

Minutes



To: All Members of the Children, Young People and Families and Education, Libraries and Localism Cabinet Panels, Chief Executive, Chief Officers, All officers named for 'actions'

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

JOINT MEETING OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES CABINET PANEL AND THE EDUCATION, LIBRARIES & LOCALISM CABINET PANEL 26 NOVEMBER 2020

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS OF THE PANEL (26) (Quorum 7)

Children, Young People & Families

N Bell, L A Chesterman, J M Graham, D Hart, L J Greensmyth, T C Heritage (Chairman), D Hewitt (*substituted for S Brown*), T Howard, G McAndrew, A Plancey, N Quinton (*substituted for K Hastrick*), A F Rowlands, M A Watkin

Education, Libraries & Localism

J Billing, A P Brewster, T L F Douris (*Vice-Chairman*), N A Hollinghurst, S K Jarvis (*substituted for A F Rowlands*), J R Jones, A K Khan, M B J Mills Bishop, M Muir (*substituted for A Plancey*), R A C Thake, R G Tindall (*substituted for M A Watkin*)

OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

D Andrews, D Ashley, F Button, T Hone

Upon consideration of the agenda for the Joint Meeting of the Children, Young People & Families and the Education, Libraries and Localism Cabinet Panel meeting on 26 November 2020 as circulated, copy annexed, conclusions were reached and are recorded below.

Note: The following declarations of interest were made in relation to agenda item 2:

- *Mark Mills-Bishop's declared that his wife was a teacher at a Primary School in Broxbourne, his Son was Headteacher of a Primary School in Welwyn Hatfield and he was a Director of Dame Alice Owens School, Potters Bar.*

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS

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PART I ('OPEN') BUSINESS

ACTION

1. PUBLIC PETITIONS

1.1 There were no public petitions.

2. COVID WINTER SUPPORT GRANT

[Officer Contact: Simon Newland, Operations Director, Education]

2.1 The Panel reviewed a report which detailed the proposed programme of activity to be undertaken with the £2.49m received from the Covid Winter Support Grant. A presentation was given to Panel and the presentation slides can be viewed here: [Hertfordshire Covid Winter Grant Scheme - Presentation Slides.](#)

2.2 Members welcomed the information provided in the presentation. It was noted that meal vouchers were going to be electronically sent to parents via schools and officers confirmed that vouchers would be sent out w/c 7 December 2020 to ensure any download issues were resolved. The vouchers could be used electronically or printed. It was noted that schools would be able to provide vouchers for those without the correct equipment and that the County Council would be allocated vouchers to post out direct to parents should any problems occur once schools closed.

2.3 In response to a Member question, regarding families that became eligible to free school meals after the initial vouchers were distributed, officers advised that data would be collected via the free school meals application process and that new applications would be sent vouchers.

2.4 Members queried if the actions detailed within the EqIA would be complete by mid-December 2020. Officers confirmed that work was ongoing with local districts/schools to ensure all residents had the appropriate support to understand the schemes available.

2.5 In response to a Member question regarding further flexibility on the supermarkets where the vouchers could be spent, officers advised that unfortunately for the Christmas holiday scheme, vouchers could only be used at the supermarkets detailed within the report. Officers advised that they would seek clarification regarding whether the vouchers could be used for online shopping and noted that an expansion of supermarket choice may be available for the February half-term scheme.

2.6 Members commented on the additional workload for schools and officers advised that the method for distribution had been developed alongside schools.

Juliet
Whitehead

**CHAIRMAN'S
INITIALS**

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- 2.7 In response to a Member query regarding the 2021 Easter school holidays which falls after the Governments funding ended, the Panel noted the County Council had agreed to provide support for children eligible for free school meals for Easter and Summer half term school holidays for 2021.

- 2.8 In response to a Member question, officers advised the recipients will have two months to redeem their voucher from receipt. Officers noted the complexity of children living in Hertfordshire but being educated outside of Hertfordshire. It was noted that vouchers could not be allocated direct by officers and they were in contact with bordering Local Authorities to reach an agreement on managing these circumstances.

- 2.9 Officers noted that Government allowed for an administrative spend in administering the scheme and noted that it was expected that administration costs would be less than 5% of the value of vouchers offered.

- 2.10 Members commented on the use of a Member working group / topic group to focus on issues surrounding Free Schools Meals going forward. The Chairman noted that discussions were ongoing with officers on the best approach and that Members would be updated. Members noted that a piece of work that could be included could be reviewing why eligible families chose not to partake in the voucher scheme.

- 2.11 The Panel noted that communication around the voucher scheme and other assistance available was key and officers noted that they would ensure communications was clear and as detailed as possible.

- 2.12 Members thanked the schools administration teams for their involvement in delivering the scheme alongside the officers working on the creation of the scheme.

- 2.13 In response to a Member suggestion to add a recommendation requesting that an update report be brought back to a Panel, Members were advised that a follow up Joint Panel had been scheduled for 27 January 2021, where the winter scheme would be reviewed.

- 2.13 Following discussion of recommendation detailed at 3.1 (ii), N Bell proposed the following be added:

...While this Panel welcomes the initial allocation of support, this panel urges the cabinet to lobby the government to make sure all of our eligible free school meals children in Hertfordshire are properly covered till the end of 2021.

Cllr. Teresa Heritage

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS

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- 2.14 The amendment was voted on and lost.
- 2.15 N Bell further suggested an amendment to the second recommendation with the following to be added:

...Again this panel welcomes and notes the further £0.49million available for further allocation but calls on the cabinet to prioritise resources so that this funding is urgently added to in the light of yesterday's statement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the rise in unemployment which will inevitably lead to a rise in child poverty in Hertfordshire.

- 2.16 The amendment was voted on and lost.
- 2.17 The full Panel debate can be viewed here at 00:08:15 [Item 2 - Covid Winter Support Grant](#).

Conclusion

- 2.18 The Joint Cabinet Panel noted and commented upon the Report and recommended to Cabinet that Cabinet agrees:
- (i) to the provision of food vouchers to parents/carers of each child eligible for Free School Meals, to the value of £30 for the Christmas holidays and £15 for February half term.
 - (ii) to an initial allocation of £1m for a further programme of support, the details of which will be developed in the light of emerging government guidance.
 - The Joint Panel noted that a further £0.49m remained available for further allocation.
 - The Joint Panel's recommendation/s to Cabinet would be reported orally at the Cabinet meeting and circulated to Members in the Order of Business sheet.

3. OTHER URGENT PART I BUSINESS

- 3.1 There was no other urgent Part I Business.

QUENTIN BAKER
CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER

CHAIRMAN _____

**CHAIRMAN'S
INITIALS**

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