

EXECUTIVE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

THURSDAY, 19 JANUARY 2017

Councillors Present: Dominic Boeck, Anthony Chadley, Jeanette Clifford, Hilary Cole, Roger Croft, Lynne Doherty, Marcus Franks, James Fredrickson, Graham Jones and Rick Jones

Also Present: John Ashworth (Corporate Director - Environment), Sarah Clarke (Acting Head of Legal Services), Martin Dunscombe (Communications Manager), Andy Walker (Head of Finance), Rachael Wardell (Corporate Director - Communities), Claire White (Finance Manager (Schools)), Councillor Lee Dillon, Councillor Billy Drummond, Moira Fraser (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager), Councillor Mollie Lock and Councillor Quentin Webb

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Nick Carter (Chief Executive)

PART I

88. Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings held on 13 October 2016 and 22 December 2016 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Leader.

The Leader explained that items 8 and 11 on the originally published agenda (Public Health Nursing Services – 0-19 (25 SEND) HCP) were withdrawn from this agenda to allow further time to resolve issues identified within the reports. The items would return at the next Executive on 16 February 2017.

89. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Jeanette Clifford declared an interest in Agenda Items 6 and 7 by virtue of the fact that she was a school governor. As her interest was a personal interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest nor an other registrable interest, she determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

Councillor Roger Croft declared an interest in Agenda Item 7 by virtue of the fact that he was an ex-trustee of Thatcham Pre-School who made use of the Moorside Centre. As his interest was a personal interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest nor an other registrable interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

Councillors Billy Drummond and Mollie Lock declared an interest in Agenda Items 6 and 7 by virtue of the fact that they were school governors. As their interest was a personal interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest nor an other registrable interest, they determined to remain to take part in the debate.

90. Public Questions

There were no public questions submitted.

91. Petitions

There were no petitions presented to the Executive.

92. School Funding Formula (EX3053)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 6) concerning the proposal for the primary and secondary school funding formula for the 2017/18 financial year.

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Councillor Lynne Doherty in introducing the report noted that the School Finance Regulations required the local authority to review the school funding formula on an annual basis, consult with all schools on its proposals and gain political approval. This report set out the proposal for the primary and secondary school funding formula for the 2017/18 financial year. The proposed move to a national funding formula had been delayed by a year, and therefore there were minimal changes for 2017/18, none of which effected West Berkshire schools.

The proposal agreed by the Schools' Forum (after discussing the options with head teachers) was that if there was a reduction in resources that there would be a deduction in the per pupil basic entitlement rate, as this would have a proportional impact on every school in accordance with their size. If there were additional resources available, for the first £848k, 55% would be added to the per pupil basic entitlement and 45% added back to the lump sum.

Councillor Rick Jones asked for clarification about the impact the delay to changes to the national funding formula had had. Councillor Doherty noted that the consultation had only been announced just before Christmas. The Council was therefore currently working through the numbers in order to input into the consultation and as a consequence had not proposed changes for 2017/18.

Councillor Mollie Lock was concerned about the impact the formula could have on the District's small schools possibly resulting in them going into deficit. Councillor Doherty explained that the financial position of schools at risk of going into deficit was reviewed on a six monthly basis. Where appropriate an action plan would be put in place, each being developed on a case by case basis.

Councillor Lee Dillon commented that it was disappointing that West Berkshire Council's funding was below the national average. He queried whether it would be possible to submit a cross party response to the consultation. Councillor Roger Croft stated that he would consider whether or not to submit a joint response once he had seen what the Liberal Democrats proposed to say. Councillor Croft stated that it was disappointing that the Council's funding was slightly lower than the national average and that he did not welcome being penalised for West Berkshire being an economically viable and sustainable district.

RESOLVED that: the formula factors for 2017/18 were to remain the same as those in 2016/17.

55% be added to the basic entitlement (per pupil funding) which equates to £8 per pupil, and 45% be added back to the lump sum which equates to £1,400. This is the same proportion to the deduction that was made to school budgets in 2016/17 to transfer funding to the high needs block.

Reason for the decision: The School Finance Regulations require the local authority on an annual basis to review the school funding formula, consult with all schools on its proposals and gain political approval.

Other options considered: No other options were considered for the formula factors to be used or the amount of current funding that is put into each factor, mainly due to the fact that a national funding formula was due in 2018/19 and to make changes for one year only would cause unnecessary turbulence to school budgets.

There are various options available in distributing additional funding or reducing funding should this be required – through one factor only or a combination of factors. The proposal being recommended was following a discussion with head teachers on what they felt was fair, and this was agreed by Schools' Forum.

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93. **Alternative Provision for Young People with Additional Needs - Education Plan (EX3164)**

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 7) concerning the restructuring of the Pupil Referral Units from two services, Reintegration Service and Alternative Curriculum, into a single service providing Alternative Education Provision.

Councillor Lynne Doherty commented that bringing the services together would result in a more cohesive and robust service and would also generate savings.

Councillor Anthony Chadley welcomed the efficiencies that would be generated and queried what would happen to the affected buildings. Councillor Dominic Boeck stated that both the Riverside and Moorside buildings were community assets. Both had been funded by s106 monies and there were agreements in place in respect of retaining them as community assets. The Property Team were currently appraising the options available to the Council which included transferring the assets to the Clay Hill Residents' Association and Thatcham Youth, leasing them to other organisations or leasing them to a commercial organisation whilst still adhering to s106 requirements.

Councillor Lee Dillon noted that in section 47 (page 57) it stated that in determining the level of provision consideration had been given to the alternative provision that schools might establish and the potential for a range of interventions and approaches. Later on in point 50 it stated that the Council would develop a delivery method more able to meet the requirements of schools. He felt that the statements seemed to be the wrong way round. He was concerned whether the Council had adequately considered alternative provision that the schools might establish if the Council had not yet worked with schools to identify the strengths and assets. He queried when this work would take place given that the Council had 78 schools to cover.

Councillor Doherty explained that in 2014 a group had been set up which comprised Members, providers and a number of head teachers. A consultation document had also been issued to schools and so they had been very involved in the process. The West Berkshire Local Safeguarding Children Board had also been involved and the exclusion figures and the needs of those pupils had also been taken into consideration.

Councillor Dillon queried what oversight the Council would have in order to ensure that the pupils that stayed with their schools were achieving the same outcomes as they would have done under the current arrangements. Councillor Doherty noted that outcomes would be measured across the board and any needs would be highlighted. Head teachers and governors would also be involved with scrutinising arrangements.

Councillor Dillon noted that section 83 on page 63 stated that the line management of the Home Education Service currently sat with the Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). In future it was proposed that the Home Education Service would be managed by the Council. On page 71 it stated however that as a result of the consultation the Home Education Service would remain as part of the Alternative Education Provision Service for 2017/18 but that this would be reviewed again to ensure efficient use of resources and best outcomes for young people. Councillor Doherty commented that this demonstrated that the Council listened to comments made during consultations but that this situation would be kept under review.

Councillor Dillon stated that he was pleased to see that The Riverside and The Moorside Community Centres were recognised as community buildings and that their future would be discussed with the relevant communities. He noted the comments about alternative education providers and queried what these providers would charge for a day rate when compared with the Council's charge of £90 per day. Councillor Doherty agreed to provide him with a written response to this query.

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RESOLVED that: the 2 current services, Reintegration Service and Alternative Curriculum, should merge to become a single Alternative Education Provision. The number of sites be reduced from 6 to 4, thus reducing duplication of management, building and administrative costs. A single unified service be provided which can offer consistent support and provision for pupils and schools.

To approve the savings that were to be delivered by scaling down the size of the Service from 84 to 66 pupil places thus delivering efficiencies in costs across budget lines, including staffing reductions; and by removing the Council contribution (centrally retained DSG) to the cost of pupil places. All savings will be within the DSG.

The Council has traditionally funded places at the PRUs but over time funding had shifted to the schools. The proposal means that the Council would no longer contribute to placements commissioned directly by schools, thus making a saving to the High Needs Block, which would help reduce the pressure in this block.

Reason for the decision: The Council could no longer afford to deliver Alternative Provision in the same way. The proposed Alternative Education Provision would provide a budget saving to the DSG High Needs Block which would help to reduce pressure on this block.

Other options considered: We have previously considered leaving the service, which was seen by OFSTED as good, unchanged but this is not financially sustainable in the current climate.

The Management Committee of the two services discussed the possibility of establishing an Academy but voted not to proceed down that route at this stage.

We considered passing all of the funding to schools to deliver Alternative Provision themselves, which would have removed the Council-maintained PRUs, and rely on the use of alternative provision providers from a range of sources. However, it was felt this would not provide the best arrangement for West Berkshire students and would not guarantee meeting the Council's statutory duties. This was also the view expressed during the pre-consultation exercise with secondary headteachers in Summer 2015.

94. **Members' Questions**

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

(a) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Member for Planning and Housing submitted by Councillor Lee Dillon**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Lee Dillon on the subject of how much S106 money the Council had in its accounts for affordable housing was answered by the Portfolio Member for Planning and Housing.

(b) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Member for Planning and Housing submitted by Councillor Lee Dillon**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Lee Dillon on the subject of whether the 13 affordable housing units within the Market Street Development represented value for money for local taxpayers was answered by the Portfolio Member for Planning and Housing.

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(c) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Member for Highways and Transport submitted by Councillor Billy Drummond**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Billy Drummond on the subject of what support the Council is offering local businesses during the 9 weeks of roadworks on the A339 was answered by the Portfolio Member for Highways and Transport.

(d) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Member for Planning and Housing submitted by Councillor Lee Dillon**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Lee Dillon on the subject of whether the Council had changed its policy in terms of wanting a joint application for the Sandleford development was answered by the Portfolio Member for Planning and Housing.

95. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the under-mentioned item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as contained in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the [Local Government \(Access to Information\)\(Variation\) Order 2006](#). [Rule 8.10.4 of the Constitution also refers](#).

96. Staffing Implications Associated with Savings put forward to deliver the 2017/18 Revenue Budget: Approval to Pay Redundancy Payments – Strand Two (EX3194)

(Paragraph 1 – information relating to an individual)

(Paragraph 2 – information identifying an individual)

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 10) concerning redundancy payments and staffing implications associated with savings to deliver the 2017/18 revenue budget.

RESOLVED that the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed.

Reason for the decision: as outlined in the exempt report.

Other options considered: as outlined in the exempt report.

(The meeting commenced at 5.00pm and closed at 5.40pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature