

Cabinet

14 January 2020 – At a meeting of the Cabinet held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Marshall (Chairman)

Mr Crow, Mr Elkins, Mr Hunt, Mrs Jupp, Mr Jupp, Mr Lanzer, Mrs Russell and Mrs Urquhart

Apologies were received from

Absent:

Also in attendance: Mr Barling, Mr Barrett-Miles, Mrs Dennis, Mr Jones and Mr Turner

Part I

24. Declarations of Interest

24.1 In accordance with the code of conduct the following personal interests were declared:

- Mrs Deborah Urquhart as the local member and ex-Chairman of Governors for Clapham and Patcham C of E Primary School in relation to agenda item 5a, Proposals for reorganisation of Rural and Small Schools in West Sussex.

25. Minutes

25.1 RESOLVED – that the minutes of meeting held on 3 December 2019 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

26. Urgent Matters

26.1 Mr Paul Marshall, The Leader, proposed the following changes to the order of the agenda:

- Item 6: Adults Services Improvement be postponed to allow for relevant scrutiny and governance.
- Item 7: Risk Management to be postponed to a future Cabinet meeting.
- Item 5a: Proposals for reorganisation of rural and small schools in West Sussex (CAB10_19/20) to be taken as the next agenda item given the public interest in the subject.

26.2 RESOLVED – that Cabinet agrees to the postponement of Item 6 and Item 7 and for Item 5a to be taken as the next agenda item.

27. Children's Commissioner's Report

27.1 Mr Paul Marshall, The Leader, introduced the item. He highlighted the recommendations in the report in regards to the leadership, governance and culture of the County Council.

27.2 The Leader confirmed that John Coughlan had been appointed as commissioner for Children's Services and Hampshire County Council was partnering with the County Council to share best practice.

27.3 Mrs Jacqui Russell, Cabinet Member for Children's Services highlighted the actions that were taking place to improve Children's Services following the recommendations in the report and commented on an Ofsted monitoring visit which took place in December.

27.4 Mr Barling confirmed that the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is reviewing the improvement progress at each of its meetings. The Committee supports the work the Cabinet and Leader are doing to address the recommendations and findings in the Commissioner's report.

27.5 Mrs Russell confirmed that the Corporate Parenting Panel will meet later in the month with the aim to refresh the Corporate Parenting Strategy and Pledge (launch April 2020). A Member Day is being held on 29 January 2020. The voice of the child is being explored through the Care Council and engaging with the Youth Cabinet.

27.6 Mr Michael Jones, Leader of the Labour Group, commented on the potential financial impact the improvement work could have on other county council services and how the cultural issues identified in the report would be addressed. Mr Jones also questioned what the impact would be for staff if the responsibility for Children's Services moved to a Trust and how scrutiny of services would happen.

27.7 Becky Shaw, Chief Executive confirmed that she would be engaging with staff over the next few weeks to gain their views.

27.8 Cabinet Members noted the seriousness of the outcome of the report and how Cabinet leadership is important for the cultural changes required.

27.9 Cabinet Members thanked John Readman, Executive Director Children, Young People and Learning for the work he had done in the service.

27.10 The Leader thanked Lee Harris who had served as interim Chief Executive and other officers for the work they had carried out over the last few months. He emphasised that members need to be advocates for staff and recognise their expertise and knowledge to help members make decisions.

27.11 RESOLVED - Cabinet notes the Children's Commissioner's report and welcomes the steps being taken for the improvement of Children's Services and the wider corporate governance and leadership.

28. Key Decisions

28.1 Mr Paul Marshall, The Leader, introduced the item.

29. Proposals for reorganisation of rural and small schools in West Sussex (CAB10_19/20)

29.1 Cabinet considered a report by Director of Education and Skills (copy appended to the signed minutes).

29.2 Mr Nigel Jupp, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, introduced the report and thanked the members of the public for attending. He stated that alternative plans would be considered for those schools where closure was being proposed. The proposed timescale would allow for any proposals to be published and implemented prior to the next academic year (September 2020).

29.3 Mr David Barling, Chairman of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee advised that the Committee had recommended that the consultation on the closure of schools be postponed. Mr Barling suggested delaying the consultation by one month.

29.4 Mr Michael Jones, Leader of the Labour Group stated that his group felt the proposals were focused on finances and commented that details on the plans for the buildings following closure and any associated redundancy costs were not included in the report.

29.5 Paul Wagstaff, Director of Education and Skills, highlighted that academisation proposals (Clapham and Patching C of E Primary School) would not be considered by the Regional Schools Commission until a decision was made on the school's viability.

29.6 Cabinet Members agreed that the County Council should support and assist the schools as much as possible to enable them to develop alternative plans. Cabinet Members confirmed that the proposals were being driven by the School Effectiveness Strategy.

29.7 An amendment was moved by Mrs Urquhart and seconded by Mr Lanzer in regards to the recommendation for Clapham and Patching C of E School.

'Consult on: Closure of Clapham and Patching C of E Primary School by September 2020 whilst continuing to discuss academisation proposals which the County Council will encourage and support.'

29.8 The amendment was agreed by the Cabinet.

29.9 An amendment was moved by Mr Hunt and seconded by Mrs Jupp in regards to the recommendation for Stedham Primary School.

'Consult on: Closure of Stedham Primary School by September 2020, whilst continuing to encourage and assist the school in its discussion on federation which, if agreed by the end of the consultation period (16 March 2020), will result in the consultation ceasing.'

29.10 The amendment was agreed by the Cabinet.

29.11 RESOLVED: That Cabinet approves the proposals outlined in section 2 of the report going forward to:

1. Consult on:
 - a) Closure of Clapham and Patching C of E Primary School by September 2020 whilst continuing to discuss academisation proposals which the County Council will encourage and support.
 - b) Closure of Rumboldswyke C of E Infant School effective September 2020.
 - c) Relocation of Warninglid Primary School and the federation of the school by September 2021 (subject to developers progress).
 - d) Closure of Stedham Primary School by September 2020, whilst continuing to encourage and assist the school in its discussion on federation, which if agreed by the end of the consultation period (16 March 2020), will result in the consultation ceasing.
2. Progress the Federation proposals for:
 - Compton and Up Marden C of E Primary School.

30. Fees and Charges (CAB11_19/20)

30.1 Cabinet considered a report by Director of Finance and Support Services (copy appended to the signed minutes).

30.2 Mr Jeremy Hunt, Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report stating that the majority of the changes to fees and charges were in line with inflation or to recover costs of services provided.

30.3 Mrs Joy Dennis, Chairman of Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee stated that, when previewed by the Committee, the members were in favour of the proposals. The Committee had sought assurance that cost recovery charges were providing full cost recovery.

30.4 Mr Michael Jones, Leader of the Labour Group, challenged the increase in some charges and whether this was creating an income for the County Council.

30.5 Mr Hunt stated that benchmarking was done for all charges and was a key part of setting the revised charges each year.

30.6 RESOLVED that Cabinet approves –

1. The discretionary fees and charges as set out at Appendix A, to take effect from 1 April 2020 or as otherwise stated within the report.
2. That Directors, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Support Services and the relevant Cabinet Member/s are delegated authority to vary fees and charges in-year within their respective portfolios in support of achieving their income budgets, taking account of changes in service costs, the market environment, demand and/or service levels and any statutory constraints.

31. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

31.1 Cabinet considered a report by Director of Law and Assurance (copy appended to the signed minutes).

31.2 Mr Paul Marshall, The Leader, introduced the report that listed the future key decisions listed in the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

31.3 RESOLVED - Cabinet notes the progress against the Forward Plan and the decisions identified for future Cabinet meetings.

32. Date of Next Meeting

32.1 It was confirmed that the next meeting of Cabinet was scheduled for 28 January 2020.

The meeting ended at 1.29 pm

Chairman