographic planned expenditure.

Arising from the report, Members:

- noted that the proportion of pupils attending Cambridgeshire schools judged good or outstanding by Ofsted had improved, but was still a cause for concern. The main reason was that a number of the county's largest secondary academies had slipped from 'good' to 'requires improvement';
- in relation to Education Transport, asked about children who travel to school in taxis. Officers advised that the main use of taxis was for children with special educational needs, and whilst every effort was made to minimise these costs e.g. by a number of children sharing taxis, there were limits as to what savings could be made in this area;
- noted that work was being undertaken on a regional basis to address the issue of agency staff costs, with a single procurement option being investigated. The Council had also successfully converted a number of agency staff to permanent Council contracts, where this was appropriate.

It was resolved to:

Note the report.

### **34. FEEDBACK FROM TOPIC LEADS**

The Chairwoman invited Topic Champions to update the Committee on their topic areas.

Councillor Onasanya (Early Years Topic Champion) reported that she had had a meeting with staff at the Fields Children's Centre. The staff had expressed concerns with the recent directive that there should be formal education for two year-olds, and had asked if the Committee could support them in any way with the "too much too soon" campaign.

Councillor David Brown (Children's Social Care Topic Champion) advised that he had met recently with Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption team and discussed concurrent planning for babies. Members discussed what was being done to promote foster caring within the county. Councillor Brown also advised that Hampton Academy Trust was the recommended sponsor for that Academy, which was a Peterborough School.

Councillor Downes (Quality of Education Topic Champion) advised that he had recently attended a workshop on *Accelerating Achievement* (the new name for *Narrowing the Gap*). At that workshop, Rosemarie Sadler (the Council's Head of School Intervention Service) had reported that the Council was marginally moving in the right direction in relation to accelerating achievement. Councillor Downes urged Members to use their influence with Governing Bodies, Parish Councils, etc, to encourage parents to apply for Free School Meals when they are eligible, as this increased the Pupil Premium available for schools, which was a very significant investment.

Councillor van de Kerkhove (Early Help Topic Champion) reported back on meetings he had had with Diane Lane on youth engagement, and a subsequent meeting with Nikki Booth. There was a particular issue when about young people with mental health problems moving from CYP's care to Adult Services.

### **35. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN AND APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

Members received the agenda plan for the Children and Young People Committee, and noted changes that had been made since publication.

Members agreed that when they requested a report for a future Committee, a meeting date should be specified.

It was resolved to:

Note the agenda plan, including the updates reported orally at the meeting.

Chairwoman