

MINUTES of a meeting of the **CABINET MEMBER – CHILDREN'S SERVICES** held on 11 October 2016 at County Hall, Matlock.

PRESENT

Councillor J Coyle (in the Chair)

In attendance - Councillors C Bisknell, D Greenhalgh and J Street

96/16 **MINUTES** **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Cabinet Member.

97/16 **NEW INSTRUMENTS OF GOVERNMENT** Under the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012; proposals had been received from school Governing Bodies for an amendment to their Instrument of Government.

RESOLVED that approval be given for new Instruments of Government to be made for the two schools detailed in the Director of Legal Services report.

98/16 **APPOINTMENT OF PERSONS TO SERVE AS LA GOVERNORS ON SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES** This report was withdrawn at the meeting.

99/16 **SCHOOLS BUDGETS: DEFICIT BALANCES AND RECOVERY PLANS BRINGING BUDGETS INTO BALANCE OVER MORE THAN ONE FINANCIAL YEAR** Approval was sought to requests from governing bodies of schools with budget deficits to implement budget plans to repay the deficit over more than one year and to report on the schools which had still to agree a deficit recovery plan.

Before making such a request, the school must demonstrate to the Authority that all other options had been exhausted. Approval to repay a deficit over three years or more may only be given in exceptional circumstances where the Cabinet Member was satisfied that the school's ability to deliver the national curriculum would otherwise be seriously jeopardised and that no other reasonable course of action is available.

The balances and pupil numbers of the schools included in this report were included at Appendices 1 & 2.

In relation to requests to balance the budget over more than one year there were three schools in this group detailed in Appendix 1 to the Strategic Directors report.

These being Blackwell Primary School (two-year plan), Highfields School (two-year plan) and William Levick Primary School (four-year plan.) The schools on two year plans were making staffing reductions; the full financial savings from which won't be delivered until 2017-18. The third school, William Levick Primary, was seeking to retain its current staffing levels pending an expected increase in pupil numbers and thus budgets. The higher pupil numbers were already beginning to feed through and the school was confident that this would continue.

In relation to Schools without agreed budget plans, there were three schools which so far had been unable to agree a plan to address their deficits. The three schools were: Matlock St Joseph's RC Primary School, New Mills Secondary School and Anthony Gell Secondary School

St Joseph's RC Primary School was set to become an academy in the autumn and it was likely that it would convert leaving a deficit which the Authority would have to meet. The other two schools were supported by the Authority's "Team Around the School" (TATS) processes which involved officers from the LA's School Improvement, Finance and HR services working with the schools' senior leadership to agree a financial recovery plan.

New Mills School had significant financial difficulties and the school's Governing Body had recently asked the Authority to undertake the formal processes necessary to close the school's sixth form provision. This matter was considered by the Authority's Cabinet on 26th July and it was agreed to defer a decision pending further submissions and a petition presented by local residents. Subsequently, Cabinet, at its meeting on 20th September, agreed to undertake a statutory consultation on the publication notice to close the sixth form provision.

Irrespective of the final decision on the sixth form, the school was likely to require a licenced deficit covering an extended period of time before its budget could be brought back into balance. The Authority would continue to support and challenge the school to agree and implement a long-term recovery plan over the coming months.

In 2015-16, Anthony Gell School set a balanced budget but this was underpinned with over £100,000 of one-off income from the School's Private School Fund. A new Head teacher and School Business Manager both started in September 2015 and were immediately faced with an in-year overspend and a potentially large deficit for future years. The deficit was largely due to small class sizes especially in post-16 and reducing sixth form pupil numbers.

The school had made significant improvements by cutting uneconomic class sizes, wherever possible not replacing staff who leave, and were in the process of restructuring their support staff and teaching and management levels. The figures in Appendix 2 to the Strategic Director's report did not show the savings from the restructures which would undoubtedly improve the financial position. The Head teacher, Business Manager and Governors were working closely with the Local Authority to find further ways to reduce expenditure levels.

RESOLVED (1) to allow Blackwell Primary School, Highfields School and William Levick Primary School to recover their budget deficits over two or four financial years as detailed above;

(2) to note the position in respect of Matlock St Joseph's RC Primary School, New Mills Secondary School and Anthony Gell Secondary School which were currently unable to submit a budget recovery plan;

(3) to note St Joseph's proposed conversion to academy status and the potential risk of a deficit remaining with the Authority; and

(4) to require officers to continue to work with the governing bodies of Anthony Gell and New Mills schools on their respective financial recovery plans.

100/16 HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT HAZARDOUS ROUTES

A request was considered for a home to contracted vehicle bus stop being declared 'hazardous' for the purpose of establishing eligibility for free transport to the bus stop.

The request had been made by a parent who resided in Haddon Grove and whose child attended Lady Manners School. The home to school distance measured less than the statutory walking distance for a secondary school pupil which was three miles, measured by the shortest available route.

The section of the shortest route from Haddon Grove to Lady Manners School (Over Haddon village to Bakewell via Bakewell Road) had been assessed previously and determined not hazardous for the purposes of home to school transport. Haddon Grove to Over Haddon Village had not previously been assessed

A pro forma (Appendix A) was attached to the Strategic Directors report with the area in question indicated on the attached map

The route from Haddon Grove was along a single track road towards Over Haddon village with the roadway widening on the approach to the village. There were grass verges of varying widths along the route and there were pavements in the village.

If the route from Haddon Grove to Over Haddon was declared hazardous, the Authority would provide a bus pass on the local Authority contracted vehicle transporting students to Lady Manners School.

RESOLVED that having considered the Hazardous Route Panel's recommendation for the route indicated, that the route should be declared not hazardous for the purposes of entitlement to free school transport in accordance with the Authority's Home to School Transport policy.

101/16 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 confirm the exempt minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member – Children's Services held on 6 September 2016 (contains exempt information).
- (2) To consider the report of the Strategic Director for Children's Services on Children's Services Capital Programme 2016/17 – School 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 Child Protection Information Sharing (contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person(including the authority holding that information)
- (5) To consider the report of the Strategic Director for Children's Services on School Staff Redundancies 2016 (contains information which is likely to reveal the identity of any individual)