

CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SERVICES
12th January, 2015

Present:- Councillor (in the Chair); Councillors Beaumont, Lelliott and Roche.

F36. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

A member of the public referred to a letter published in the Rotherham Advertiser from a parent of a child at Abbey School. The parent was concerned about her daughter's education as, for half of the time, the School was closed to children and no reason had been given. The member of the public stated that the Local Authority should ensure that Schools were open all of the time. For example, if children were absent because they had been taken on holiday, parents would end up being fined. If the School had to be closed, parents should be given specific reasons as to why it had been closed, not general reasons.

The Service Lead for School Planning, Admissions and Appeals (Schools and Lifelong Learning, Children and Young People's Services Directorate) was shortly due to meet with the Interim Executive Board at Abbey School and would pass this information on to them.

Councillor C. Beaumont, Cabinet Member for Children and Education Services, referred to the duty on the Local Authority and Schools to ensure the safety of children and young people and to inform parents and carers if this was not the case. She agreed that reasons for any instances of school closures did need to be provided for every closure.

The member of the public asked a supplementary question and referred to a pressure campaign to make Abbey School unviable. He was aware of a parent who had been pressured by the Associate Headteacher who had stated that the parent's child would have to be educated at home if they did not accept an alternative school place immediately. The member of the public felt that this type of pressure made a joke of the democratic and consultation processes. If the School lost more than 50% of its students it would be de facto shut. The Local Authority must ensure that parents are not put under pressure to move their children. If and when the School closed the pupils should be guaranteed a place at another school at that point.

The Service Lead for School Planning, Admissions and Appeals (Schools and Lifelong Learning, Children and Young People's Services Directorate) confirmed that no Officers of the Local Authority were saying this to parents and carers. All Officers were aware that this was a consultation process and the decision would be a political one. The Local Authority considered Abbey School as operational until a final decision was made by elected members in June. The Service Lead agreed to pass this back to the Interim Executive Board.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Education Services referred to the external consultant's report, which would also inform the consultation process.

A member of the public referred to different messages he was hearing with regards to the involvement of Mr. Burman in Abbey School. In previous meetings it had been shared that Mr. Burman had left from this position of responsibility. However, the same day Mr. Burman had attended a meeting in Abbey School and still retained an education influence at the School. The member of the public asked for correct information.

The Service Lead for School Planning, Admissions and Appeals confirmed that Mr. Burman was still the Executive Headteacher at Abbey School. The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Children and Education Services of 8th December made reference to the Interim Executive Board (which has replaced the Governing Body), not the Executive Headteacher.

The Cabinet Member could not recall confirming this at any meeting, but agreed to look back carefully at the minutes of the meetings.

The member of the public stated the information was shared at meetings on 8th and 10th December, 2014.

F37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were made at the meeting.

F38. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Cabinet Member for Children and Education Services held on 8th December, 2014, were considered.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as an accurate record.

F39. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 30TH NOVEMBER, 2014.

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Finance Manager for Children and Young People's Services and Schools (Financial Services, Resources Directorate) that provided a budget monitoring update on the Children and Young People's Service revenue budget to the end of March, 2015.

The budget monitoring report was based on actual income and expenditure to the end of November, 2014. Overall, the Directorate was projecting an over-spend outturn position of £4.262M, which was an increase of 9.8% of the total budget. The reported position at the end of

November was an increase of £233,000 since the October budget monitoring report.

The report gave the net budget and forecast outturn for each division of service within the whole Directorate, and any variations.

The main variances were outlined, along with the underlying reasons shown in the submitted report. The main areas of over-spend related to:-

- Academy conversions – treatment of deficits - £310,000 (previous provision had also been made in the 2013/2014 accounts);
- Child Protection Teams - £125,000;
- Children in Need Social Work Teams - £579,000;
- Looked After Children - £3,502,000.

Some of the overspends were off-set against under-spends in other areas as outlined in the submitted report.

The Adoption Reform Grant that was first received in 2013/2014 was reduced by £746k in 2014/2015. The grant significantly mitigated LAC budget pressures in 2013/2014 on a temporary basis.

As at the end of November, 2014, there were 409 Looked After Children, which was an increase of 7 since the October budget monitoring report and an increase of 9 as at March, 2014. The submitted report outlined the type of looked after children's placement, along with current and previous financial year costs, including whether they were based in Out of Authority Residential settings, and independent or in-house fostering settings.

The report also outlined the use of Special Guardianship and Residence Orders. There was a continuing push to secure permanency for some children via these routes rather than becoming or remaining looked after children. This sought to reduce the numbers of Looked After Children and also provide better outcomes for children and young people.

Management actions had contributed £698,000 of cost avoidance which would otherwise have been incurred. These related to a reduction in placement costs of £598,000, the Fostering Framework had achieved £48,000 of cost avoidance, the Block contract had avoided £52,000 and the multi-agency support panel and the Valuing Care review would identify potential areas for cost renegotiations and ongoing savings in 2014/2015.

Further information was provided in relation to:-

- Agency spend totalled £655,000 as at 30th November, 2014. This compared to an actual cost of £541,000 for the same period last year;

- Non-contractual overtime totalled £66,000 as at 30th November, 2014, excluding schools. This compared to an actual cost of £84,000 for the same point last year. The overspend related mainly to cover in Residential Units.

Discussion followed and the following issue was raised: -

- Working with Schools that were in the process of converting to be academies, especially in the cases where there would be a deficit balance for the Local Authority to pick-up.

Resolved: - That that latest financial projection against budget for the year on actual income and expenditure to the end of November, 2014, be noted.

F40. ROTHERHAM'S INTEGRATED YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICE - QUARTERLY UPDATE.

Resolved: - That this item be deferred to the next meeting for further information.

F41. PROPOSAL TO MAKE A PRESCRIBED ALTERATION TO THE KILNHURST AUTISM RESOURCE CENTRE, HOOTON ROAD, KILNHURST

The Service Lead, School Planning, Admissions and Appeals, submitted a proposal to enter a Pre-Statutory Consultation phase to transfer the Kilnhurst Autism Resource Unit from Kilnhurst Junior and Infant School to Milton School control.

The discontinuance or transfer of a SEN Unit attached to a Maintained 'mainstream' School was classed as a 'prescribed alteration' under the 'School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013' and, therefore, necessary to consult on the proposals including a 4 weeks representation period prior to implementation.

There were no cost implications to the proposal; the building, associated resources and staff employed at the Unit would be transferred from under the control/employment of Kilnhurst to the control/employment of Milton School. A Service Level Agreement would be implemented between the two Schools to ensure smooth transition and onward operation.

Resolved:- (1) That Pre-Statutory Consultation commence on the following proposals:-

- (a) To discontinue the Kilnhurst Autism Resource Centre as an annex of Kilnhurst Junior and Infant School;

(b) Transfer control of the Unit to become a Satellite Unit of Milton School.

(2) That a further report be submitted to the Cabinet Member with details of the outcome of the consultation.

F42. PROPOSAL TO MAKE PRESCRIBED ALTERATIONS TO MILTON SCHOOL, STOREY STREET, SWINTON

The Service Lead, School Planning, Admissions and Appeals, submitted a proposal to expand Milton School by the addition of the Kilnhurst Unit satellite. The DfE School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 required a formal Pre-Statutory and Statutory Consultation process to be undertaken where expansion was above 10% of an existing Special School roll or there is a change of age range or type of SEN provision. The proposed expansion of Milton School exceeded the threshold.

It was proposed:-

- To re-designate Milton School as a school for pupils with learning difficulties. It was proposed to extend its remit beyond its current role for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. This would support greater diversity and parental choice as well as enabling the Local Authority to provide more flexibility in and targeting of placement decisions
- To increase the Admission Number at Milton School from 100 to 120 pupils by placing the specialist unit at Kilnhurst Primary School under its management and governance

Specialist provision would continue to be funded from the High Needs Block. The overall cost of specialist provision was not anticipated to change as a result of the proposal. The proposal would improve the Local Offer and consequently may realise savings on current out-of-authority and specialist provider expenditure.

The proposed timelines for the Pre-Statutory Consultation was included in the submitted report.

Resolved:- (1) That Pre-Statutory Consultation commence on the proposal to make prescribed alterations to Milton School.

(2) That a further report be submitted to the Cabinet Member at the end of the consultation period.

F43. TWO-YEAR OLD EARLY EDUCATION CAPITAL FUNDING PROPOSAL

The Childcare Sustainability Manager (Early Years and Childcare Strategy, School Effectiveness Service, Children and Young People's Services Directorate), reported on proposals to revise the method of allocating future capital funding to ensure more early education places for 2 year olds were created in areas of need and to ensure stabilisation of the childcare market due to significant changes in the market.

The 2011 Education Act stated that all economically disadvantaged and looked after 2 year old children would be entitled to 570 hours free early education from September, 2013. From September, 2014, this had increased to include more low income families, children with a special educational need or disability (SEND) and children no longer looked after but not returned to their family e.g. adopted children). The DfE estimated that in Rotherham approximately 1,600 children from September 2014, would meet the eligibility criteria.

Cabinet had approved the capital strategy to deliver sufficient early education places to meet the statutory entitlement for 2 year olds (Minute No. 94 of the former Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Services 13th March, 2013). It was originally intended to fund new places at a rate of £480 per new place created. To date 399 new places had been created across 14 providers (9 new providers created, 5 existing providers expanded) at a cost of £192,000. The childcare sufficiency analysis, which formed the basis of the original capital strategy, had been repeated in the Summer 2014 which had shown that the position had changed significantly due to a large increase of childminders who were now contracted to deliver early education places (19 to 81), the creation of new provision with support of the capital funding and the creation of new provision without capital funding.

The level of early education take-up by 2 year olds in Rotherham was one of the highest in the country with 78% of 2 year olds taking up a place in the Autumn term (compared to the national average of 55%).

In light of the above, it was proposed to revise the future allocation of capital funding:-

- Utilise the capital funding to make the necessary changes to Children's Centre buildings which will remain open in 2015/16
- Work with existing providers in geographical areas of need to identify potential to expand and fund them at a rate of £480 per new place created
- If, after 1 and 2 above, there was still a lack of capacity, open up opportunities for new provision to be created by either existing or potential new providers

- Retain capital funding into 2015/15 to ensure that further provision could be created if required following Summer 2015 childcare sufficiency analysis

Resolved:- That the proposal to review the 2 year old capital spend, as set out in the report submitted, be approved.

F44. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING: -

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Cabinet Member for Children and Education Services take place on Monday 16th February, 2015, to start at 10.00 a.m. in the Rotherham Town Hall.