

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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, 13 January 2015.

PRESENT: Mr L B Ridings, MBE (Chairman), Mrs P T Cole (Vice-Chairman), Mr L Burgess, Mr G Cowan, Mrs M E Crabtree, Mr M J Northey, Mr J M Ozog, Mr C R Pearman, Mr W Scobie, Mr T L Shonk and Mr M J Vye

ALSO PRESENT: Mr P J Oakford and Mr P M Hill, OBE

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P Leeson (Corporate Director Education & Young People Services), Mr K Abbott (Director School Resources), Mr D Shipton (Head of Financial Strategy), Mr S Bagshaw (Head of Fair Access), Ms S Dunn (Head of Skills and Employability), Mrs L Simpson (Acting Head of Inclusion) and Ms C A Singh (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

49. Apologies and Substitutes
(Item A2)

Apologies were received from Mr Balfour, Mr Manion, Mr Tear and Mr Brunning
Mr Brookbank attended as substitute for Mr Balfour.

50. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda
(Item A3)

No declarations were received.

51. Verbal updates
(Item A4)

1. The Cabinet Members, Mr Gough and Mr Oakford; and the Corporate Director gave their verbal updates and highlighted the following:-

2. The Corporate Director, Mr Leeson, advised that Ofsted published its annual report on Schools and Early Provision in December and held good news for Kent on Early Years provision and outcomes for children at the Early Years Foundations Stage were mentioned as one of the examples of best practise in the country. The validated assessments for Key Stage 2 were available and Kent achieved 79% at level 4 in reading, writing, mathematics at the end of primary at the age of 11 years which was in line with the national average and a significant step forward for Primary education in Kent.

3. The Cabinet Member, Mr Gough, spoke on the National Funding Schemes advising that there were likely to be announcements on the range of future national

funding schemes which include; (1) Basic Need – news was expected on the allocation for 2017/18, Kent had made representation on the particular demographic pressures in Kent including inward migration into the county following, what was considered, inadequate funding for 2015/17. Mr Gough explained that during the announcement of the 2015/17 funding the government held back £300 million for allocation of areas of particular pressure. (2) The Priority School Build II [A partial substitute for Building Schools for the Future] of £2 billion, Kent had submitted bids for 19 Kent maintained schools a total of £75.5 million, some schools, academies, had made their own bids. (3) There was a small additional pot of money available to local authorities of £20 million in relation to universal Free School Meals. Kent submitted 16 bids, totalling just over £3 million. The outcome of all the bids was awaited.

4. The Cabinet Member, Mr Oakford, advised that a report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee on 20 January 2015 regarding the implementation of the work carried out by Newton Europe on the Service Design phase of the 0-25 Unified Programme.

5. Mr Oakford praised the Swattenden facility which he visited on 13 January.

6. Mr Oakford advised that he had been accompanying social workers once a week, attending their offices and making visits to clients. He had also freed up time to spend time every other week with an Early Prevention officer and planned to visit every Children Centre across Kent over the coming months.

7. Mr Gough, Mr Oakford and Mr Leeson noted comments and responded to questions as follows:

a) Mr Leeson advised that the school improvement services offered support to every school in Kent whether it was a local authority school or not. Time was allocated to every academy and the offer was made and largely the offer of support was accepted. There were a small number of cases where the offer was refused. Marlow Academy had been experiencing difficulties for some time and the local authority had been speaking with the DfE and the Regional Schools Commissioner for the South East of England about the declining standards in the school. There had been some progress in recent weeks in terms of the school's openness with the local authority's School Improvement Service which was a breakthrough. For the past year the local authority had brokered areas of support for the Marlow Academy from other schools in the area. The criticism by the Ofsted report was fact but it was difficult when the local authority was not permitted to have direct intervention power over an academy when it was under performing and they chose not to engage. He advised that there were now positive steps being made with Marlow Academy. Mr Leeson considered that the wording by Ofsted was not helpful as the inspectors were fully aware of the limits of the local authority regarding academies and he would be taking this up with Ofsted as the wording gave the wrong impression to those who did not have knowledge of the limitations the local authority had regarding its intervention with academies.

b) Mr Leeson advised that he had spoken with Mr De Haan about the two academies he sponsors. There had been every indication from Mr De

Haan that he wanted regular conversations with the local authority but the decision to engage with the local authority had been made by the school's governing body.

- c) Mr Oakford advised that a grass roots review on fostering had been completed. He welcomed the opportunity to speak with Mr Cowan on his views.
 - d) Mr Gough agreed that the number of primary school places had been increasing and would continue to do so, although there had been a drop in the birth rate in 2013 but it was not known whether this was a blip. He considered that it would be interesting to note what happens in the secondary sector as this had been a dip for some time and those presently in primary school would be working their way through the system to secondary school. Seven new primary Kent schools would be opening in September 2015. Pressures for primary school places would remain. The local authority would have to wait to see what it received from Basic Schools allocations to see how best to respond to the pressures.
 - e) Mr Gough agreed to submit a report on the conditions of all Kent schools to a future meeting of the Capital Group and a decision to be made at that meeting on the need for any issues to be submitted to this Cabinet Committee.
 - f) Mr Gough advised that some of the seven new primary schools would not be fully opened but would open in a phased way.
 - g) Mr Leeson agreed to submit a report on how Kent interacts with Kent academies.
 - h) A Member said that the data from the Education and Young People's Services Directorate on the attainment of children in care that was reported to the Corporate Parenting Panel needed to be co-ordinated. Mr Gough advised that the Management Information Unit used published data.
8. RESOLVED that the responses to questions by Members and the information in the verbal updates be noted.

52. Proposed Co-ordinated Schemes For Primary And Secondary Schools In Kent And Admission Arrangements For Primary And Secondary Community And Voluntary Controlled Schools 2016 /17
(Item B1)

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

(Mr S Bagshaw, Head of Fair Access, was also present for this item)

1. The Corporate Director, Mr Leeson, introduced a report on the outcome of the consultation on the proposed scheme for admission to Primary and Secondary

School in September 2016 including the proposed process for non-coordinated In-Year Admissions which would be determined by Cabinet.

2. The Head of Fair Access, Mr Bagshaw, highlighted that there were no proposals that changed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools. There were minor changes including Ramsgate Primary School to introduce a linked arrangement and consultations were being held presently, which may result in minor changes to the report.

3. Mr Leeson and Mr Bagshaw noted comments and responded to questions as follows:-

- a) Mr Bagshaw advised that the local authority did consult with neighbouring authorities most conformed to the nationally set term dates.
- b) Mr Bagshaw advised that the local authority has the authority to direct schools to take children in care. There was mostly a good understanding from schools as the local authority would not want to put a child in the wrong place.
- c) Mr Leeson advised that due to the exceptional pressures in Thanet on primary school places the local authority would speak with the placing authority about not placing children in Thanet. This was not a special rule but was appropriate to manage the situation and it would not be appropriate to make a reference to this in the Admissions documentation. Mr Bagshaw advised that there was clear legislation on this matter; these were arrangements for school settings and not beyond.
- d) Mr Leeson confirmed that the local authority was obliged by law not to exceed 30 in a class at Key Stage 1 but in exceptional circumstances for Key Stage 2 also.

4. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the responses to questions by Members be noted; and
- b) the Education and Young People's Cabinet Committee endorsed the proposed decision to be made by Cabinet to accept and determine:
 - i) the Coordinated Primary Admissions Scheme 2016/17 incorporating the In Year admissions process as detailed in Appendix A of the report.
 - ii) the Coordinated Secondary Admissions Scheme 2016/17 incorporating the In Year admissions process as detailed in Appendix B of the report.
 - iii) the oversubscribed criteria relating to Community and Voluntary Controlled Infant, Junior and Primary schools in Kent 2016/17 as detailed in Appendix C (1) of the report.
 - iv) the oversubscribed criteria relating to Community and Voluntary Controlled Secondary schools in Kent 2016/17 as detailed in Appendix D (1) of the report.
 - v) the Published Admissions Number for Community and Voluntary Controlled Infant, Junior and Primary Schools 2016/17 as set out in Appendix C (2).

vi) the Published Admissions Number for Community and Voluntary Controlled Secondary Schools 2016/17 as set out in appendix D (2).

vii) the relevant statutory consultation areas for Kent Primary School 2016/17 as detailed in Appendix C (3) and the relevant statutory consultation areas for Kent Secondary Schools 2016/17 as set out in appendix D (3).

53. Elective Home Education Policy
(Item B2)

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

(Ms L Simpson, Acting Head of Inclusion was also present for this item)

1. The Cabinet Member, Mr Gough introduced the report on the draft Elective Home Education (EHE) Policy. He explained that Cabinet agreed to defer approval of the revised EHE Policy pending further consideration and a process of engagement on the revised EHE policy.

2. Mr Gough highlighted paragraph 1.2 of the report regarding the significant increase in EHE registrations from 703 in 2008 to 1326 in 2013-14. There was particular concern with vulnerable groups which had formed the focus for the revised Policy. The current practise had shown that some families had been using EHE as a last resort and were not choosing the option proactively. Mr Gough identified that the law and guidance in 2007 offered no clarity as to how the local authority would know there was an issue. Paragraph 4.2 highlighted the conditions where heightened risks would be identified. A decision report would be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

3. The Corporate Director, Mr Leeson, explained that there were varying positions from other local authorities on the issue of EHE but Kent's view was to be proactive. There had been a rapid increase in EHE, especially adolescents who had been consistently absent from school or who had been excluded. The Policy was required to ensure where there was some reason for concern, the child and the evidence of learning would be seen. Where there had been a breakdown of communication between the parents and the school or cases of bullying there had been a good track record of getting those issues resolved and those children back to school.

4. Mr Gough, Mr Leeson and Ms Simpson responded to questions by Members as follows:-

- a) Mr Leeson advised that there were no exam results available for EHE. There were 1400 EHE in Kent and half of those were not visited, there was no contact and there was no one monitoring them.
- b) Ms Simpson advised that 50% of EHE had visits and 300 had returned to mainstream education.
- c) Mr Gough explained that the local authority had to act within the law and guidance and it could not exceed its powers. Kent was doing everything it

could. If a child did not fall into one of the categories set out in the report where there is a whistle blower it would come under the category "reason to believe" which would give the local authority access.

- d) Members noted that there were excellent examples of EHE but the Policy was the best way to reconcile principles to keep children safe and well educated.

5. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the responses to questions by Members and the report be noted; and
- b) the Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee agreed that a process of engagement be undertaken on the revised EHE Policy, prior to consideration by Cabinet.

54. Adult Learning and Skills Strategy 2015 - 2018

(Item B3)

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

(Ms S Dunn, Director of Skills and Employability, was also present for this item)

1. The Corporate Director, Mr Leeson, introduced the report that outlined the consultation process on the draft Adult Learning and Skills Strategy for Kent. The Strategy would help to increase adult employment, provide better pathways, increase participation especially for vulnerable and disability groups and refocus the County Skills Service.

2. Mr Leeson and Ms Dunn responded to questions by Members which included the following:

- a) A comment was made that this was an excellent report and a comprehensive Kent Adult Datapack and congratulations were extended to the Skills and Employability Team.
- b) A Member looked forward to receiving the outcome of the consultation at the 7 April meeting.

3. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the responses to questions by Members be noted;
- b) the Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee endorsed the recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform to undertake consultation on the Adult learning and Skills Strategy for Kent; and
- c) agreed to receive the outcomes of this consultation at the Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee meeting on 7 April 2015.

55. Budget 2015/16 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/18
(Item C1)

(Report by Mr J Simmonds, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement, Mr R Gough, Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform, Mr M Hill Cabinet Member for Community Services and Mr A Wood, Corporate Director for Finance and Procurement)

(Mr D Shipton, Head of Financial Strategy and Mr K Abbott, Director of School Resources were also present for this item)

1. The Head of Financial Strategy, Mr Shipton, introduced the report that sets out the proposed draft budget 2015/16 and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTP) 2015/18 as it affects the Education and Young People's Services. He advised that the provisional settlement had been received on 18 December and the settlement on 23 December and the final draft budget was published on 12 January 2015.

2. The draft Budget was based on the provisional settlement from government received on 18 December 2014, and the provisional Council Tax figures, which had been received just before Christmas. The provisional settlement had been largely as expected but the Council Tax base showed a 1.7% increase on the current year, which was higher than expected. The budget consultation had been based on an increase of 0.5% providing an extra £6.2m available in the budget. This additional tax base had been allocated in the draft budget to cover additional spending of £2.8m; including pressures on school transport. There were no savings proposals that directly affected this portfolio.

3. The Cabinet Member, Mr Gough, advised that the Education and Young People's Services Directorate budget would contribute to the overall budget savings of the County Council.

4. Mr Gough highlighted that there were particular pressures with SEN transport of £1.8m. There were steps being taken to deliver savings through a range of initiatives including travel training for vulnerable young adults, personal budgets for families and the devolution of some budgets to schools. He referred to SEND Strategy, which was building up capacity in Kent for more local SEN provision, which would also help deliver savings.

5. Mr Gough stated the successes of the trading activity eg Education psychology and School Improvement. There was restructuring being carried out and the reduction in staffing was being carried out where possible through natural wastage. Many of the posts proposed to be deleted are already vacant. Wherever possible frontline serves would be protected.

6. Mr Gough explained that we were in the fifth year of flat cash for the DSG in 2015/16 and within this pressure on schools continued to mount. A change in the funding formula tied closely to pupil numbers and the demography of number in the secondary schools being at a relatively low level at present were adding to the pressure on schools.

7. Mr Gough, Mr Shipton and Mr Abbott noted comments and responded to questions by Members follows:

- Members thanked officers for arranging the budget to be available for consideration at the meeting. [The draft budget appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4 were restricted from publication until 12 January when they were made available to the public]. Members agreed to this method being used for future budget reports.
- Members were advised that the virements that had occurred throughout the year and base budget adjustments would be detailed in the final budget book for submission at the next County Council meeting in February.
- Members were advised that the Travel pass was negotiated through the Integrated Transport Unit and any reports are submitted to the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee.

8. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the responses to questions by Members be noted; and
- b) the draft budget 2015/16 and MTFP 2015/2018 (including responses to consultation and Government announcements) and make recommendations to the Cabinet Committee Member for Finance and Procurement and the relevant Cabinet Members for Education and Young People's Services on any other issue which should be reflected in the budget and MTFP prior to Cabinet on 28 January 2015 and County Council on 12 February 2015.

56. Supporting the Well-Being and Effectiveness of Headteachers
(Item C2)

(Report by Mr P Leeson, Corporate Director of Education and Young People's Services)

1. The Corporate Director, Mr Leeson, introduced a report that sets out the way the Local Authority worked with Headteachers to support them in being effective in carrying out their responsibilities to lead good schools, and how the Local Authority discharged its duty of care for the wellbeing of Headteachers.

2. Mr Leeson advised that schools continued to be supported by local government services. Every school has named officers from a range of local authority services that were attached to the school and worked with them, including the four Area Education Officers and School Improvement Advisors.

3. The local authority supports the recruitment of new Headteachers and provides advice, support and guidance, training and other professional development opportunities.

4. The Kent Association of Headteachers supports collaborative working and partnership arrangements between Headteachers through specific funding allocated by the Schools Funding Forum.

5. Kent continues to provide a wide range of support to school where Headteachers should not be without support, both professional and personal support. Where Headteachers are experiencing stress they are encouraged to take up support from a trusted colleague or to access County Council's counselling service.

6. Mr Leeson responded to questions by Members as follows:

- a) A Member commented that this was a timely report as it listed the types of support that can be offered to Headteachers and teachers.
- b) A Member commented that the contents of the report was the right way forward in supporting Headteachers particularly those with difficulties in their schools. He stated that Headteachers had made representation to him regarding their fears for their careers. Mr Leeson stated that the success of the education system in Kent depended on the quality of its Headteachers. Kent had strong school leadership with nearly 80% of schools in Kent being judged good or outstanding and this would not be achieved without good leadership and management. Mr Leeson said that Kent was enormously grateful for the work carried out by its Headteachers to improve Kent schools. 25 schools in Kent had failed their Ofsted inspections and the aim was to reduce that number significantly and avoid schools having that experience in the future. In a number of cases that would have been through the failure in leadership. He clarified what he said at previous meetings by stating that it was government policy that a failed school in Ofsted terms would become an academy with a change in leadership and governors as a result. This was not necessarily the case as Kent had supported Headteachers in schools that received an inadequate rating because they had not been in post that long and were effective leaders. Support would be given to continue the improvements they were there to achieve. Kent had a responsibility to take action where leadership was unable to do the job.

7. RESOLVED that:-

- a) the responses to questions by Members be noted; and
- b) the Education and Young People's Cabinet Committee noted the contents of the report and endorsed the actions being taken by the Local Authority to support Headteachers to be effective leaders of their schools.

57. Work Programme 2015
(Item C3)

(Report by Mr P Sass, Head of Democratic Services)

1. The Democratic Services officer, Mrs Singh, invited Members to suggest items for future meetings.

2. In response to a request, Mr Leeson agreed to submit a report explaining the interaction between the Local Authority and Academies and for decisions on proposed Commissioning agreements to be submitted to future meetings of the Cabinet Committee.

3. RESOLVED that the Work Programme appended to the report be noted subject to the additional items detailed in paragraph 2 above being included.