

# Minutes



To: All Members of the Children's Services Cabinet Panel, Chief Executive, Chief Officers, All officers named for 'actions'

From: Legal, Democratic & Statutory Services  
Ask for: Michelle Diprose  
Ext: 25566

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## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES CABINET PANEL THURSDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2017**

### **ATTENDANCE**

#### **MEMBERS OF THE PANEL**

N Bell, S Brown, B A Gibson, J M Graham, D Hart, T C Heritage (Chairman), T Howard, T R Hutchings, G McAndrew (Vice-Chairman), A Plancey, A Rowlands, M A Watkin

#### **OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Upon consideration of the agenda for the Children's Services Cabinet Panel meeting on Thursday, 2 November 2017 as circulated, copy annexed, conclusions were reached and are recorded below:

*Note: No conflicts of interest were declared by any member of the Cabinet Panel in relation to the matters on which conclusions were reached at this meeting*

#### **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman advised that she had requested that the Panel be provided with an update on Nascot Lawn Respite Centre, that update is summarised below:

Members received an update in relation to Nascot Lawn Overnight Short Breaks (OSB) Service informing them that Herts Valley's Clinical Commissioning Group withdrew its decision to cease funding on the understanding that a new decision would be made lawfully on 16 November 2017. A paper had been circulated to relevant stakeholders including parents, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust and East & North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group (ENHCCG) outlining various options as detailed below:

1. HVCCG to continue funding
2. HVCCG to cease funding
3. Deliver a joint offer with the local authority for a joint model for children who meet continuing health care criteria
4. Deliver an integrated offer including parents support. The CCG only providing for their statutory health care responsibilities.

It was noted that the County Council could only fund three respite units. Parents hoped Nascot Lawn would be one of them and a piece of work was underway to consider which

building in the west of the county would be best suited for OSB. The Panel noted that the County Council could not commission the nursing service and could only use the Nascot Lawn building to deliver OSB. Officers had also contacted OFSTED as the unit would need to be registered as a children's home. A decision would be made on 6 November as to which site would be used.

The Panel were informed staff recruitment had started for other units already and the desire remained to have a nursing oversight in all of the OSB units.

If the decision is made by HVCCG to cease funding Nascot Lawn then HVCCG will be required to service notice on HCT. The contractual notice period is six months however this can be shortened through negotiation. A six month notice period would result in the nursing service ceasing during May 2018.

The decision to 'set aside' the decision to cease funding was made several days before a Judicial Review Hearing initiated by several parents whose children use Nascot Lawn. Any new decision made by HVCCG could be the subject of further challenge by Judicial Review

## **PART I ('OPEN') BUSINESS**

### **ACTION**

#### **1. MINUTES**

- 1.1 The Minutes of the Cabinet Panel meeting held on 21 September 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **2. PUBLIC PETITIONS**

- 2.1 There were no public petitions.

#### **3. AREA SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) POST INSPECTION ACTION PLAN**

[Officer Contact: Waqar Bhatti, Performance & Improvement Manager (Tel: 01992 556617)]

- 3.1 The Panel received a report which gave an update on the Area SEND Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) following the joint local inspection by OFSTED and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in July 2016 of Hertfordshire's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- 3.2 The Panel were informed a workshop was held after the OFSTED inspection in 2016 which involved Local Authority Officers, support services, schools, early years' settings, colleges, health and parents. A number of areas were identified for improvement and categorised into three themes. The action plan had been progressed over the past 12 months.

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3.3 Members noted the positive progress of the PIAP and were informed of a conference being held on Monday 6 November where officers were looking for parental sign off of the completed elements of the plan.

**Conclusions:**

3.4 That the Panel noted and commented on the progress of the Post Inspection Action Plan and requests further information as appropriate, particularly once the plan was signed off.

**4. HERTFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (HSCB) ANNUAL REPORT**

[Officer Contact: Nicky Pace, Independent Chair of Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children’s Board (HSCB), Caroline Aitken, Safeguarding Boards Manager (Tel: 01992 556988), Mary Moroney, HSCB Business Manager (Tel: 01992 556603)]

4.1 The Panel received an Annual Report providing an update on Safeguarding Children in Hertfordshire and of the work undertaken by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board during the period April 2016 – March 2017.

4.2 Members were informed that all local authorities were legally obliged to have a Children’s Safeguarding Board and also to produce an annual report which reviewed the effectiveness of child safeguarding and the welfare of children in the local area. The Board was made up of multi-agencies.

4.3 It was noted that due to a national review into Local Safeguarding Children’s Board and the changes accepted by Government, a review of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board would be undertaken. A plan will be formalised and would be submitted to the DofE in March 2018.

4.4 In response to a question in relation to how the county was addressing the issue of placing homeless families outside Hertfordshire Members heard that officers were working closely with district colleagues to try to advert homeless situations. It was also noted that the Health & Wellbeing Board were doing a strand of work on housing.

**Conclusions:**

4.5 That the Children’s Services Cabinet Panel considered the content of the HSCB Annual Report and had taken it into account in future discussions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Hertfordshire.

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**5. INDEPENDENT REVIEW OFFICERS ANNUAL REPORT**

[Officer Contact: Kim Burrowes, Independent Review Service Manager (Tel: 01992 588156)]

5.1 The Panel received the Annual Report for the Independent Review of Officers which summarised the work undertaken during 2016-2017. The County Council was required to periodically review the case of each child looked after (CLA)

5.2 Members were informed that personal education plans (PEP) were carried out with children three times a year, they were carried out at the school with the pupil and the carer. The IRO’s role would be to oversee the care planning for the child during the time the child was looked after and to provide challenge if needed to ensure the child’s care plan was progressed and specific outcomes were achieved.

5.3 In relation to the performance data on CLA reviews being held within statutory timescales Members were informed that the average of CLA reviews held on time had increased from 92.6% as detailed in the report to 98%. It was noted there was various reasons why it was not at 100% but mainly due to the review being delayed by a week or so to suit the availability of the child.

**Conclusions:**

5.4 That the Cabinet Panel:

- noted the work delivered by the Independent Reviewing Service on behalf of the local authority as Corporate Parents of all Children Looked After (CLA) as described in the Annual Report attached at Appendix A to the report.
- considered and endorsed the future developments and key actions for the service for 2017-2018 set out in the Annual Report attached as Appendix A to the report.

**6. THE HERTFORDSHIRE FOSTERING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT**

[Officer Contact: Lynn Costello Service Manager Fostering (Tel: 01442 453322), Sue Lowndes Head of Adoption & Fostering Service (Tel: 07833 484306)]

6.1 The Panel received the Annual Report for the Hertfordshire Fostering Service which provided Members with information regarding the progress of the Fostering Service to recruit and support foster carers to develop a high quality fostering service to meet the needs of children looked after in Hertfordshire.

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- 6.2 Members heard that fostering recruitment activity had increased during the second half of 2017/18 due to a sharper focus of support and stability to foster carers and placements; it was also due to new recruitment materials and social media communications. Officers had targeted social media to help recruit foster carers of a younger age group as many older foster carers were leaving the service.
- 6.3 A revised learning and development programme had also been available to foster carers during 2016/17 which included on line training opportunities such as child protection and radicalisation and other face to face training.
- 6.4 Members noted the success of funding from the DfE to deliver a new fostering initiative, the Mockingbird Family Model, this would be developed during 2017/18 and concentrated on providing extensive peer support and strengthen placement stability.
- 6.5 The Panel congratulated officers on the good work of the Fostering Service.

**Conclusions:**

- 6.6 That the Cabinet Panel considers the outcomes of the Fostering Service 2016/17, and notes the planned service development for 2017/18 as set out in the Hertfordshire Fostering Service Annual Report 2016-2017 attached as Appendix A to the report.

**7. HERTFORDSHIRE YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2017 - 2018**

[Officer Contact: Nick Smith Head Of Service Youth Justice (Tel: 01442 388755), Jeanette Williams Youth Justice Policy manager (Tel: 01992 556824)]

- 7.1 Members received a report outlining the strategic plan highlighting the performance and key priorities and challenges for 2017-18 for the Herts Youth Justice Service. Members acknowledged this was the legacy of the recently deceased Conservative Leader of the Council, Robert Gordon that the review was being presented for the first time to the Panel.
- 7.2 Members heard that the Police would refer children or young people to Children’s Services if concern was raised in relation to families and anti-social behaviour. It was noted the Police consult with Children’s Services over actions taken against crime and the County Council benefited from working with other agencies and schools to tackle anti-social behaviour.

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- 7.3 It was noted that officers were trying to do early intervention first via the Families First' service in an attempt to reduce numbers entering the Youth Justice Service.
- 7.4 It was noted the service maintained first time entrants figures to the Youth Justice System and was lower than the region, this was due to how cases were handled and pressures on other local authorities.

**Conclusions:**

- 7.5 That the Panel recommended to Cabinet:-
- That Cabinet recommends to County Council that Council approves the Hertfordshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2015 – 2018, 2017 update, attached as Appendix A to the report.

**8. INSPECTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN SUMMARY AND CLOSURE OF POST INSPECTION ACTION PLAN (PIAP)**

[Officer Contact: Karen Noble, Performance & Improvement Manager, Family Services Commissioning (Tel: 01992 588394)]

- 8.1 The Panel received a report in relation to the OFSTED Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) informing Members of the significant progress that has been made in addressing the issues identified by the inspection in September 2016.
- 8.2 The inspection identified nine high level recommendations and associated actions were developed into the PIAP to address them. All action have now been completed with the exception of two bits of activity which were still being addressed, these are detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.
- 8.3 The Panel were informed that Children's Services were working closely with schools to raise awareness of children's whereabouts and unauthorised absences from school in order to keep them safe.

**Conclusions:**

- 8.4 The Panel noted the progress to date confirmed actions had been delivered and incorporated into business as usual where required.

**9. SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE IN HERTFORDSHIRE:  
DEVELOPING A NEW APPROACH**

[Officer Contact: Andy Manson, Head of Services for Young People  
Tel: (01992) 555014, Peter Hosier, Head of Service for YC  
Hertfordshire Youth Work Tel: (01992) 555406]

- 9.1 The Cabinet Panel received a report in relation to a Children's Services proposal to review the services provided by YC Hertfordshire. The review and implementation would be phased over a two year period to allow service remodelling processes and workforce development, including consultation with the workforce, partner and young people. It was noted that detailed proposals for the remodelled service would be presented to Children's Services Cabinet Panel in February 2018 for consideration.
- 9.2 Members welcomed the review of this service, although some were slightly concerned about the impact on staff reductions, the timing and the budgetary implications and believed it was being financed driven not service driven. The Chairman assured the Panel that it would not be finance driven and it was about mapping the service and getting sustainable services in place. She reiterated that she wanted Panel Members to be part of the remodelling process. Members noted that work had already been started on the process which would involve the DWP.
- 9.3 Members heard the age range in focus for review would be from 11 to 19 where early support was required and up to 25 for care leavers and those with learning disabilities. This fits in with the revised Family Centre offer. The key element was about partnership working and support for the service.
- 9.4 A vote was taken on recommendation 1 as detailed in the report. The vote was as follows:
- 7 voted in favour  
1 voted against  
3 abstained from the vote
- It was noted that N Bell, was against the recommendation as detailed in the report and B Gibson, A Rowlands and M A Watkin Abstained from the vote
- 9.5 A vote was taken on recommendation 2 as detailed in the report. The vote was as follows:
- 10 voted in favour  
1 abstained from the vote
- It was noted that N Bell, abstained from the vote

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**Conclusions:**

9.6 That the Cabinet Panel:-

- i. Noted and commented upon the content of the Report and recommended that Cabinet endorses the proposal to remodel services in line with Council and Children's Services priorities and the need to make savings as described in this Report.

It was noted that N Bell, was against the recommendation as detailed in the report and B Gibson, A Rowlands and M A Watkin abstained from the vote

- ii. Noted that detailed proposals for a remodelled service would be presented to the Cabinet Panel in February 2018 and then to Cabinet in February 2018.

It was noted that N Bell, abstained from the vote

**10. TO CONSIDER THE FUTURE OF CUFFLEY CAMP OUTDOOR CENTRE**

[Officer Contact: Alan Haines, Senior Estates Officer (Tel: 01992 588120), Peter Hosier, Head of Service YC Hertfordshire (Tel: 01992 555406)]

10.1 The Panel received a report to consider the future of the Cuffley Outdoor Centre located in Carbone Hill, Northaw which consisted of an outdoor education centre for children and young people run by Hertfordshire County Council. The Camp was owned by Hatfield House Estate and managed by Gascoyne Holdings Limited (GHL), the County Council leased the property over a 25 year period from January 2007 until January 2032.

10.2 Members heard that GHL had served the County Council with a Schedule of Dilapidations. Under the lease the County Council covenanted to invest money each year to improve the premises. It was noted that the County Council had not complied with the lease agreement for the investment obligation, therefore owing GHL 11 years non-payment. The options open to the County Council were detailed within the report.

10.3 Some concern was raised that the decision was being rushed and should be considered as part of the YC review. Concerns were also raised at the admission of neglect and unfulfilled leasing obligations and panel questioned why the Council had not maintained its responsibilities. It was noted in the report that the numbers of users of Cuffley Camp had declined although a panel

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Member had researched figures and questioned if the report was accurate.

10.4 In relation to a Member question it was noted that a proportion of the funding from the Big Lottery Fund (BFL) to assist with building work to the hall at Cuffley Camp would need to be paid back to BFL.

10.5 It was noted by the Panel that there was 11 other private and voluntary outdoor centres within a 30 mile radius offering outdoor related activities, as well as Hudnall Park Outdoor Centre which was owned by the County Council. Members questioned if these other centres provided the same types of facilities and whether they could absorb the 8000 children across the County that would be affected by the closure of Cuffley Camp. Officers agreed to liaise with the centres and report back to Members.

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10.6 Members were also reminded that the County Council was not statutorily obliged to provide outdoor education facilities.

10.7 **PART II ('CLOSED') AGENDA  
EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

10.8 The Panel then decided to move into Part II ('closed' session').

10.9 That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the said Act and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

10.10 Following discussion on the Part II Report, the Panel moved back into Part I (open session) and discussed the recommendations.

10.11 A series of issues were raised by Members that officers were unable to answer. These would be addressed at the Resources, Property and the Economy Cabinet Panel on 9 November 2017. These are listed in the document appended to these minutes.

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10.12 An alternative recommendation to the officer recommendations was proposed by A Rowlands and duly seconded for 'a further report regarding the future of Cuffley Camp be brought to a future meeting of the Cabinet Panel containing options for the management of the site and that in the meantime the County Council undertakes a public consultation on the future of Cuffley Camp outdoor centre'. Upon being put to the vote, the alternative recommend was lost.

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10.13 An amendment to the officer recommendation set out in the report was proposed by the Chairman and duly seconded. Upon being put to the vote, the amendment was agreed.

It was noted that N Bell, B A Gibson. A Rowland and M A Watkin voted against the recommendation as amended.

**Conclusions:**

10.14 The Panel agreed to the recommendations set out in the Officer report subject as mentioned below:

Given the assurance that the groups currently accessing Cuffley Camp outdoor Centre are able to access other appropriate outdoor centres facilitating Hertfordshire, or within a reasonable distance of Cuffley Camp Outdoor Centre, the Children's Services Cabinet Panel recommend to Cabinet that:

1. Cabinet agrees that:-
  - (i) Cuffley Camp Outdoor Centre ('the Camp'), Northaw, should be closed;
  - (ii) the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Executive Member for Resources, Property and the Economy, be authorised to agree terms for the surrender of the County Council's lease of the premises used by the Camp; and .
  - (iii) that the expenditure associated with the surrender of the lease for the premises and for the closure of the Camp be met from the Children's Services revenue budget, with any shortfall being met from contingency.
2. The recommendations of the Panel to Cabinet, will be reported orally at the Cabinet meeting and circulated to Members in the Order of Business sheet.

It was noted that N Bell, B A Gibson. A Rowland and M A Watkin were against the recommendations as amended

**11 OTHER PART 1 BUSINESS**

11.1 There was no other business

**PART II ('CLOSED') AGENDA**

**1. TO CONSIDER THE FUTURE OF CUFFLEY CAMP OUTDOOR CENTRE**

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**Decision**

- 1.1 The decision reached on this item of business is recorded at item 10 above.

**KATHRYN PETTITT  
CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER**

**CHAIRMAN** \_\_\_\_\_

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