

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday, 9 January 2018.

PRESENT

Mr. N. J. Rushton CC (in the Chair)

Mr. R. Blunt CC
Mr. I. D. Ould CC
Mr. B. L. Pain CC

Mrs. P. Posnett CC
Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC
Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC

In attendance

Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC, Mr. T. J. Pendleton CC and Mrs. C. M. Radford CC, Mr D, Jennings CC, Mrs R. Page CC, Mr. S. J. Galton CC, Dr. T. Eynon CC

82. Announcement - Mr. E. R. White CC

The Leader announced with great sadness that Mr Ernie White CC had died on 2 January 2018 aged 76. The Leader said that Mr White, who represented the Stoney Stanton and Croft electoral division, had first been elected to the County Council in 1975 and was the Authority's longest serving councillor, having been re-elected 11 times.

Mr White had been Chairman of the County Council during the civic year 1995 – 1996 and he later became a member of the Cabinet in 2003, covering various portfolios, including as Lead Member for Community Services. Latterly he was Cabinet Lead Member for Health, Wellbeing and Sport and was the Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board since it was created, a role in which his expertise and commitment had been locally and nationally recognised.

The Leader asked members to join him in standing in silent tribute to the memory of Ernie White.

83. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2017 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

84. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

85. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

Mr. B. L. Pain CC declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item 7 (Adult Social Care Transport Policy) as a director of a taxi company and undertook to leave the room during consideration of this item.

86. Early Help Review.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services which sought approval to consult on proposed changes to the Early Help Service and the further investigation of options for redesigning the Service to support children and their families more holistically through a 0 to 19 years offer. A copy of the report, marked '4', is filed with these minutes.

The Director set out the three key issues that had resulted in the Service having to be redesigned: savings identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, increasing service pressures, particularly in the area of Special Educational Needs and looked after children, and the loss of Government funding and partner support for the Supporting Leicestershire Families Programme.

The Director emphasised that the main focus for any new service delivery model would be to target support to those most vulnerable and to utilise the whole family approach already established through the Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF) Programme which had proved to be successful.

Mr. Ould CC confirmed his support for the proposed way forward, in particular the continued use of a whole family approach. Mr Ould said this had been proven through the SLF Programme to have a positive effect on reducing the number of young people entering the care system and would ensure, so far as possible, the delivery of a high quality service despite the reduced budget now available.

Mr Ould CC highlighted, in response to the comments received from Mrs. D. Taylor CC, that the Director would be considering the potential effect any proposed service changes might have on users, including organisations that currently used or benefited from the operation of children centres in particular locations.

Mr Pain CC and Mrs Posnett CC confirmed their support for the proposals, but emphasised that consultation feedback would be essential in shaping the final service model to ensure this met the needs of those most affected.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That consultation on a revised delivery model for the Early Help Service including reducing the number of service delivery buildings from 40 to 15 be approved;
- (b) That the Director be requested to undertake further work to:
 - (i) develop the detail of the new delivery model and ascertain the potential effect of the proposed service changes on users;
 - (ii) investigate alternative uses for the re-designation of 25 of the 40 Early Help Service delivery buildings including 24 of the existing Children's Centres;

- (c) That a further report on the outcome of consultation and setting out final proposals for a new Early Help Service delivery model be submitted to the Cabinet in Summer 2018.

(KEY DECISION)

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) requires a saving of £1.5m in 2019/20 through a service review of Early Help. Part of the current Early Help offer, Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF), has received funding from the Department for Communities and Families and Local Government (DCLG) via the Troubled Families Programme. This will cease after 2019/20, reducing SLF funding by £2.3m. Combining the four existing elements of Early Help in a redesigned service offer would enable the £3.8m saving to be made.

It is a statutory requirement to consult on proposals in respect of the opening, change of use, or other major changes to the provision of Children's Centres. The views of service users and stakeholders will inform the outcome of the review and how Early Help is best delivered in the future.

87. 2018/19 and 2019/20 School Funding Formula.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services regarding the proposed Leicestershire Schools Funding Formula for 2018/19 and 2019/20 following the Department for Education's announcement that a National Funding Formula for funding maintained schools and academies would be introduced from 2018/19. A copy of the report, marked '5', is filed with these minutes.

The Director emphasised that the introduction of a National Funding Formula (NFF) was, in the short term, good news for Leicestershire as all schools across the County stood to benefit from it, but he said this would not meet the ongoing needs of Leicestershire Schools in the long term.

Mr Ould CC said that disappointingly the NFF had not introduced fairness across the system as had been hoped, and although Leicestershire would benefit in the short term, complex new rules regarding the management of Schools Block Dedicated Schools Grant and restrictions on virement between blocks, would likely have a detrimental effect on future funding arrangements for both schools and the Authority.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the outcome of the consultation be noted;
- (b) That the 2018/19 and 2019/20 Leicestershire schools funding formula as detailed in paragraph 34 and the Appendix to this report be approved;
- (c) That the proposed balancing 2018/19 adjustments for pupil led characteristics and school led factors as detailed in paragraphs 36-38 of this report be approved;
- (d) That the Director of Children and Family Services, following consultation with the Lead Member, be authorised to develop and consult on the methodology to be

used to balance the cost of the 2019/20 School Funding Formula with the 2019/20 Schools Block Dedicated Schools Grant.

REASON FOR DECISION:

To enable the County Council to respond to the requirement to submit the 2018/19 school funding formula to the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

88. In - House Fostering Fees Review.

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services regarding proposals to change the Fostering Fee Payment Structure to increase payments given to foster carers at the lowest end of the skills payment scale and to rationalise the structure at the top end of the scale. A copy of the report, marked '6', is filed with these minutes.

Mr Ould CC said positive feedback had been received from foster carers registered with the Authority due to the level of support provided. However, to be truly competitive in what was a difficult market, the payments at the lowest end of the payment scale needed to be improved. He emphasised that for every foster carer recruited there would be a £15,000 per year saving due to the reduced use of independent fostering agencies.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That a consultation exercise on the proposed changes to the Council's Fostering Fee Payment Structure be undertaken as detailed in the report;
- (b) That the Director of Children and Family Services be authorised to make ad-hoc temporary payments to foster carers in addition to their skills fee, based on the needs of the child in placement;
- (c) That a further report be made to the Cabinet in March 2018 regarding the outcome of the consultation together with the final Fostering Fee Payment Structure for consideration.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

Changes to the Fostering Fees Structure are proposed as part of a suite of enablers to help achieve the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) savings target of £2,900,000 by contributing to the service's ability to meet its challenging in-house fostering recruitment targets. This change is thought to help enable the service to reduce its reliance on Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) provision - which per child placed equates to an avoided cost of approximately £15,000 per year.

This change would complement other ongoing activity in enabling the realisation of the service's challenging fostering recruitment targets.

The authorisation sought for the Director to make discretionary ad-hoc payments would cater for situations where the child or young person's needs are above what is expected of the skills level of the carer.

89. Adult Social Care Transport Policy.

[Mr B. L. Pain CC left the meeting during consideration of this item]

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities which sought approval of a revised Adult Social Care Transport Policy for 2018. This had been updated to reflect legislative changes and updated practices in the Adults and Communities and Environment and Transport Departments. A copy of the report, marked 7', is filed with these minutes.

Mr Blunt CC confirmed that the Policy was largely unchanged, and said the threshold and eligibility criteria had not been altered which meant that service users would not be affected.

RESOLVED:

That the revised Adult Social Care Transport Policy attached as Appendix A to the report be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION:

It has been necessary to revise the Adult Social Care Transport Policy in order to reflect changes in legislation; it remains broadly similar to the existing Policy. The amendments will also ensure that any revisions to operational guidance are aligned to an up-to-date Policy and corresponding legislation. As the changes will not have a significant effect on service users there is no requirement for formal consultation. (Note: this is separate from the Council's *School Transport Policy* which affects a different group of service users and will be the subject of a future report to the Cabinet following recent consultation).

90. Suicide Prevention - Strategy Work and Stop Suicide Campaign and Pledge.

[Mr B. L. Pain CC returned to the meeting]

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Public Health regarding work undertaken by the County Council and its partners to prevent suicide and which sought approval to develop a broader STOP Suicide Campaign and pledge, as adopted in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire, to help reduce deaths from suicide across the County.

Mr. Rushton CC emphasised the need to provide support, particularly for young people who were most at risk. He said excellent work was already undertaken but he supported the proposed way forward to improve delivery further.

Mrs. Posnett CC and Mr. Pain CC also confirmed their support for the proposed new approach.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the existing work and initiatives undertaken by the County Council and its partners in line with its Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan be noted;
- (b) That the development of a STOP Suicide Campaign and Pledge similar to that operated in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire be approved.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The National Suicide Prevention Strategy for England calls for upper tier local authorities to lead the development and implementation of a local response to the national strategy as part of their public health responsibilities.

Around 60 deaths a year in Leicestershire are from suicide, making it a significant cause of death, particularly amongst younger people.

Suicides are not inevitable and are often the end point of a complex history of risk factors and distressing events. The prevention of suicide has to address this complexity through concerted action and collaboration amongst services, communities, individuals and across society as a whole.

The existing Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Suicide Audit and Prevention Group leads on and co-ordinates strategies and actions to reduce the risks and burden of suicide locally. The approach of the STOP campaign in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire, if replicated in Leicestershire, would add significant extra delivery and profile to the existing work the Authority undertakes.

91. Items referred from Overview and Scrutiny.

There were no items referred from Overview and Scrutiny.

2.00 - 2.40 pm
09 January 2018

CHAIRMAN