

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CHILDREN'S, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee held at Online on Friday, 15th January, 2021.

PRESENT: Mrs L Game (Chairman), Mr D Murphy (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A D Allen, MBE, Mr M J Angell, Mr D L Brazier, Mrs P T Cole, Mr G Cooke, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Ida Linfield, Mr R C Love, OBE, Mr S C Manion, Mr M Reidy and Dr L Sullivan

OTHER MEMBERS: Richard Long, TD, Peter Oakford and Sue Chandler

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

219. Apologies and Substitutes
(Item 2)

There were no apologies for absence.

220. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda
(Item 3)

Dr Sullivan declared an interest as her husband worked as an Early Help Worker for Kent County Council

221. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2020
(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee held on 18 November 2020 were correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

222. 20/00117 - Admission Arrangements and Scheme for 2022-23 Academic Year
(Item 5)

Craig Chapman (Interim Head of Fair Access) and David Adams (Interim Director for Education) were in attendance for this item.

- 1) Mr Chapman introduced the report and it was noted that the scheme was broadly in agreement with the current system.
- 2) In response to questions, it was noted:
 - Children who sit the Kent Test early were not permitted to sit the test again a year later. Once a child had sat the test, that would denote their grammar standard but would not preclude a child from accessing a grammar school at other times in their school career.
 - There were 6 schools not using Pupil Premium and those that did not use it had indicated that they had looked at their intake patterns and

were confident that they were offering a proportionate number of places to children with Pupil Premium.

3) RESOLVED to note the report.

223. 20/00119 - SIMS Contract for LA Maintained Schools
(Item 6)

Katherine Atkinson (Assistant Director of Management Information and Intelligence) was in attendance for this item.

1) Ms Atkinson introduced the report for the SIMS Contract for Local Authority Maintained Schools and said that it was the most cost effective and non-disruptive solution for schools.

2) In response to questions and comments, it was noted:

- As part of stakeholder engagement, schools had been consulted and most responses were from primary schools. It was confirmed that only maintained schools were able to vote on issues relating to maintained schools. The feedback had indicated that schools were happy using SIMS for their returns.
- Members raised concerns around data loss and system migration. There was a rigorous programme of 'back ups' managed by Cantium and work was being done to consolidate ICT systems across the Children's directorate and to ensure systems were joined up.

3) RESOLVED to note the report.

224. 20/00123 - Liquidlogic Contract for Integrated Children's Services and Disabled Children's Services
(Item 7)

Katherine Atkinson (Assistant Director of Management Information and Intelligence) was in attendance for this item.

1) Ms Atkinson introduced the report regarding the Liquidlogic contract for Integrated Children's Services and Disabled Children's Services. In the longer term, a move towards using the same case management system across Children's and Adults' services would be explored.

2) In response to questions and comments from Members, it was noted:

- There had been some performance issues following an upgrade to the system in 2019 which were recurrent. However, significant work had been undertaken and the problems had been resolved.
- The key purpose of the system was to safeguard children. There was a monthly log from Cantium which flagged any issues day to day and the severity of the issues.
- Work was being undertaken with Cantium to install LAM which would allow Liquidlogic to see live performance issues and to take pre-emptive actions where there were upcoming issues.

3) RESOLVED to note the report.

225. 20/00124 - Provision of therapeutic practitioners for Kent's post adoption support service
(Item 8)

Christy Holden (Lead Commissioning Manager – Children's) was in attendance for this item.

1) Ms Holden introduced the report regarding the provision of therapeutic practitioners for Kent's post adoption support service.

2) In response to questions from Members, it was noted:

- The contract with Coram was to be extended by up to 3 months as a transition period and following this, there would be efficiency in staff already working within a multi-disciplinary team being directly managed in house.

3) RESOLVED to note the report.

226. The Education People (TEP) Update
(Item 9)

David Adams (Interim Director for Education) was in attendance for this item.

1) Mr Long introduced the TEP update and said that the report was not about the financial performance of TEP as a trading company and was about the quality of the delivery of the services it was contracted to provide for KCC and schools within KCC contracts. Members were reminded that questions around financial performance should be brought to the relevant committee meetings such as Governance and Audit Committee or Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee.

2) In response to questions and comments, it was noted:

- The report was to provide a general overview, showing performance against KPIs and PIs and Members were invited by the Chairman to request further details on performance in particular divisions from officers. The report showed the performance on the basis of KCC's contract with TEP, not the performance of TEPs contracts with schools.
- Concerns were raised about NEETs, particularly in the Canterbury area. TEP were contracted for work with NEETs from October 2020 and the report was looking at the performance in the previous year.
- In some areas such as examinations results or OFSTED reports, performance could not be reported because of the pandemic.

3) Dr Sullivan asked for it to be noted that she did not support the recommendation and Ms Linfield asked for it to be noted that she had abstained.

4) RESOLVED to note the report.

227. 20/00113 - Proposal to allocate £6,187,241 to permanently expand Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys, Nackington Lane, Canterbury Kent CT4 7AS from 120 places to 150 places from September 2022
(Item 10)

1) RESOLVED to note the report.

228. 20/00114 - Proposal to expand Whitstable and Seasalter Endowed CE Junior School from 192 places to 240 places, increasing the published admission number (PAN) from 48 to 60 for Year three entry in September 2021
(Item 11)

1) RESOLVED to note the report.

229. 20/00115 - Proposal to permanently expand Highsted Grammar School, Highsted Road, Sittingbourne, ME10 4PT from 120 places to 150 places for September 2022
(Item 12)

Marisa White (Area Education Officer – East Kent) was in attendance for this item.

1) Ms White introduced the report and updated Members regarding the highways and transport considerations connected with this school expansion. The school would be taking the plans through the Planning process. A condition of an approved plan would be for a footpath to be elongated. There were concerns around a bus stop to accommodate school buses for Highsted Grammar School and the nearby Fulston Manor School.

2) RESOLVED to note the report.

230. 20/00116 - Proposal to allocate Basic Need funding and enter necessary contracts to enable the second phase of expansion at Broomhill Bank School
(Item 13)

1) RESOLVED to note the report.

231. Performance Monitoring
(Item 14)

Katherine Atkinson (Assistant Director of Management Information and Intelligence) was in attendance for this item.

1) Ms Atkinson introduced the Performance Monitoring scorecard and reported that some indicators were out of date due to the impact of the pandemic, such as those that related to SATs or examinations.

2) There had been challenges with regard to meeting safeguarding requirements as children had not been in the school setting or families were isolating due to Covid-19. However, high performance levels had been maintained in this area.

- 3) There had continued to be a backlog for Education, Care and Health Plans but performance was starting to improve.
- 4) There was an increased level of demand for school places for children with special educational needs and work was being done with SEN and Commissioning teams.
- 5) The target percentage of 100% of children and young people being offered a home visit within 10 schools days of the Local Authority being informed of them being electively home educated had not been met but it was acknowledged that this was an ambitious target.
- 6) In response to questions and comments from Members, it was noted:
 - Members who wanted further details or data broken down by district were able to make a request. The performance monitoring data was used across the directorate.
- 7) RESOLVED to note the report.

232. Draft Capital Programme 2021-24 and Revenue Budget 2021-22
(Item 15)

Zena Cooke (Corporate Director, Finance) in attendance for this item.

- 1) Mr Oakford introduced the Draft Capital Programme 2021-24 and Revenue Report 2021-22 and advised Members that there was a lot of uncertainty and it had been difficult circumstances in which to prepare the draft budget.
- 2) Ms Cooke said careful consideration had been given to what should be included in the document which had been sent out to all Members. It was important to take strategic view on the draft budget during unprecedented times, considering the wider uncertainty and financial risk. Members were asked to pay attention to the financial appendices to the report which outlined the main components of the proposed revenue and capital budget with a particular focus on the revenue growth and savings proposals. Within the proposals, there were those specific to the CYPE Cabinet Committee but also included were the other proposals, which provided further context.
- 3) In response to questions and comments, it was noted:
 - In previous years, the detailed budget book had been produced outlining very small changes but did not provide detail about areas that could be challenged or where changes could be made. Members were able to ask specific questions about particular services or budgets.
 - There had been a large piece of work conducted by Finance with the mid-year budget amendment and this had impacted the capacity of the team to produce the level of detail given to Members in previous years.
 - Work was ongoing on the Capital Programme and an announcement from the Department for Education was anticipated regarding allocations up to 2023.

- Concerns were raised about the level of detail included in the papers about schools' maintenance.

4) RESOLVED to note the report.

233. Verbal Update by Cabinet Member and Corporate Director
(Item 16)

Sarah Hammond (Director Integrated Children's Services (Social Work Lead)) was in attendance for this item.

- 1) Mr Long (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills) said the rapidly changing guidance to schools from the Department for Education to the evolving Covid emergency had required Education officers to work through Christmas to provide much needed advice and support to Kent schools. All mainstream primary and secondary schools were to remain closed to all except the children of critical workers and vulnerable children. Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units remained open to all pupils as these fell within the vulnerable category. A school survey revealed that there were 5162 vulnerable children and 16,340 critical worker children and it was expected that the numbers would rise. The definition of vulnerable includes those without adequate access to online learning, and this was also starting to have an impact.

Early Years Settings, in line with government guidance, remained open to all pupils and had 13,899 in attendance which had dropped from the attendance level in December which was just over 27,000. Childminder numbers however remained stable. The government had responded to concerns about the funding for Early Year Settings which had been based on attendance figures and funding would reflect around 94% attendance.

Schools had a statutory duty to deliver remote learning with the minimum criteria set by government. There was a mix of both live and recorded teaching sessions as well as set time to complete tasks and assignments independently. KCC were providing advice and support to schools to ensure that they delivered the best education possible in the circumstances. Ofsted were to inspect schools where there were significant concerns about safeguarding or the quality of remote learning.

Secondary schools were to prioritise home learning to exam year groups and other year groups would be included as resources allowed.

KCC distributed laptops and tablets to all our children in care. The DfE had provided 3563 devices and 502 4G routers to Kent and these were deployed to all children with a social worker and vulnerable Year 10 children within maintained schools. Academies had their own allocation. The DfE aimed to deliver 1million devices by the end of the academic year.

In response to questions from Members, it was noted:

- Early Years providers should not be asking parents to keep their children at home. It would only be expected that this would happen if there were insufficient staff to open to all children.
- There should be an element of direct delivery of education from schools online.
- Kent's schools had been encouraged to issue free school meal vouchers to eligible families, rather than food parcels but individual schools made their decisions locally about how to deliver the free school meals.
- Schools were surveyed regarding devices for learning to identify gaps. Improvements were being made to access to devices and WiFi connections to support children's education.
- Period poverty was not within KCC's remit and therefore, information on this issue was not held.

2) Mrs Chandler (Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services) said despite unprecedented pressures on the Social Work Team face, all families with an assigned Social Worker had been contacted to ensure that families continued to receive the correct level of support and assistance. KCC had continued to ensure that all families were provided for through the help and support of the Social Work Team.

KCC had only received 6 new Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASCs) over the festive period which was considerably lower than previous years, however, this was a result of the closed border to France.

Covid-19 testing was being conducted at reception centres which had helped to reduce the number of UASC kept in quarantine and had allowed for a speedier transition. There had been a reduction in the number of UASC as a large cohort transitioned to Care Leavers on 1 January 2021.

The SEND Strategy Consultation was ongoing and 185 responses had been received, 48% from parents or carers of young people with SEND. 90% strongly agreed or agreed with the vision and 80% strongly agreed or agreed with the priorities. The full outcomes of the consultation would be brought to a future meeting.

In response to questions from Members, it was noted:

- Emphasis was put on safeguarding of children during the pandemic. Measures had been put in place to allow home visits to vulnerable families; guidance had been issued with regard to priorities, risk assessments were adhered to and appropriate PPE was provided for staff as well as for families who wished to wear PPE for visits.

3) Ms Hammond gave an update on behalf of Matt Dunkley, Corporate Director – Children, Young People and Education. Excellent work had been done by the Out of Hours Service, which covers Children's and Adults' services for Kent and Medway. Lessons had been learned from the first lockdown and there was a sharp focus on maintaining face to face contact with vulnerable children not having contact with professionals.

It was noted that the Out of Hours services had worked throughout the pandemic and the Christmas period, and had provided an excellent service for Children's and Adults' services across Kent and Medway.

The Toy Scheme which had been rolled out during lockdown for disabled children was to be expanded more widely. Activity boxes for families were to be provided to families whose children were not able to attend school.

Staff resilience and morale remained high. However, there were a reduced number of staff available to work in the community and redeployment options were being considered.

234. Work Programme
(Item 17)

- 1) RESOLVED that the Work Programme for 2020/21 be noted.