

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 22 April 2014.

PRESENT: Mr M A C Balfour, Mr D Brunning, Mr L Burgess, Mrs P T Cole, Mr G Cowan, Mrs M E Crabtree, Mrs T Dean, MBE (Substitute for Mr M J Vye), Mr S C Manion, Mr M J Northey, Mr C R Pearman (Substitute for Mr J M Ozog), Mr L B Ridings, MBE, Mr W Scobie, Mr T L Shonk, Mrs P A V Stockell and Mr A Tear

ALSO PRESENT: Mr R W Gough and Mr P M Hill, OBE

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr S Bagshaw (Head of Fair Access), Mr P Leeson (Corporate Director Education & Young People Services), Mr J Nehra (Area Education Officer - West Kent), Mr K Shovelton (Director Education Planning & Access) and Mrs M White (Area Education Officer - East Kent)

#### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

**1. Substitutes**  
(Item A2)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Vye and Mr Ozog. Mrs Dean and Mr Pearman attended as substitutes.

**2. Election of Chairman**  
(Item A3)

Mr Northey proposed, seconded by Mr Manion that Mr Ridings be elected as Chairman of this Cabinet Committee.

*Carried*

*Mr Ridings took the Chair*

**3. Election of Vice Chairman**  
(Item A4)

1. Mrs Crabtree proposed, seconded by Mr Balfour that Mrs Cole be elected as Vice Chairman of this Cabinet Committee.

*Carried*

2. RESOLVED that Mrs Cole be elected as Vice Chairman of the Education and Young People Services Cabinet Committee

**4. Declarations of Members' Interest relating to items on today's Agenda**  
(Item A5)

No declarations were made.

**5. Future Meeting Dates 2014**  
*(Item A6)*

RESOLVED that the future meeting dates of the Education and Young People Services Cabinet Committee for 2014 be noted as follows:

Wednesday, 23 July

Wednesday 24 September

Tuesday 16 December

*(All meetings will commence at 10.00 in the Darent meeting room)*

**6. Introduction to the new Cabinet Committee**  
*(Item A7)*

1. Mr Leeson advised on the additional responsibilities of the new Education and Young People Services Directorate included services from the Communities Portfolio and the Children's Services portfolio which included Children's Centres, Early Intervention and Prevention for children, young people and their families including Family CAF co-ordination, Adolescent Services Social Work Assistants, Early Years Treasure Chest, Commissioned Services for early intervention and prevention, Inclusion and Attendance – Child Employment and Young Carers Co-ordination.

2. Mr Hill explained that although the Communities Directorate had been decommissioned the portfolio continued within the remit of three of the Directorates and Cabinet Committees. Within the remit of Education and Young People Services was the Youth Services, Troubled Families, Inclusion and Attendance – Education Youth offending and Community Learning and Skills. He highlighted that a major concern for the County Council and nationally was Troubled Families and there were significant targets to achieve. Mr Hill agreed to submit a report to a future meeting of this Cabinet Committee on Youth Service contracts.

3. RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Community Services submit a report on Youth Service to a future meeting of the Cabinet Committee and the information in the verbal update be noted with thanks.

**7. Decision Number: 14/00039 - Proposed Closure of Chaucer Technology School, Canterbury**  
*(Item B1)*

*(Report by Mr P Leeson, Corporate Director for Education and Young People Services)*

*(Mrs M White, Area Education Officer for East Kent, and Mr K Shovelton, Director of Education Planning and Access were present for this item)*

1. Mr Leeson introduced the report that outlined the proposal to close Chaucer Technology School, Canterbury, for all year groups except the current year 10 from 31 August 2014. Part of the school would remain operational until August 2015 to enable year 10 pupils to complete their GCSE courses.

2. Mr Leeson expressed his regret that the school had to close but the situation for Chaucer Technology School had become untenable.
3. The Chairman advised that he had used his discretionary powers to allow members of the public to speak on this item. No requests had been received by the Democratic Services Officer from the public to speak for or against the proposal.
4. Mr Gough and Mr Leeson responded to comments and questions by Members which included the following:
  - a) Mr Cowan stressed in the strongest terms that he considered that the information in the report on the closure of the Chaucer Technology School a fait accompli. He highlighted his point by referring to paragraph 1.10 of the report which referred to the pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 being offered and accepting alternative schools places. He suggested that the issues regarding Chaucer Technology School should have been brought to the Cabinet Committee earlier for discussion. Mr Cowan stated that he would vote against the recommendations to close the school. Mr Gough advised that the events regarding the Chaucer Technology School had moved rapidly from December 2013 to the end of January 2014. He too regretted that parents learnt about the proposal to close the school following information being leaked to the press. This had occurred following preliminary discussions being made with local schools to ascertain whether there were places available to take pupils from Chaucer Technology School. It was not clear whether there was a better way of proceeding with a proposed closure as there had to be an assurance that there were places for the children locally should the decision be made to close the school.
  - b) In response to a comment made that Year 10 pupils needed support even though it was proposed that they would remain in the school until they completed their GCSEs. There had been concerns about the effect on extra curriculum activities etc. Mr Leeson said the remaining pupils in Year 10 would have the upmost support from Swale Academy Trust and would have opportunities for trips etc. It was a priority to ensure that all pupils had a good chance of completing their education.
  - c) Mr Leeson paid tribute to the local neighbouring schools that had welcomed and integrated pupils from Chaucer Technology School into their schools.
  - d) Mrs Dean made a request for more detail on the issue/options considered when drafting the report eg proposed housing developments in the area, neighbouring schools expansions/relocating to be forwarded outside the meeting.
  - e) A Member welcomed the public being given the opportunity to speak on this item and would like to see this practise continued. The Chairman advised that his decision to allow public speakers would be considered on a case by case basis.
  - f) In reply to a question, the Chairman advised that public meetings held as part of the consultations regarding school closures/expansions etc were open to all Members, cross party; and Members were encouraged to attend.
  - g) In response to a question regarding the need for additional secondary schools in the future in Canterbury, Mr Leeson and Mrs White advised that KCC had been working closely with Canterbury City Council regarding future housing developments and was confident that there would be no requirement for additional secondary school places in the Canterbury area until the middle of

the 2020s. The largest development was to be in South Canterbury which required a lot of enabling work from Kent Highways. Mr Gough considered that it was likely that the Chaucer Technology School site would be kept for educational purposes.

- h) The local Member, Mr Northey, reflected on his statement on page 12 of the report and said that few people had approached him regarding the closure of the school.

5. The Chairman proposed, seconded by Mr Balfour, that the Chaucer Technology School site should be retained for additional educational use and that further analysis of future need be undertaken to inform whether any part of the site could be disposed of or made available for alternative use.

*Carried 8 votes for 5 against*

6. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the responses to comments and questions by Members be noted;
- b) the Education and Young People Services Cabinet Committee endorses the decision to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform to issue a public notice to close Chaucer Technology School for all year groups except the current Year 10 from 31 August 2014 and to close the school permanently from 31 August 2015;
- c) the Education and Young People Services Cabinet Committee recommends that the Chaucer Technology School site be retained for additional educational use and further analysis of future need be undertaken to inform whether any part of the site could be disposed of or made available for alternative use;

And following the issuing of the Public Notice and subject to consideration of objections:

- d) Close the School for all year groups except the current Year 10 from 31 August 2014 and to close the school permanently from 31 August 2015.

Should objections, not already considered by the Cabinet Member when taking this decision be received during the notice period a separate decision would be required in order to continue the proposal and to allow for proper consideration of the points raised.

**8. Decision Number 14/00040 - New Primary School at Knights Park, Tunbridge Wells**

*(Item B2)*

*(Report by Mr P Leeson, Corporate Director for Education and Young People Services Cabinet Committee)*

*(Mr J Nehra, Area Education Officer for West Kent and Mr K Shovelton were present for this item)*

1. The Area Education Officer for West Kent, Mr Nehra, introduced the report that sets out the processes undertaken to establish a new school at Knights Park, Tunbridge Wells and the associated financial implication for Kent County Council.

2. Mr Nehra advised that this was key to delivering sufficient primary school places in Tunbridge Wells and the SEND Strategy. A proposal had been submitted to the Secretary of State and a decision on the appointed academy sponsor was expected in May 2014. He then highlighted an amendment to paragraph 2.2 a ii. third line which should read "However the cost net of the developer contributions is expected to be approximately £1.6m."

3. Mr Balfour moved the report, seconded by Mrs Stockell.

4. RESOLVED that:-

a) the Education and Young People Services Cabinet Committee endorses the decision to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform to:

i. Allocate £5.4 million from the Education Learning and Skills Capital Budget to fund the capital cost of the new primary school at Knights Park.

ii. Authorise the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support in consultation with the Director of Governance and Law to enter into any necessary contracts/agreements on behalf of the County Council.

iii. Authorise the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support to be the nominated Authority Representative within the relevant agreements and to enter into variations as envisaged under the contracts.

## **9. Post 16 Transport Policy**

*(Item C1)*

*(Report by Mr R Gough, Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform and Mr P Leeson, Corporate Director for Education and Young People Services Cabinet Committee)*

*(Mr S Bagshaw, Head of Fair Access and Mr K Shovelton, Director of Education Planning and Access were present for this item)*

1. Mr Leeson introduced the report that explained the local authority's legal duty to consult on its Policy for Post 16 Transport and publish a Post 16 Transport Policy Statement by 1 June. Mr Leeson advised that the existing Policy remained the same with changes made to the travel pass.

2. Mr Bagshaw explained that it was proposed to reduce the cost of the travel pass to learners from £520 to £400.

3. Members were given the opportunity to make comments and ask questions which included the following:-

- a) A comment was made that this policy was an improvement for pupils.
- b) Mr Manion advised that schools had funding available to contribute towards the travel card. Mrs Dean sought information on this practise across the County.
- c) In reply to a question, Mr Bagshaw advised that schools and colleges could use bursary funding to further supplement the cost to learners if they wished and were able to allow staged payments for parents to access the travel pass. The local authority assisted this by invoicing the school or college at the end of each term.

4. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the information sought by Mrs Dean be forwarded outside the meeting; and responses to comments and questions by Members be noted;
- b) the proposed Kent Post 16 Transport Policy Appendix1 which was out for consultation and devised in light of the Member decisions already taken relating to the discretionary 16+ Travel Card Scheme be noted; and
- c) the Education and Young People Services Cabinet Committee endorsed the decision which was due to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform to agree the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement to be published by 1 June.

**10. Recruitment of Local Authority Governors**

*(Item C2)*

*(Report by Mr R Gough, Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform and Mr P Leeson, Corporate Director for Education and Young People Services Directorate)*

1. The Cabinet Member, Mr Gough, introduced the report that summarised the proposed action the local authority would take to comply with the new governance regulation to be introduced in September 2014, and September 2015 with regard to the local authority governors.

2. Mr Gough and Mr Leeson responded to comments and questions by Members which included the following:

- a) Members welcomed and generally agreed with the suggestions made within the report.
- b) With reference to the heading 'Role and Expectations of a Local Authority Governor', listed on page 55 of the report, which stated "Make a minimum of one governor visit to the school each year" a comment was made that schools and Ofsted expected a minimum of three visits as best practise. Mr Gough said that he had no objections to this suggestion.
- c) In reply to a question, Mr Gough advised that he was not aware of a maximum distance for which a governor had to live from a school to be appointed.
- d) It was suggested that with the number of vacancies for governors and tightening the criteria regarding skills base may cause even more issues in producing good governing bodies.

- e) Following a comment it was agreed that de-selection would be removed from the text.
- f) A comment was made that governors were generally working people and everything should be done to make carrying out their duties as straightforward as possible so that they are not put off applying.
- g) A suggestion was made that some subtle adjustments in the wording to encourage governors may need to be made for example "You would want to be a good governor therefore you will need to..."

3. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the responses to comments and questions by Members be noted;
- b) reference to de-selection be removed from the text;
- c) the revised duties of the Governor Appointment Panel (GAP) be noted; and
- d) the quality of local authority representation on governing bodies be strengthened.

**11. DfE Consultation "Fairer funding in schools 2015/16"**  
*(Item C3)*

*(Report by Mr K Abbott, Director of School Resources)*

1. The Cabinet Member, Mr Gough, introduced the report and highlighted key points within the report which included the removal of the variations of allocations and the tackling of allocation of distinction between local authorities. He explained that there was now one off funding that looked at those local authorities that were underfunded. This approach had worked against Kent as Kent had moved towards greater delegation to schools. He ensured Members that Kent would be submitting a robust response to the consultation.

2. Mr Leeson confirmed that Kent was in the top list of local authorities that were poorly funded he gave the example of £85k per pupil received by London where in Kent £4k per pupil was received. He advised that Kent schools that were in financial difficulty were receiving support and placed on an agreed recovery programme for 2-3 years.

3. A comment was made that if additional funding was received this should be allocated to the Dover, Ramsgate and Thanet areas, Mr Gough advised that the allocation of this funding was mandated.

4. RESOLVED that the responses to comments and questions by Members be and the information provided on the consultation and Kent's proposed response be noted.