

# 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

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## EDUCATION, LIBRARIES AND LOCALISM CABINET PANEL 5 FEBRUARY 2020

### ATTENDANCE

### MEMBERS OF THE PANEL

J Billing, A P Brewster, T L F Douris (*Chairman*), J R Jones, A K Khan, M B J Mills-Bishop (*Vice Chairman*), A Plancey, A F Rowlands, R A C Thake, M A Watkin, T J Williams

Upon consideration of the agenda for the Education, Libraries and Localism Cabinet Panel meeting 5 February 2020 as circulated, copy annexed, conclusions were reached and are recorded below.

*Note: J Billing, A P Brewster, T L F Douris, J R Jones, M B J Mills–Bishop, A Plancey, M A Watkin, T J Williams and declared an interest as recorded at item 3.*

### PART I ('OPEN') BUSINESS

#### 1. MINUTES

1.1 The minutes (Part I and Part II) of the previous meeting held on 11 December 2019 were agreed.

#### 2. PUBLIC PETITIONS

2.1 There were no public petitions.

#### 3. INTEGRATED PLAN 2020/21 - 2023/24 (EDUCATION, LIBRARIES AND LOCALISM)

[Officer Contact: Simon Newland, Operations Director – Education  
Taryn Pearson-Rose, Assistant Director, Customer Engagement & Libraries]

3.1 All Members who have a disclosable pecuniary interest arising from an allowance from the County Council, another local authority

### ACTION

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in Hertfordshire, or a body to whom they have been appointed by the County Council, have received a dispensation to allow them to participate in debate and vote on the Integrated Plan (IP).

All Members have been granted a dispensation to participate in debate and vote in any business of the County Council relating to setting the council tax or precept when they would otherwise be prevented from doing so in consequence of having a beneficial interest in land which is within the administrative area of Hertfordshire or a licence (alone or jointly) to occupy such land.

M A Watkin – by virtue of his wife being employed as a part-time teacher in the music service in Hertfordshire. He has been granted a dispensation by the Standards Committee to participate, debate and vote in business in which this Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is mentioned provided that the business to be considered does not directly affect his financial position or that of his wife.

M B J Mills–Bishop – by virtue of his wife being employed as a teacher in Hertfordshire. He had been granted a dispensation by the Standards Committee to participate, debate and vote in business in which this Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is mentioned provided that the business to be considered did not directly affect his financial position or that of his wife; which he considered it did not.

T J Williams – by virtue of his wife being employed at Kingswood Nursery School, Watford.

J Billing – by virtue of her daughter being employed at Whitehill Primary School in Hitchin.

The following Members have declared Declarable Interests under the County Council’s Code of Conduct for Members:-

T L F Douris – as he is a trustee of the Hertfordshire Community Foundation which contracts with the County Council for the delivery of training and also for the distribution of the Hertfordshire Community Funds scheme. His grand-daughter is employed by the County Council as a teaching Assistant at Belswains Primary School.

T L F Douris, J R Jones, M B J Mills–Bishop, A Plancey and M A Watkin – as members of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Hertfordshire, which, receives funding from the County Council.

A P Brewster and J R Jones – as Local School Governors.

3.2 Members were presented with an overview of the full structure

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and detail of the County Council's Integrated Plan for 2020/21 - 2023/24 before discussing the detail of the section relating to Education, Libraries and Localism. Members noted that there were not any new policy changes for the Education portfolio within the IP. It was noted that the biggest change was in relation to capital for new school developments. Officers advised that the issue was due to cash flow and that funding would be recovered.

- 3.3 There was some discussion of the division of responsibility for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) as between Education and Children's, Young People and Families Cabinet Panel, and the importance of an overview being maintained of their educational needs by Education Panel. Officers advised that whilst elements of SEND fell within the remit of another Panel, the Education, Libraries and Localism Cabinet Panel remained the relevant panel for matters relating to schools, for example the expansion of Special Schools.
- 3.4 In response to a Member question regarding SEND funding, Officers advised that the pressure for SEND funding was a national issue and that other County Council's had gone into a deficit. Members noted that the number of children with statements or an Education, Health and Care plans was rising rapidly and putting pressure on the budget for future years. It was noted that due to the way the National Funding Formula was partly based on historic spend, Hertfordshire received amongst the lowest level of funding per-capita of 31 County Councils and that it was important to lobby and advocate to Government to change the way the National Funding Formula was applied so as better to align with needs. Officers advised that in terms of managing the existing budget, the service would work as effectively as possible e.g. by providing the right provision locally to reduce more expensive out of county provision. Members heard that a whole spectrum of activity was being progressed as part of the SEND strategy and SEND transformation, in addition to extra support being made available to support SEND pupils in mainstream schools.
- 3.5 The Panel discussed the increase in numbers of pupils who were home educated (as set out on page 113 of the IP) and were interested to know how many children were now being taught at home and which division the children were based in. Officers advised that there were now just under 1500 children receiving elective home education and that a report on this topic was to be brought to the Panel.
- 3.6 In relation to Libraries and Localism, Members heard that the IP focussed on a continuity of policy choices. It was noted that £1 million remained of the inspiring libraries capital and that the money agreed for archives remained.

3.7 Members queried if the £179,000 in-year saving due to the delay of the library service transferring to Libraries for Life impacted on the IP. Officers advised that this was a proposed in-year saving for this year and would be met by the contingency budget, with a full year of savings due to be made next year.

**Conclusion**

3.8 The Panel commented on the proposals relating to the Integrated Plan in respect of Education, Libraries and Localism.

The Panel identified issues that it felt that the Cabinet should consider in finalising the Integrated Plan proposals.

**4. DETERMINATION OF HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2021/2022, FOLLOWING CONSULTATION**

[Officer Contact: Jayne Abery, Strategy and Policy Manager, Admissions & Transport, Tel No: 01992 588785 / Pauline Davis, School Place Planning Manager]

4.1 Members reviewed a report which sought the views of the Panel on the amendments to the County Council's admission arrangements for 2021/22. In response to a question, officers confirmed that any admitting authority had to consult on changing its admission rules and were bound by the Admissions Code. If the County Council thought an admitting authority had taken an unlawful decision, the County Council could refer the decision to the office of school's adjudicator.

4.2 Officers advised that there were only 8 respondents to the proposal to reduce the Published Admission Number at Richard Whittington School. and confirmed that consultation was not required to increase Published Admission Numbers. The Panel heard that the Local Member for St. Peter's School was content with the proposal. Officers confirmed that the school would have sufficient accommodation to support the increased pupil numbers in September 2020, however building works may be ongoing.

4.3 In response to a Member question regarding primary feeder schools blocking places into secondary schools, officers advised that the County Council had made a referral to the adjudicator regarding this matter, however the referral was not upheld as feeder schools were deemed to be reasonable. Officers confirmed that Looked After Children were still prioritised over children from feeder schools.

**Conclusion**

4.4 Panel noted and commented upon the report and recommended to

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Cabinet that:-

- following consultation in the appropriate Relevant Area the Published Admission Number at Richard Whittington School, Bishops Stortford is reduced from 45 to 30
- the Published Admission Numbers at St. Peters Primary School in St. Albans and Belswains Primary School in Hemel Hempstead are increased from 30 to 60 for 201/22
- the County Council's admission arrangements and schemes of coordination for statutory school age pupils are retained for 2021/22

**5. WHETHER TO PUBLISH A STATUTORY NOTICE IN RESPECT OF THE PROPOSAL TO EXPAND THE FOLLOWING SPECIAL SCHOOLS: GREENSIDE, STEVENAGE, BY 16 PLACES; LAKESIDE, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, BY 8 PLACES AND WOODFIELD, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, BY 32 PLACES, TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE OUTCOME OF A PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

[Officer Contact: Sally Glossop, County Lead for SEND, Integrated Services for Learning; Tel - 01992 588556 / Samantha Young, Senior Planning Officer, School Planning Team; Tel – 01992 555811]

5.1 The Cabinet Panel considered a report which detailed the outcome of the public consultation on proposals for the permanent enlargement, and associated capital works, to the premises of Greenside Community Special School, Stevenage, by 16 places; Lakeside Community Special School, Welwyn Garden City, by 8 places; and Woodfield Community Special School, Hemel Hempstead, by 32 places from September 2020.

5.2 Members acknowledged that the expansions would provide much needed school places for children with severe learning difficulties across the county and noted that the majority of respondents agreed with the proposals. In response to a Member question regarding why Woodfield School had a higher proportion of respondents disagree with the proposal, officers advised that concerns were around local traffic and parking. Officers advised that respondents had not recognised that 16 of the 32 proposed spaces were currently filled and that part of the proposal included additional parking within the school site.

5.3 Officers confirmed that all of the proposals were achievable from September 2020.

**Conclusion**

5.4 The Panel recommended to Cabinet that it authorises the Director

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of Children's Services to publish statutory notices to enlarge the premises at Greenside, Stevenage, by 16 places; Lakeside, Welwyn Garden City by 8 places and Woodfield, Hemel Hempstead by 32 places from September 2020.

The Panel recommended to Cabinet that it approved the capital costs of the expansion of the three schools, as set out in paragraph 6.3 of the report.

**6. THIRD 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 reviewed a report which provided an update on the progress made in implementing the Hertfordshire Skills Strategy. Members noted that the skills strategy had been in place since 2015 and was on the second edition. The strategy aimed to address the skills gap across the county and was monitored by a partnership group. The Panel noted the significant progress, the challenges and the next steps as detailed within the report.

6.2 Members were concerned to note that apprenticeship starts for 16-18 years olds had fallen and queried what the County Council were doing to ensure that the take-up of apprenticeships increased. Officers advised that the County Council were working alongside Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and a local company in Hitchin called Amazing Apprenticeships to promote apprenticeships to young people, parents and within schools. In addition, the Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal (HOP) had launched in November 2019, this provides a resource to help young people make informed decisions about their future employment opportunities. Members noted that the lack of 16-18 year old apprenticeship starts was a national issue and that it may be due to the requirement to remain in education until 18 years old and a lack of trust and understanding of the apprenticeship programme.

6.3 The Panel requested that Caroline Cartwright, LEP Skills Lead, also attended Panel to present the fourth monitoring report to share the LEP's outlook.

Kate Brierley

6.4 Members commented on lifelong learning as detailed at 4.6 of the report and discussed the 50+ age range and mothers trying to get back into work. Officers advised this area was led by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and that an issue with the 50+ age group appeared to be some discrimination from employers. It was however noted that this was not always the case, with employers such as Arriva having a campaign focussed on recruiting employees aged 50+. Officers advised that employers

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were being asked to widen their talent pool when recruiting and residents were encouraged to take a mid-life career 'MOT' or review which can act as an effective tool in financial and career planning, both of which are important to preventing people falling out of the workforce, or finding themselves in unfulfilling employment.

6.5 In response to a Member question regarding whether there was a lack of people to fill apprenticeship spaces or a lack of apprenticeships available, officers advised that it was a bit of both. It was advised that the LEP commission an annual Hertfordshire Skills and labour Market Review which was due to be published April and detailed an extensive survey of local businesses. Officers agreed to circulate the Hertfordshire Skills and labour Market Review to all County Councillors.

Kate Brierley

6.6 The Panel discussed the way in which parents viewed apprenticeships and noted that apprenticeships were often viewed as vocational and a weaker career option. Members acknowledged that the value of apprenticeships should be accepted by parents.

6.7 In response to a Member question regarding apprenticeship fairs, officers advised that careers fairs were still taking place across the county. Officers confirmed that schools were required to provide impartial and independent careers guidance and advice. Joint working between YC Hertfordshire and the LEP through the Careers and Enterprise programme also supported schools in developing their curriculum with regards to employment pathways.

6.8 The Panel requested that the next monitoring report included target dates for 2020.

Kate Brierley

**Conclusion**

6.9 Panel noted the progress made in implementing the Hertfordshire Skills Strategy and the development of a third edition of the strategy, following a period of engagement including the Skills Summit.

**7. UPDATE ON PROGRESS IN TRANSFERRING THE LIBRARY SERVICE TO LIBRARIES FOR LIFE**

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

7.1 The Cabinet Panel reviewed a report which provided an update on the latest position in transferring the Library Service from the County Council to Libraries for Life.

7.2 Members heard that the transfer of the service had been due to take place on 1 December 2019, however following a 'readiness to

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go live' check, it was apparent that there were critical tasks incomplete which would have left the transfer at high risk. It was noted that a consequence of delaying the transfer to the 1 April 2020 was that the in-year saving of £179,000 would not be made. Members noted the progress that had been made as detailed at section 5 of the report and heard that further progress had been made since the report had been published.

7.3 Members attention was drawn to the two red risks detailed in section 5 of the report. Officers advised that the red risk around property was in relation to sub-leased properties and that whilst work remained ongoing with landlords, it should not impact on Libraries for Life taking over the contract from 1 April 2020. In relation to the other red risk around pensions, it was noted that arrangements had further progressed and concerns of this being incomplete had reduced. Officers informed Members that the Operator's Licence with an amber rated risk was also being closely monitored. Members noted that Libraries for Life would need to provide a service that delivers books and items between sites across the county and discussions were ongoing with Herts Business Services to see if they could provide this service as the Library Service currently operated under the County Council's Restricted Operators Licence.

7.4 In response to a Member question on the trustees, officers confirmed that Libraries for Life would have 6 trustees, three independent and three representatives. It was advised that the recruitment phase was underway for three additional independent trustees, with a broad range of applications received. The current three representative trustees are a representative for Community Libraries (volunteer), a staff representative and a County Council appointed representative.

7.5 Members commented on the branding and queried what was in place for the launch on 1 April 2020. Officers advised that Libraries for Life had developed their own branding which had been shared with staff in November 2019. Whilst there were not any plans for an official launch the branding would be used from 1 April 2020. It was noted that Libraries for Life's initial priority was to ensure that the library service was delivered as business as usual.

7.6 In response to a Member question, officers confirmed that the Finance Manager was still awaiting pre-employment checks and that a second round of recruitment has commenced for a Chief Executive as the right candidate was not found in the first round. It was noted that this may mean that Libraries for Life begin without a Chief Executive, but it was important to have the right candidate in the role.



7.7 Officers confirmed that they were confident that many of the amber rated tasks would be marked as complete prior to the 1 April 2020 transfer date. It was noted that the pension issue had moved forward and that for the other tasks the liabilities were with the County Council so would not create any fundamental issues for Libraries for Life going live.

**Conclusion**

7.8 Panel are noted and commented on the report, as detailed above.

**8. OTHER URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

8.1 There was no other urgent Part I Business.

**QUENTIN BAKER  
CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER**

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

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