

# **EXECUTIVE**

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON**

### **THURSDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2015**

**Councillors Present:** Dominic Boeck, Hilary Cole, Roger Croft, Lynne Doherty, Marcus Franks, James Fredrickson, Graham Jones, Alan Law and Garth Simpson

**Also Present:** John Ashworth (Corporate Director - Environment), Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Andy Day (Head of Strategic Support), Martin Dunscombe (Communications Manager), Andrea King (Head of Prevention and Developing Community Resilience), Rod Mercer (Chief Accountant (Operations)), Ian Priestley (Chief Internal Auditor), Andy Walker (Head of Finance), Rachael Wardell (Corporate Director - Communities), Stephen Chard (Policy Officer), Councillor Manohar Gopal and Councillor Alan Macro

#### **PART I**

##### **34. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2015 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Leader.

Councillor Alan Macro referred to the final paragraph of item 27 – Home to School Transport Policies and queried whether an ‘easy payment’ option would be available to parents to enable them to spread the cost of home to school transport over a year. Councillor Dominic Boeck explained that a response had been e-mailed by Officers to Councillor Mollie Lock, Shadow Portfolio Holder for Education, on this point and he believed that this cost could be spread over a year.

##### **35. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

Councillor Roger Croft, newly elected Leader of the Council, announced the new Executive which consisted of the following nine Members with the following Portfolios:

Councillor Roger Croft	Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Performance, and Finance
Councillor Graham Jones	Deputy Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, and Devolution
Councillor Dominic Boeck	Portfolio Holder for Education, Property and Broadband
Councillor Hilary Cole	Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Housing, Countryside, Community Culture and Leisure Services
Councillor Lynne Doherty	Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services
Councillor James Fredrickson	Portfolio Holder for Communications, Democratic and Electoral Services, Finance Assurance, Legal, Human Resources and ICT
Councillor Marcus Franks	Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, Equality, Community Safety, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Waste and Customer Services
Councillor Alan Law	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economic Development, Regeneration and Pensions

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Councillor Garth Simpson                      Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport and  
Emergency Planning

Councillor Alan Macro offered his congratulations to Councillor Fredrickson on becoming an Executive Member and to those Members with an extended Portfolio.

### 36. **Public Questions**

There were no public questions submitted.

### 37. **Petitions**

There were no petitions presented to the Executive.

### 38. **School Funding Formula 2016/17 (EX3052)**

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 6) concerning the requirement of the Council to decide the formula factors to use to distribute funding to all primary and secondary schools for the 2016/17 financial year.

Councillor Dominic Boeck explained that since the change to School Finance Regulations in 2013/14, the Council had been required annually to approve the school funding formula. This was in consultation with the Schools Forum and also included consultation with all maintained and academy schools. The Department for Education (DfE) had announced the arrangements for the 2016/17 funding formula for primary and secondary schools on 16 July 2015. There were no amendments to the regulations, and therefore the options available for the formula to be used to distribute funding to schools remained the same as for 2015/16.

School funding allocations were paid for from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and did not impact on the Council's budget. It was likely that the funding rate (per pupil) that the DSG was based upon would also remain the same, although this would be subject to the Government's spending review. The Council would be notified of its actual DSG funding for 2016/17 in mid December 2015.

At the Schools Forum meeting held on 13 July 2015, it was agreed that if there was no change to the regulations that would be of benefit to West Berkshire schools, their preferred option would be no change to the formula for 2016/17. A briefing/consultation document setting out this proposal (see Appendix C) had been sent to all primary and secondary schools on 1 September 2015. There had only been a few responses to the consultation and all except one had agreed with all the proposals. The one exception asked for consideration to be given to allocating more money through the deprivation factor, due to the fact that West Berkshire did have some pockets of serious deprivation.

At the meeting of the Schools Forum held on 28 September 2015, the members of the Forum confirmed that their preferred option would be to keep the funding formula the same for 2016/17 as that used in 2015/16 and this was recommended in the report.

If there was a funding shortfall, this would be addressed through an adjustment to the basic entitlement rate. If additional funding was available, the Schools Forum, at its January 2016 meeting, would decide whether this was all allocated through the basic entitlement rate or through other factors including deprivation.

Councillor Alan Macro referred to Appendix C (3) to the report and queried the justification for the fact that the budget for the two federated schools was 50% higher per pupil than a primary school with a similar number of pupils. Councillor Boeck agreed to provide a written answer on that point.

**RESOLVED that:**

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- (1) The formula factors for 2016/17 remain the same as those used in 2015/16.
- (2) If there was a funding shortfall, this would be addressed through an adjustment to the basic entitlement rate.
- (3) If there was additional funding available, the Schools Forum, at its January 2016 meeting, would decide whether this was all allocated through the basic entitlement rate or through other factors including deprivation.

**Reason for the decision:** The Council is required to decide the formula factors to use to distribute funding to all primary and secondary schools for the 2016/17 financial year.

**Other options considered:** None.

### 39. **Emotional Health re-design proposals for Children's Mental Health (EX3058)**

Councillor Lynne Doherty introduced the report (Agenda Item 7) which provided an update on the Brilliant West Berkshire Building Community Together emotional health re-design proposals for children and young people's emotional health services and which sought Executive approval of the design proposals for the Emotional Health Academy which included the creation of additional posts.

Emotional health need was one of the most common early indications of additional need; left unsupported, early emotional health difficulties could rapidly develop into a diagnosed mental health condition. Over 5,000 West Berkshire children had been referred to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) last year alone for emotional health services.

80% of children and young people asking CAMHS for support/help in West Berkshire did not receive a service. The vast majority of children subject to Child Protection Plans and those open to the Youth Offending Team had emotional health needs and many had mental health disorders. Most children were waiting over a year to be seen by a mental health professional and some were waiting over two years; for most children and young people, their condition would deteriorate significantly in that time.

Currently children and young people requiring extra mental health support were referred to a CAMHS single common point of entry (CPE). If they met the criteria and threshold they would be referred to Primary CAMHS workers who worked at Tier 2, or for more intense and specialist Tier 3 and 4 interventions. The Council currently gave £80k a year in funding which funded two 0.5 FTE (full time equivalent) workers. Just under 6,000 contacts for help and support had been made in West Berkshire in the last year which meant that having a resource of 1.0 FTE was insufficient to cope with demand.

As part of the Brilliant West Berkshire work it was proposed to create an Emotional Health Academy which was an innovative idea unique to West Berkshire and would use the funding provided by the Council more wisely. Schools and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) had also been asked to provide funding and the service would grow proportionately to reflect the level of funding from other agencies. The Department of Health and the Department for Education had looked at the proposals and had provided feedback that they were innovative. Feedback received from partners had also been positive.

The creation of an Emotional Health Academy would ensure that:

- Children would be seen in a week, rather than waiting a year. Newly qualified psychology graduates and other emotional health qualified staff would be trained to work with children and families in the communities in which they lived.

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- The Council would work in partnership to ensure that these staff worked closely with schools, GP surgeries, Children's Centres, the Police and crucially with the voluntary sector.
- The needs of the whole family would be looked at, not just the child by testing a new way of working with adult services to see how the Council could work more effectively with whole families; where both adults and children were affected by emotional health needs.
- Sustaining good health – the Council would support children and young people to develop sustainable strategies to keep themselves well and promote their long-term well-being; by drawing on their own resources, the resources of their friends and family; by utilising and creating community led resources.
- Getting to children early would reduce the pressure on child protection services and Tier 3 mental health services later.

The report also proposed to commission specialist voluntary sector providers to provide more non-stigmatising care in, and to, communities in close partnership with the Academy.

The Academy would require the creation of additional posts (four minimum and eight maximum) within the employment of West Berkshire Council. The business case appended to the report outlined the plans which would ensure that the Emotional Health Academy became financially self-sustaining and this would fund the posts.

Councillor Doherty felt these proposals were an excellent example of looking to improve service delivery in a more innovative way. The Executive was asked to give its support to progressing the implementation of the Emotional Health Academy, Emotional Health Triage and associated partnership working with the voluntary, community and faith sectors; and to approve the creation of new and additional posts.

Councillor Alan Macro noted that it was proposed for newly qualified psychology graduates to work with children and adolescents with emotional health needs and he queried whether these trainees would be adequately supervised. Councillor Doherty explained that a full time Clinical Worker and clinical supervision provided by Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust would be a key factor of this proposal and this was detailed within the full proposal document which had been provided.

Councillor Macro then queried how services would be covered during the transition from the existing service delivery to the new proposals, i.e. prior to the recruitment of the new posts. Councillor Doherty reported that the recruitment process for the new posts would commence immediately, subject to the Executive's approval, to enable workers to be recruited and inducted before the current Tier 2 Primary CAMHS contract came to an end, to enable the Academy services to be operationalised in good time for the 1 April 2016. It was also the intention for service provision to develop over time, i.e. as new posts were recruited to.

Councillor Macro also asked whether the service could continue should external funding cease, for example, from the CCGs. Councillor Doherty clarified that the CCGs had already indicated that they would be willing to contribute funding and there would be clarity by mid December 2015 on the funding which would be provided by schools. The Emotional Health Academy had a sustainable business model (see the Emotional Health Academy Business Case). The longer term intention was for children and young people with emotional health needs to be supported within their school/within their community.

**RESOLVED that** the design proposals for the Emotional Health Academy be approved, including the creation of additional posts.

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**Reason for the decision:** To provide an update on the Brilliant West Berkshire Building Community Together emotional health re-design proposals for children and young people's emotional health services and to approve the design proposals for the Emotional Health Academy which includes the creation of additional posts.

**Other options considered:** The Council could continue funding Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust to deliver the service. However, there were some concerns in relation to this option which were detailed within the report.

### 40. **Result of the review of the Insurance Fund by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (EX3042)**

Councillor Roger Croft presented the report (Agenda Item 8) which outlined the results of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission's (OSMC's) scrutiny of the insurance fund.

By way of background, Councillor Croft explained that Councillor Alan Law, at the time Portfolio Holder for Finance, asked the OSMC to review the operation and level of funding of the insurance fund. The results of the review were outlined in the OSMC report and in summary the review recommended that:

- the Council maintain a fund of between £950,000 and £1,500,000;
- the Head of Finance and the Finance Portfolio Holder conduct an annual review of the fund, making necessary adjustments to maintain the fund within the above limits; and the results of the review be reported to the Governance and Ethics Committee.

At the time the OSMC conducted the review, the level of the fund was £1,295,000. However at year end, 31 March 2015, this had dropped to £802,000.

The Head of Finance and Finance Portfolio Holder had since carried out a review of the insurance fund in line with the OSMC recommendation. This resulted in the transfer of balance sheet funds of £273k from the Berkshire Receipts Reserve (set up in 1998 to cover claims relating to Berkshire County Council) to the insurance fund reserve to bring the insurance fund back within the agreed limit of £950,000 to £1,500,000.

Councillor Law stated that he was willing to support the proposal to accept the OSMC's recommendations. In previous years, the fund had remained at between £1.2m and £1.4m which he felt was overly high. He was therefore a little disappointed at the proposed range for the fund. Councillor Law also questioned the reasons why the fund had dropped to £802,000. Councillor Croft confirmed that this was due to the Council needing to use this fund to meet the cost of claims which were at a relatively high level, which was why the fund was set up, as the Council had a large excess. Councillor Croft agreed to provide a more detailed written answer to Councillor Law and Councillor Alan Macro on this point.

Councillor Macro then queried whether claims could still be made against the Berkshire Receipts Reserve or whether this had been removed. Councillor Croft explained that the Section 151 Officer was comfortable with the cost of potential claims being met from the insurance fund reserve.

**RESOLVED that** the recommendation of the OSMC for an annual review of the insurance fund by the Head of Finance and Finance Portfolio Holder be accepted, with a view to maintaining a fund of between £950,000 and £1,500,000.

#### **Reasons for the decision:**

- (1) To consider the response to the OSMC's scrutiny review of the insurance fund.
- (2) To outline the result of the annual review of the insurance fund.

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(3) To highlight pressures on the insurance budget.

**Other options considered:** None.

### 41. **Members' Questions**

A full transcription of the public and Member question and answer sessions are available from the following link: [Transcription of Q&As](#).

(a) **Question to be answered by the Leader of the Council submitted by Councillor Lee Dillon**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Lee Dillon on the subject of whether consideration had been given to the Council co-operating with neighbouring authorities on all major procurements in order to reduce costs was answered by the Leader of the Council.

(b) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Member for Children's Services submitted by Councillor Alan Macro**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Alan Macro on the subject of how successful the recruitment of a Social Media Executive had been in helping to reduce external foster care placements was answered by the Portfolio Member for Children's Services.

(c) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Member for Property submitted by Councillor Alan Macro**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Alan Macro on the subject of the progress made in selling the depot site in Pound Lane, Thatcham was answered by the Portfolio Member for Property.

*(The meeting commenced at 5.00pm and closed at 5.23pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

**Date of Signature** .....