

Minutes



To: All Members of the Education,
Libraries and Localism
Cabinet Panel, Chief
Executive, Chief Officers, All
officers named for 'actions'

From: Legal, Democratic & Statutory Services
Ask for: Stephanie Tarrant
Ext: 25481

EDUCATION, LIBRARIES AND LOCALISM CABINET PANEL 8 JULY 2019

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS OF THE PANEL

N Bell (*substituted for A K Khan*), J Billing, T L F Douris (*Chairman*), J R Jones, J S Kaye (*substituted for A P Brewster*), M B J Mills-Bishop (*Vice Chairman*), A Plancey, A F Rowlands, J F Wyllie

Upon consideration of the agenda for the Education, Libraries and Localism Cabinet Panel meeting 8 July 2019 as circulated, copy annexed, conclusions were reached and are recorded below.

Note: No declarations of interest were made at this meeting.

PART I ('OPEN') BUSINESS

1. MINUTES

1.1 The minutes (Part I and Part II) of the previous meeting held on 10 May 2019 were agreed.

2. PUBLIC PETITION

2.1 There were no public petitions.

3. FINANCIAL OUTLOOK FOR THE PERIOD 2020/21-2023/24

[Officer Contact: Steven Pilsworth, Assistant Director Finance
Faisal Mir, Assistant Director Finance and Business Support]

3.1 The Cabinet Panel reviewed a report which detailed the overall financial outlook for the County Council and sought Members views on areas where further work should be done as part of the forthcoming Integrated Planning round.

ACTION

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS

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- 3.2 Panel Members noted that Financial Outlook reports had been considered at each portfolios Panel over the past month, with feedback collated in preparation to present it to Cabinet. Comments from Education, Libraries and Localism Panel Members would be fed back verbally via the Executive Member due to Cabinet being held the same afternoon.
- 3.3 Members acknowledged the overview as set out on page 8 of the report and noted the increased uncertainty around government funding arrangements for the future. Members expressed concern over the lack of clarity from government and noted that a number of grants were due to expire in March 2020.
- 3.4 Members discussed the estimated 1% reduction per pupil of Dedicated Schools Grant, as detailed on page 106 of Appendix 2 and it was advised that the County Council in conjunction with Herts for Learning had been running financial workshops for schools to enable schools to best protect themselves financially. It was noted that only 2% of schools in Hertfordshire were running in deficit compared to 8% nationally.
- 3.5 The Panel discussed the use of the Schools Forum for support across the county and officers confirmed that there were not any known plans to discontinue to Schools Forum.
- 3.6 In response to a Member question regarding where The Edge Review had got, officers advised that the review had looked at the delivery end of providing school transport and that colleagues in Environment were assessing how the County Council delivered transport and were reviewing current transport modes. Members heard that eligibility for school transport was assessed against a set framework for both mainstream and special schools.
- 3.7 Members commented on the Libraries and Localism aspects of the portfolio and noted that the County Council were working to ensure that the current library standards remained. Members agreed that cutting locality budgets would not be a quick win as locality budgets had been used to support services where budget cuts had already been made.
- 3.8 In response to a Member question regarding the revised capital bids (as detailed on page 121 of Appendix 2), officers advised that the information provided was as set out in January 2019. Members heard that revised capital bids would pass through the process for approval by County Council in February 2020. It was noted that the bids were currently fixed but could be changed or varied through the next process, however officers confirmed that at present there were no plans to alter the capital bids.

**CHAIRMAN'S
INITIALS**

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Conclusion

3.9 Members noted and commented upon the financial position and options outlined within the report, as detailed above.

4. RELOCATION OF THE PARK EDUCATION SUPPORT CENTRE, POTTERS BAR TO THE FORMER SOUTHFIELD SCHOOL SITE, TRAVELLERS LANE, HATFIELD

[Officer Contact: Richard Woodard, Area Manager – Professional Lead for Access and Inclusion, Integrated Services for Learning
Tel: 01442 453224 / Samantha Young, Senior Planning Officer, School Planning Tel: 01992 555754]

4.1 The Cabinet Panel reviewed a report which detailed the outcome of the public consultation on the proposal to relocate The Park Education Support Centre (ESC) in Potters Bar to the former Southfield School site In Traveller’s Lane, Hatfield from 1 August 2019.

4.2 Officers advised that following a site search for a more suitable location to base the ESC, the former site of Southfield School become available and deemed the right location. It was noted that there was overwhelming support from stakeholders and on that basis the department was moving forward proposing a formal recommendation.

4.3 On behalf of a Local Member, concerns were expressed that only part of the former Southfield School had been allocation for the ESC, leaving prime land left for development. Members noted that the remaining land would be a matter for Welwyn and Hatfield Borough Council to consider, taking into account the impact on the ESC.

4.4 In response to a Member question regarding whether the remaining land would be of benefit to the ESC for use by students, officers advised that the children attending the ESC attended a mainstream school for Physical Education (PE). It was noted that the aim of the ESC was to help re-integrate children back into mainstream schooling, so going back for PE was a positive move.

4.5 Members recognised the outstanding quality of Education Support Centre’s across the county and welcomed the proposal.

4.6 **Conclusion**

The Panel recommended to Cabinet that it:

- a) approves the relocation of The Park Education

**CHAIRMAN’S
INITIALS**

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Support Centre to the former Southfield School site, Travellers Lane, Hatfield, as proposed in the report;

- b) grants a standard DfE Academy Lease at a peppercorn rent to the new provider for the former Southfield School site in Travellers Lane, Hatfield; the proposed area of the former Southfield School site which is to be reallocated to The Park ESC to be as set out in Appendix 1 to the report; and the remaining land on the former Southfield School site to be managed by the County Council.
- c) approves a capital budget of £0.5million to complete the required works to make the former Southfield School site fit for use as an Education Support Centre.

5. RELOCATION OF THE PRIMARY SUPPORT BASE AT THE LEYS PRIMARY SCHOOL, STEVENAGE TO THE LODGE, CHELLS WAY, STEVENAGE

[Officer Contact: Richard Woodard, Area Manager – Professional Lead for Access and Inclusion, Integrated Services for Learning Tel: 01442 453224 / Samantha Young, Senior Planning Officer, School Planning Tel: 01992 555754]

- 5.1 The Cabinet Panel considered a report which detailed the outcome of public consultation on the proposal to relocate the Primary Support Base (“ the PSB”) at The Leys Primary School in Stevenage to The Lodge, Chells Way, Stevenage, SG2 0LQ from 2 January 2020.
- 5.2 Members heard that the DfE had agreed that Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) could be used towards this project which would be of benefit to local children. Officers confirmed that PSB’s supported primary school aged children.
- 5.3 Members thanked Peartree Spring Primary School and its Governors for agreeing to support the PSB in its new location.

Conclusion

- 5.4 The Panel recommended to Cabinet that it:
 - (a) approves the relocation of the the Primary Support Base at The Leys Primary School, Stevenage to The Lodge, Chells Way, Stevenage as proposed in the report

- (b) approves the revenue and capital funding costs of the relocation in (a) above, as set out in paragraph 8 of the report.

6. SECOND MONITORING REPORT OF HERTFORDSHIRE SKILLS STRATEGY TO 2020

[Officer Contact: Kate Brierley, Senior Policy Officer, Corporate Policy team, Tel: 01992 588321]

- 6.1 The Cabinet Panel considered a report which detailed the progress made in implementing the Hertfordshire Skills Strategy. Members noted that stakeholders were working towards the development of a third edition of the strategy alongside a third Skills Summit in 2020.
- 6.2 In response to a Member question regarding how the skills strategy linked in with Further Education colleges, officers advised that the strategy was discussed at the LEP Skills Board at which Further Education colleges were also represented. It was noted that colleges were closely involved in discussions on ensuring that provision matched workplace demand.
- 6.3 Members commented on the YC Hertfordshire Annual Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) Conference and requested that all relevant Members be invited to public events to ensure work was not being undertaken in silos.
- 6.4 The Panel noted that a number of the YC Hertfordshire initiatives/programmes had come to an end and asked if what was replacing these. Officers advised that the service was constantly looking for more sources of funding to support initiatives. Members noted the projects underway and officers advised that a future report would detail work being undertaken by Jobcentre Plus to support vulnerable groups.
- 6.5 Members commented on funding for those Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) as detailed at 5.6 of the report and queried if the new MEP's had been lobbied about money coming back in to the county. Officers advised that they would follow up on this and it was noted that the application for funding had successfully moved through the first stage of the process but that it was not known when a decision would be made.

Kate Brierley

Conclusion

- 6.6 The Cabinet Panel noted the progress made in implementing the Hertfordshire Skills Strategy.

**7. LOCALITY BUDGET SCHEME 2018/19 – OVERALL
BREAKDOWN OF SPEND**

[Officer Contact: John Birch, Corporate Policy, Tel: 01992 555602]

- 7.1 The Cabinet Panel reviewed a report which provided a breakdown of overall spend against the 2018/19 Locality Budget Scheme, and information collected about the use and effectiveness of the scheme.
- 7.2 The Panel noted that the scheme was approaching 10 years old and that 2018/19 was the second time in which the entire locality budget was spent. Last year saw the largest number of grants made with the average value of grants decreasing. In response to a Member question, it was advised that any unspent money go back into County Council funds.
- 7.3 Members agreed that the simplicity of the scheme and the application process made it easy to utilise the scheme. Officers were thanked for supporting the process.
- 7.4 In response to a Member question regarding better promotion of the scheme to the public, officers advised that the best promotion would be via County Councillors as the scheme was created to help County Councillors engage with the public. The Panel discussed the use of newspapers to promote the scheme via referencing funded projects. Officers were to discuss this with the Communications Department.

John Birch

Conclusion

- 7.5 The Education, Libraries and Localism Cabinet Panel noted the content of the report.

8. INSPIRING LIBRARIES PROPERTY UPDATE

[Taryn Pearson-Rose – Assistant Director: Customer Service and Libraries, Tel: 01992 556012]

- 8.1 The Cabinet Panel considered a report which provided an update on Library Service Property projects. The report detailed refurbishment and relocation projects over the past two years and provided a resume of property projects planned for 2019/20. It was noted that paragraph 8.5 of the report, which referred to exploring the possibility of relocating Ware Library to Mill Lane should have read exploring the possibility of relocating Ware Library to Star Street.
- 8.2 Members welcomed the update and the work that had taken place to date and commented on the excellent use and feel of refurbished libraries. Members queried if figures were available

**CHAIRMAN'S
INITIALS**

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regarding the usage of libraries once they had been refurbished. Officers advised that statistics were collected but needed to be considered over a period of time as there was always an initial 'bounce' in visitors when a library was refurbished/relocated. Members heard that when Harpenden Library relocated in 2013 the usage doubled and that this had been sustained whereas the library at Hemel Hempstead settled into a 1/3 increase in usage.

8.3 The Panel discussed whether more County Council plans/reports should be available to the public in libraries for reference, but it was noted that all of these were available to view online.

8.4 Members queried if there had been any update on the financial aspect of the co-location scheme and holding the advisors to account. Officers advised that the financial situation remained the same as reported in April 2019, with discussions still taking place with the Home Office around funding. The final decision would be reported back to Panel. In terms of holding the advisors to account, the Assistant Director of Property was informed of the difficulties faced and an update would be sought for Members.

Taryn
Pearson-Rose

Conclusion

8.5 The Panel noted and commented on the report, as detailed above.

9. OUTCOME OF THE PROCUREMENT EXERCISE AND AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR THE FUTURE DELIVERY OF LIBRARY SERVICES IN HERTFORDSHIRE

[Taryn Pearson-Rose – Assistant Director: Customer Service and Libraries, Tel: 01992 556012]

9.1 The Cabinet Panel considered a Part I and Part II report which detailed the proposed award of contract for the future delivery of Hertfordshire's Library Service.

9.2 Members acknowledged that 2.1 of the report detailed the number of reports previously considered by the Panel in relation to this proposal. Members noted that the Inspiring Libraries programme had saved around £2.7million in revenue since 2014 and was required to make a further £500k saving to support the County Council's overall financial position. It was noted that the County Council has looked for ways to make this saving without reducing the Library Service, agreeing to undertake a procurement exercise to find an external provider that could retain the high quality of service whilst making savings.

9.3 The Panel noted that alongside Cabinet's agreement to undertake a procurement exercise, it also agreed to the establishment of a Public Service Mutual. As part of the restricted procurement process the County Council invited expressions of interest through

**CHAIRMAN'S
INITIALS**

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a selection questionnaire. Two providers showed an interest, and both passed the requirements so were invited to submit a full tender. The tenders were evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria and an external library specialist was brought in as part of the assessment panel. Members noted that as part of the procurement process careful consideration had been given on how to disentangle support services, to ensure clarity in arrangements there would be a support service contract alongside the main contract.

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

- 9.4 The Panel agreed to move into Part II ('closed' session').
- 9.5 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.
- 9.6 Following discussion on the Part II Report and Part II recommendations, the Panel moved back into Part I (open session) to agree the Part I recommendations.

Conclusion

- 9.7 The Education, Libraries and Localism Cabinet Panel recommended to Cabinet

That Cabinet:

- (i) authorises the award of contract for the future delivery of Hertfordshire's Library Service to the organisation that provided the most economically advantageous tender in accordance with the procurement process (as detailed in the Part II report), for five years with the potential extension of an additional five years.
- (ii) In conjunction with entering into the contract for the future delivery of Hertfordshire's Library Services, further to (i) above approves the Council entering into an associated Support Services Agreement.
- (iii) Authorises the Director of Resources in consultation with the Executive Member for Education, Libraries and Localism to finalise all arrangements, to make any other decisions as are necessary and agree other documents

**CHAIRMAN'S
INITIALS**

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necessary for the County Council to conclude the arrangements in the preceding Recommendations.

10. TO CONSIDER THE FUTURE OF LAND AT LONDON ROAD BISHOPS STORTFORD: RELOCATION AND EXPANSION OF THE BISHOP'S STORTFORD HIGH SCHOOL

[Dick Bowler, Special Projects Officer, 01992 556223 / Kate Ma, Senior School Planning Officer, 01992 555858]

10.1 Members considered a report which outlined recommendations to the Council on:

a) the County Council assuming Local Delivery of the Priority Schools Building Programme 2 (PSBP2) scheme for The Bishop's Stortford High School (TBSHS) that will enable the relocation and expansion of TBSHS at a new site within the Bishops Stortford South (BSS) development area,

b) associated contractual arrangements, and

c) amending the basis of the County Council's financial support for the scheme.

10.2 Members noted the progress made to date in increasing school provision across Bishops Stortford to meet the demands of increased new homes in the area. It was noted that this report sought to agree the relocation of the boys school to a new site, which would be suitable for expansion to 8f.e in the future. Members heard that this move was part of the strategy to keep the boys and girls school provision balanced in the area and that the current school building was defective. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) had allocated additional funding to support the move of the boys school and a whilst a clear budget had been set for the scheme, the figures were tentative. It was noted that the £11.2m given to the scheme had to be spent by 31 March 2021 and therefore the process needed to move forward.

10.3 The Panel noted that the new premises and location would be more sustainable than the current school provision. Members discussed the positive impact on education that a new school fit for the 21st century would provide.

10.4 The Panel heard that the Local Members had been kept up-to-date on local developments and despite local controversy around town planning, were supportive of achieving the best facilities for the area and not losing the development. It was noted that East Hertfordshire District Council were in support of the proposals.

10.5 Members acknowledged that the DfE concluded that the County Council was best placed to enable the development of the new

**CHAIRMAN'S
INITIALS**

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premises as detailed at 6.1 of the report and queried the reason behind this. Officers advised that the County Council had greater flexibility and was able to deliver the whole largescale project.

- 10.6 The Panel discussed the risks involved with the project and officers advised that the most significant risks were around planning permission in the South of Bishops Stortford and negotiations on land prices, with the possibility of land being sold after the school has relocated.

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

- 10.7 The Panel agreed to move into Part II ('closed' session').
- 10.8 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.
- 10.9 Following discussion on the Part II Report, the Panel moved back into Part I (open session) to agree the Part I recommendations.

Conclusion

- 10.10 The Panel recommended to Cabinet:-

That Cabinet authorises:

- a) A capital budget for the scheme for relocation and expansion of The Bishops Stortford High School as set out in the report, to include feasibility expenditure to date and which covers the cost of the standard County Council specification for premises having a capacity of 6 forms of entry with 8 forms of entry core facilities and the costs of the associated minor projects, in the sum of £45.31m;
- b) The capital funding sources that are to be relied upon, being the PSPB2 grant from the DfE, the capital receipts from the sale of the existing Bishops Stortford High School site and s106 planning obligations, and the gap capital funding of £7.8m to be met from basic need;
- c) The capital receipts from the sale of the existing Bishops Stortford High School be protected by

**CHAIRMAN'S
INITIALS**

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the County Council requiring that the sale be joint with the School, that a caution be placed on the titles and that no sale be agreed until the Secretary of State for Education has given consent in writing to the sale and to the sale proceeds being remitted to the council; and

- d) The Director of Resources, as S151 officer, to provide a Capital Contributions Letter to the DfE in respect of all capital funding for a relocation and expansion scheme beyond the Priority School Building Programme (PSBP2)grant.

11. OTHER URGENT PART I BUSINESS

11.1 There was no other urgent Part I Business.

**QUENTIN BAKER
CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER**

CHAIRMAN_____

**CHAIRMAN'S
INITIALS**

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