

MINUTES of a meeting of the **CABINET MEMBER – YOUNG PEOPLE** held on 4 July 2017 at County Hall, Matlock.

PRESENT

Councillor A Dale (in the Chair)

In attendance: Councillor J Patten

01/17 HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT HAZARDOUS ROUTES The Cabinet member was asked to consider two requests for a home to school journey to be declared 'hazardous' for the purpose of establishing eligibility to free transport.

The route from the Via Gellia to Anthony Gell School along the A5012 Via Gellia Road_ had been assessed in accordance with the Authority's criteria for route safety for the purposes of home to school transport following a request made made by a parent who resided on the Via Gellia Road (A5012) and whose child was not entitled to assistance with transport as their home address measured less than the statutory walking distance as outlined in the Strategic Director's report.

Having carried out an inspection on 23 February 2017 the Panel recommended that the footway along the route be cleared and the pot holes in it to be filled to ensure the route could be walked more comfortably and that the route be declared not hazardous

The second route from Middle Lane / Redhill Lane, Tansley along the B6014 to Highfields Lower School, had been assessed in accordance with the Authority's criteria for route safety for the purposes of home to school transport following a request by a parent who resided just off the B6014 on Middle Lane / Redhill Lane and whose child was not entitled to assistance with transport as the home to school distance measured by the shortest available route was less than the statutory walking distance of three miles as outlined in the Strategic Director's report.

Having carried out an inspection on 28 February 2017 the Panel recommended that the route should be declared as hazardous.

RESOLVED (1) that he route from the Via Gellia to Anthony Gell School along the A5012 Via Gellia Road be declared as not hazardous for the purposes of eligibility to free transport; and

(2) that the route from Middle Lane / Redhill Lane, Tansley along the B6014 to Highfields Lower School be declared as hazardous for the purposes of eligibility to free transport.

02/17 CONVERSIONS OF STATEMENTS OF SEN TO EHC PLANS

Approval was sought to partially outsource the converting of statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) to Education Health and Care (EHC) Plans.

All local authorities had a duty to either convert (or cease) all their existing Statements of SEN to EHC Plans by 31 March 2018. Progress towards this was being monitored on a monthly basis by data returns to the Department of Education (DfE) and through reporting to the Derbyshire SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities) Strategic Board.

This monitoring and the SEND Local Area Inspection in November 2016 highlighted that the numbers being completed needed to increase to enable completion by the March 2018 deadline. Actions were put in place to achieve this.

It was now clear that despite all the best efforts to increase the output of the EHC writers, they had not been able to dramatically increase the rate of the number of Conversions being completed to a level that would enable them to meet the March 2018 deadline. This was due to a number of factors including the work being more complex than was originally envisaged and challenges regarding completing new EHC plans.

There was a serious and real risk that the Council would miss its target by between 1,000 and 1,500 Conversions. A review had been undertaken as to the Council's approach to achieving the deadline of March 2018 including the need to outsource a significant number of the Conversions to external companies. This was an issue that was being faced by many councils across the country, with currently 1 in 3 outsourcing in this way.

Research showed there were a number of organisations who undertake this work (8 known) and the costs involved vary between £70-£100 per plan. Due to the number of Conversions required and associated costs there would be a requirement to tender this provision in line with the Financial Regulations. Initial work on this is underway and following Cabinet Member approval, the Council would be ready to go out to tender by mid July 2017. This would enable successful bidders, subject to approval by Cabinet Member, to commence working on Conversions by mid-September 2017 at the earliest.

Due to the quantity of Conversions required to be undertaken, the contract would be based on a framework agreement whereby a number of providers would undertake the work.

The Council's Regional DfE advisor was in regular contact with the Council in relation to this issue and shared the view that the rate of

Conversions in Derbyshire needs to be accelerated. The DfE was aware that partial outsourcing was to be recommended. DfE has an option to send councils an official letter of concern if it believed that the plans in place to deliver conversions were not sufficiently robust. Derbyshire had not received such a letter to date, however, this was a risk, should timely mitigating action not be taken.

At the same time as outsourcing Conversions, the Council's in-house SEND team would continue to work with the EHC Writers to improve the rate of in-house Conversions and look at options for other existing staff to assist where possible in order to bring down the total number that would need to be outsourced.

Outsourcing has not been the preferred option up to this point as it meant that the Council had less control over the quality of the plans and due to the need to manage the data protection risks in sending confidential and sensitive data out to a third party. This would be mitigated by the procurement process that would provide due diligence and protection to the Council and ensure that data would be transmitted and dealt with securely. Initial market exploration had provided reassurance in relation to the quality of the plans being produced by external providers and their data transfer and security processes and protocols.

The SEND implementation grant had £26k set aside for an additional writer post and had a contingency of £71k and it was recommended that this was used to fund the outsourcing of Conversions. This would fund approximately 1,140 Conversions at a mid-market rate of £85 per Conversion. If further funding was required, existing SEN budgets would be reviewed and considered in order to provide this.

RESOLVED to approve the requirement to tender the partial outsourcing of Conversions, in line with the Council's Financial Regulations as detailed in the Strategic Director's report.

03/17 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC** **RESOLVED** that the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the remaining items on the agenda to avoid the disclosure of the kind of exempt information detailed in the following summary of proceedings:-

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS CONDUCTED AFTER THE PUBLIC WERE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING

- (1) To consider the report of the Strategic Director for Children's Services Reduction in Passenger Assistants (contains information which is likely to reveal the identity of any individual).
- (2) To consider the report of the Strategic Director for Children's Services on Childrens Services Capital Programme 20127-18- Schools Access

Initiative (contains information which is likely to reveal the identity of any individual)

- (3) To consider the report of the Strategic Director for Children's Services on Mr & Mrs K – Request for Financial Assistance with adaptation to home (contains information which is likely to reveal the identity of any individual).
- (4) To consider the report of the Strategic Director for Children's Services on Mr & Mrs W –Assistance with adaptations to home (contains information which is likely to reveal the identity of any individual).
- (5) To consider the report of the Strategic Director for Children's Services on Mr & Mrs WI –Assistance with adaptations to home (contains information which is likely to reveal the identity of any individual).
- (6) To consider the report of the Strategic Director for Children's Services on Report on Petition: Hilton Primary School (contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information))