

Cabinet

22 April 2020 – At a meeting of the Cabinet held at 10.30 am at Virtual meeting with restricted public access.

Present: Cllr Marshall (Chairman)

Cllr Crow, Cllr Elkins, Cllr Hunt, Cllr A Jupp, Cllr N Jupp, Cllr Lanzer, Cllr Russell and Cllr Urquhart

Also in attendance: Cllr D Barling, Cllr A Barrett-Miles, Cllr J Dennis, Cllr M Jones, Cllr B Turner and Cllr J Walsh

1. Declarations of Interest

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

- Cllr Deborah Urquhart as the local member for Clapham and Patching C of E Primary School, in relation to item 4, Small Schools proposals.
- Cllr Bryan Turner as a practising pharmacist – covid-19 report.

2. Minutes

2.1 Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2020 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

3. Key Decisions - Small Schools Proposals (CAB01_20/21)

4.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Education and Skills.

4.2 The report was introduced by Cllr Nigel Jupp, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills who outlined the journey of the decision and the proposals to be considered by Cabinet. He explained that the proposals would be based on the aims of the School Effectiveness Strategy and were responsive to the needs of local communities.

4.3 The Cabinet Member advised that the proposals relating to Warninglid, Stedham and Compton and Up Marden had been endorsed by the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee (CYPSSC) on 14 April 2020. The proposals relating to Rumboldswyke and Clapham and Patching were not endorsed by the CYPSSC and Cabinet was asked to reconsider those proposals in light of the Committee's comments.

4.4 The Cabinet Member advised that in view of the current public health restrictions, if parents had not been able to identify an alternative school for their children, the buildings at both Rumboldswyke and Clapham and Patching should remain open for some of the autumn term. The Education and Skills service, Special Education Needs Assessment

Team (SENAT) and specialist teachers would support families with school transition.

4.5 Cllr David Barling, Chairman of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee reiterated that the Committee did not support the proposals in relation to Rumboldswyke and Clapham and Patching schools. He asked that the process be held to allow Cabinet to reflect on other options.

4.6 Cllr Michael Jones, Leader of the Labour Group, advised the proposals were opposed by the Labour group. He suggested that the current situation had already disrupted children's learning, that the proposals seemed driven by financial considerations and that the Cabinet should delay the closure proposals.

4.7 Cllr James Walsh, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group invited Cabinet to consider the academy proposals for Rumboldswyke and Clapham and Patching and reflect on the views of the scrutiny committee.

4.8 Cabinet Members welcomed the proposal to extend the use of the buildings at Rumboldswyke and Clapham and Patching in the context of Covid-19. Cabinet felt that the process had been extensive and reflective to all representations. The Leader stated that to delay would leave the schools and families concerned in an indeterminate state.

4.9 Resolved – that Cabinet supports the proposals outlined in Section 2 going forward to:

1. Issue a closure notice for Clapham and Patching C of E Primary School, Clapham, Worthing, but maintaining the building open for the Autumn half term to allow those children without suitable school places to be supported to transition to a new school should schools not return to normal opening during the summer due to the current Covid-19 situation.
2. Issue closure notice for Rumboldswyke C of E Infant School, Chichester, but maintaining the building open for the Autumn half term to allow those children without suitable school places to be supported to transition to a new school should schools not return to normal opening during the summer due to the current Covid-19 situation.
3. Request County Council Officers to continue to work with Governors of Stedham Primary School and Harting CE Primary School to progress the Federation Action Plan towards a hard federation by January 2021.
4. Request County Council Officers to continue to work with Governors to progress proposals for the federation of Compton and Up Marden CE Primary School, Compton with an appropriate partner.
5. Issue prescribed alteration notices for the relocation of Warninglid Primary School, Warninglid, Haywards Heath to a new site in Pease Pottage Crawley by September 2021 (subject to developers completing in June 2021) and implement the proposals submitted by Warninglid Primary School and at least one other partner to federate.

4. Fire and Rescue Improvement Work

4.1 Cabinet received a verbal update from Cllr Duncan Crow on the Fire and Rescue Service improvement work. The following key points were highlighted:

- An inspection visit took place in February and progress noted.
- There was a clear path forward and the service had not lost focus.
- Safe and well visits were being undertaken in a timely manner.
- New posts had increased capacity in the service.
- A new IT system will provide greater accuracy in reporting.
- Cultural change was beginning to embed.
- The service had been able to respond flexibly to the Covid-19 situation, and the hard work of staff was acknowledged.

4.2 Resolved – that Cabinet welcomes the Fire and Rescue Service improvement update.

5. West Sussex County Council Response to Covid -19

5.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive. The following key points were highlighted in WSCCs response to Covid-19:

- Staff were working relentlessly to provide an effective response to the biggest priorities to keep critical services in place.
- All partners and sectors were working collectively to meet the needs of communities.
- The financial impact of Covid-19 on West Sussex was currently estimated in the region of £85m for 2021. It was likely that these implications would stretch beyond 2021.
- This £85m was likely attributable to:
 - Adults Social Care, and increased demand on residential care.
 - Impact on planned action and projects
 - Cost of recovery
 - Impact on economy

5.2 Cllr Joy Dennis, Chairman of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee, commented that the impact of Covid-19 on finances and capacity and the West Sussex Plan measures would be difficult to evaluate in the current circumstances but that a recovery plan should be considered sooner rather than later. Cllr Joy Dennis highlighted the impact on the County's economy - especially around Gatwick.

5.3 Cllr David Barling, Chairman of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee was concerned about the sufficiency of adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

5.4 Cllr Andrew Barrett-Miles, Chairman of the Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee referred to the reopening of Household Waste Recycling Sites (HWRS) and how it would be managed and stressed the importance of addressing fraudulent activity and the role of the community hubs.

5.5 Cllr Bryan Turner, Chairman of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee commented on how a recovery plan might be structured and the capacity in the care sector and non-covid hospital activity. He questioned the impact on the voluntary sector, in house day services and lifelong services.

5.6 Cllr Steve Waight, Chairman of the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee noted the response of WSCC firefighters and the support they had given to other emergency services.

5.7 Cllr Michael Jones, Leader of the Labour Group questioned the issues for care homes, the availability of PPE, and asked which services would be reduced or not delivered. He also commented on the effect of Gatwick on the local economy.

5.8 Cllr James Walsh, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group considered the impact for care homes and questioned the supply of PPE and support for families at risk of domestic violence.

5.9 All Cabinet Members, Scrutiny Chairman and Minority Group Leaders gave sincere thanks to staff and officers across the authority for their hard work in the current circumstances. Each Cabinet Member provided a brief portfolio update in the context of Covid-19.

5.10 The Leader thanked West Sussex residents for their support and understanding in the requirement to the council to realign its focus for Covid-19.

6. Date of Next Meeting

6.1 The next meeting of Cabinet would be held on 26 May 2020.

The meeting ended at 2.14 pm

Chairman