

CABINET MEMBER (EDUCATION)

18th July, 2012

Cabinet Member

Present: Councillor Kershaw

Employees Present:

S. Brake (Community Services Directorate)
C. Green (Director of Children, Learning & Young People)
D. Haley (Children, Learning & Young People's Directorate)
J. Newman (Finance & Legal Services Directorate)
U. Patel (Customer & Workforce Services Directorate)
C. Reed (Community Services Directorate)
M. Simpson (Children, Learning & Young People's Directorate)
D. Wallis (Children, Learning & Young People's Directorate)

In Attendance:

L. Williams (Work Experience)

Public Business

7. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

8. Minutes

(a) The minutes of the meeting held on 20th June, 2012 were signed as a true record.

(b) There were no matters arising.

(c) The minutes of the Joint Meeting of Cabinet Member (City Development) and Cabinet Member (Education) held on 18th June, 2012 were noted.

9. Library Service Strategy and Facilities Strategy

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Community Services which sought approval of the overall library strategy and the facilities strategy as a way forward in the future development of services in the city.

The Library Service Strategy "Making a difference" had been developed to produce a library service vision that would show how library service could develop in the future and support the council's wider priorities. The library service strategy "Making a difference" was attached as Appendix 1 of the report.

The Facilities Strategy (as attached at Appendix 2 of the report) was linked to this as it examined factors that may influence any future developments with library buildings.

The report stated that no funding implications had been identified at this stage as the purpose was to identify priorities and then focus on the development opportunities that could support this.

Public libraries are a statutory service and local councils were required to provide a "comprehensive and efficient" service. The context in which library services operate was changing with lifestyles and changing needs and in Coventry there were several local factors that influenced the way in which libraries operate. Many of these issues were challenging the traditional role of the library service and this provided an opportunity to develop a new library service vision that reflected the changes faced and showed how library services could develop and support the council's wider priorities and needs of its communities. The strategy outlined what was currently being done and how the library service would be working in the future, giving examples of the impact already made and the priorities for the future.

The Library Service Strategy " Making a Difference" had been developed taking into account the changing context in which services were now operating in including, amongst other things limited time for people to access traditional services, increased downloading of information, music and ebooks, increased customer expectation of service delivery and 24/7 accessibility and technological developments i.e. self service, online access and communications.

In addition to these, several local factors had influenced the strategy, such as a strong political commitment to support current level of library provision across the city; a young and growing population; areas of high deprivation where groups did not readily engage with council services per se; use of digital services and computers to be developed to better support the needs of today's user; a well utilised central library and libraries across the city in a wide range of buildings influencing services that were offered.

This resulted in the development of a strategy that focused on the following key priorities:

- Knowing our communities
- Enjoying books and reading
- The right books at the right time for everyone
- A digital offer 24/7 Library Service
- Addressing inequalities
- Working together
- Employment, jobs and training
- Welcoming helpful knowledgeable staff
- Libraries for the future

The Facilities Strategy supports the strategy by emphasising the need to maintain the current stock of buildings whilst linking to the new priorities by offering opportunities for other services to share library premises or for us to explore co-location/relocation. The facilities strategy would allow for opportunities to be taken as they arise and it may be that some priorities would need change to take advantage of these. In the current financial climate decisions would then have to be made about financial options for any specific developments and the priorities given to this by the Council.

The Children, Young People, Learning and Culture Scrutiny Board (Scrutiny Board 2) considered the 'Library Facilities Strategy – Jubilee Crescent Library' on 20th April 2012 and requested that the following recommendations be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for considerations as part of the overarching report:

- (a) that the priority rating for Jubilee Crescent Library be changed from "high" to "essential" and;
- (b) that officers continue discussions in order to identify what resources and options might be available to improve the facilities at the library.

The Cabinet Member noted the recommendations above and requested officers to explore the feasibility of improving the facilities at Jubilee Crescent and that this matter be discussed in greater detail at the next meeting.

In considering the report, the Cabinet Member made the following observations:

- i) That in an increasingly digitalised arena, the human element was becoming more important. Consequently, it was becoming more important for staff working in public services to be welcoming, knowledgeable, pleasant and friendly. Friendly staff would encourage people to return.
- ii) Officers be requested to explore every opportunity for library services to be incorporated into the school environment to develop their role as centres for community learning.
- iii) Officers be requested to liaise with the communications team to raise the profile of this as a good news story. It was suggested that the Coventry Literacy Festival could be held in local libraries creating more opportunities for the local community to engage with their local libraries.

RESOLVED that after due consideration of the report and matters raised at the meeting, Cabinet Member (Education):-

- (1) Considered and noted the analysis of the key issues that will influence future developments for library services in the city.**
- (2) Commented on the vision and priorities in the library service strategy and facilities strategy as above.**
- (3) Considered the recommendations from Scrutiny Board 2 that the priority rating for Jubilee Crescent Library be changed from high to essential and officers continue discussions in order to identify what resources and options might be available to improve the facilities at the library and requested that this matter be discussed in greater detail at the next scheduled meeting.**

10. Home to School Travel Assistance for pupils with Special Needs and Disabilities

The Cabinet Member (Education) considered a report of the Director of Children, Learning and Young People which outlined how the Directorate had continued to identify ways in which home to school transport might be better managed, offer better outcomes for children and young people and provide greater choice and control for parents.

A range of measures to improve the budgetary position of the SEN Home to School Transport budget had been taken. These included amongst others:

- Tighter decision making and linking responsibility for the budget with the manager who makes the decision on placement for pupils with SEND.
- Joint working between SEN Management Services and the Travel Bureau to ensure that routing is as efficient as possible.
- Greater involvement of special school headteachers to ensure efficiencies.

- Changed arrangements to support nursery aged pupils with SEN following the closure of the two enhanced resource nurseries in July 2011 which had resulted in substantial savings.

The City Council also commissioned support from Impower consultancy with the aim of identifying efficiencies whilst preserving services and reshaping its relationship with citizens. Focus groups of parents with pupils with SEND were held to seek their views and look for new ways of working. Following this work two key work streams were established to take forward the provision of Independent Travel Training (ITT) and Personal Transport Budgets.

An additional Independent Travel Trainer (ITT) was appointed to the Travel Training Team based in Community Services. Two staff now focused their work on school aged pupils and their aim would be to support a young person to improve their independence skills which would also reduce the number of adults needing training in subsequent years. ITT was now also being rolled out to other special schools for appropriate young people. Savings have been forecasted at £0.3m per year by 2013-14.

The Local Authority also developed a scheme to offer Personal Transport Budgets to parents whereby an amount of money would be provided to parents of pupils with SEND who are eligible for travel assistance, in lieu of council transport provision. They are designed to be voluntary, tailored and non-prescriptive. They also financially benefit parents who can negotiate better deals locally, joint commission and spend money more imaginatively.

Once a level had been established for personal transport budgets (PTBs), a pilot was undertaken with parents of pupils at Castle Wood School which showed that there was interest from parents with 12% of parents accepting. This was then rolled out to the rest of the special school population.

In the summer of 2011 all parents of pupils transported to the local authority's special schools were contacted and offered a PTB (approximately 650 families). As a result, 116 families whose children were previously using transport or who would have taken up transport, were now receiving a PBT (16% take-up). The amount of money provided in a PTB was based on the distance the child lives from the school. This was then paid directly into the parent's bank account on a monthly basis. The pricing level was designed to be high enough to incentivise parents to accept a PTB, while being low enough to deliver savings for the council compared to council-provided/funded transport. Feedback from young people, their families and the schools involved has been very positive.

In accepting a PTB, a parent would agree in writing to be responsible for arranging safe and timely travel to school and to inform the Council SEN Team if the child's needs changed or they no longer wished to receive a PTB and want to access other forms of travel assistance instead.

The attendance and punctuality of children with a PTB was monitored by the SEN Team and schools, and if it dropped below an acceptable level, the PTB could be stopped by the Council. Beyond this there was a deliberate lack of restrictions or guidance on how the money was spent, and parents were not asked to account for expenditure.

The support offered by Impower consultancy cost £153k of which £73k was paid for from a ring fenced grant from the DFE. There were no further costs expected from Impower that relate to this project. This cost was set against forecast savings over three years 2011/12 to 2013/14 of £892k.

This work would be kept under regular review and work would continue to improve arrangements and make efficiencies. Officers would in particular be considering how ITT and PTBs could be offered to pupils in other provisions in the city.

As part of a consultation exercise, parents were asked for feedback on both the travel training and the provision of personal transport budgets and the feedback was very positive. Examples of the comments made by parents were detailed in the report.

Independent travel training and the offer of personal transport budgets have been made since summer 2011. This work was now embedded and part of the normal offer to pupils/parents. Parents of pupils moving to secondary special school provision have been offered a personal transport budget and parents of pupils starting at primary special school provision were currently being made this offer at the conclusion of their child's statutory assessment. The outcome of the level of take up would determine the level of transport provision which the Council would need to make for the start of the next academic year.

RESOLVED that after due consideration of the report and matters raised at the meeting, Cabinet Member (Education): -

- (1) Endorsed the actions taken to date and the ongoing work with regards to this area.**
- (2) Thanked Marion Simpson and all the other senior support officers on the work undertaken to improve the service.**
- (3) Requested that his grateful thanks be extended to the admin support team, in particular Sharron Warner, Senior Admin Officer, who has been an incredible asset on this piece of work.**

11. Appointment of Authority Governors

RESOLVED that, having met the Local Authority criteria for the appointment of Local Authority school governors, Cabinet Member (Education) approved the appointment and re-appointment of the persons listed below for the schools and terms of office indicated:-

Authority Governor: New Appointments

Name	School	Term of Office
Nigel Chilvers	Foleshill Church of England Primary	17 July 2016
Ruth Winters	Hill Farm Primary	17 July 2016
Sandra Shipton	John Gulson Primary	17 July 2016
Melanie Harvey	Joseph Cash Primary	17 July 2016
Alexander Breeze	Pearl Hyde Primary	17 July 2016
Eleanor Barry	St Patrick's Catholic Primary	17 July 2016
Sue Beldon	Stretton Church of England Primary	17 July 2016
Eileen Leech	Stretton Church of England Primary (Additional LA Governor)	17 July 2016

Authority Governor: Re-Appointments

Name	School	Term of Office
Mr H Maeers	Courthouse Green Primary	29 September 2016
Cllr D Chater	Ernesford Grange Community School	31 August 2016
Cllr T Sawdon	Grange Farm Primary	31 August 2016
Mr H Hall	Stoke Heath Primary	31 August 2016
Cllr S Bains	Stoke Heath Primary	31 August 2016

12. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues.

(Meeting closed at 2.45pm)

CABINET MEMBER (EDUCATION)

9th August, 2012

Cabinet Member

Present: Councillor Kershaw

Other Members Present: Councillor Lakha (for the matter in minute 14 below)

Employees Present: E. Atkins (Finance & Legal Services Directorate)
C. Green (Director of Children, Learning & Young People)
I. Merryfield (Children, Learning & Young People Directorate)
M. Salmon (Customer & Workforce Services Directorate)
A. Simpson (Children, Learning & Young People's Directorate)

Public Business

13. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

14. Petition - Response to a petition against the expansion of Ernesford Grange Primary School

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Children, Learning and Young People that responded to a petition, bearing 109 signatures, sponsored by Councillor Chater, a Binley and Willenhall Ward Councillor, and presented to the City Council on 24th July 2012. The petition was from parents and local residents urging the City Council to halt the expansion of Ernesford Grange Primary School from September 2012 onwards. The petition had been submitted following the urgent measures already implemented to create an additional 30 reception places at the School for September 2012 admissions. Councillor Lakha, a Binley and Willenhall Councillor, attended the meeting to present the petition on behalf of Councillor Chater, who was unable to attend, together with the petition organiser.

The City was experiencing a significant rise in birth rate and inward migration. When the initial allocation for September 2012 admissions to Primary Schools was made in April 2012, there were sufficient places available across the City for the reception cohort, but insufficient reception places to meet parental demand in some parts of the City. In some Wards children were unable to be allocated a reception place in their catchment school or where their sibling attended school.

Department for Education 2012 School Capacity Collection data indicated that considerable pressure on reception places would continue over the next few years. Compared with September 2012, the pressure should ease for 2013 with a predicted surplus of 161 (3.6%) places (excluding additional September 2012, but there was an estimated shortfall of 132 (3%) places for September 2014. A minimum of 210 permanent additional places would therefore be needed to cover this shortfall and leave a 1% level of surplus places across the City. The Local Authority usually aimed to achieve between 4 and 5% above forecast to enable a reasonable degree of parental preference to be exercised.

To meet this rising pressure on school places, a total of 615 additional reception places across 28 schools had already been created since 2008. These included an additional 120 planned expansion places which would be available at 5 schools from September 2012. A total of 4,380 reception places were therefore planned to be available for September 2012

admissions against a forecast of 4,331. A total of 4,397 reception places had actually been allocated as at 23rd July 2012.

Under Section 14 of the 1996 Education Act, the City Council had a statutory responsibility to provide sufficient places for pupils in the City. The position for September 2012 admissions was extremely tight. The City Council had therefore been in discussion with a number of primary school Headteacher's and Governing Bodies to create some additional 'emergency' reception places for September 2012 because the demand for places was likely to exceed supply in certain parts of the City:

Broad Heath Primary from 2 forms of entry to 3 forms of entry (+30 Places)
Clifford Bridge Primary from 1 forms of entry to 2 forms of entry (+30 places)
Ernesford Grange Primary from 2 forms of entry to 3 forms of entry (+30 Places)
Moat House Primary from 1.5 forms of entry to 2 forms of entry (+15 places)
Frederick Bird Primary from 3 forms of entry to 4 forms of entry (+30 places)

The net effect of the admission changes for September 2012 was that a total of 4,515 reception places were available; there remained 118 (2.6%) unallocated places at 23rd July 2012 at 19 schools. It was likely that a large proportion of these would be allocated through the late applications process.

Legally with such short notice the Local Authority could only make a temporary change for September 2012 only. This had been confirmed by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator. For September 2013 admissions, the City Council would need to formally vary the admission number through a Variation Notice submitted to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator. This was because school Published Admission Numbers for September 2013 had already been determined by the City Council's Cabinet at it's meeting on 13th March 2012 (minute 136/11 referred). In order to permanently increase the size of Ernesford Grange Primary School and the other schools identified, it would be necessary to undertake formal consultation to be undertaken in 2012 Autumn Term prior to the City Council considering whether to publish formal Statutory Notices.

A Project Group, comprising officers, the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Governing Body representatives, would plan for the admission of the additional pupils in September 2012 and identify key issues impacting on any permanent expansion from September 2014. Should the City Council decide to permanently extend the school, the headteacher, staff and governors would be fully supported by the Local Authority. The Local Authority had confidence that the school would continue to deliver high quality teaching and learning to all pupils should it be expanded at a future date. The 2010 Ofsted Report acknowledged the school's strong leadership team, highly committed staff, high expectations for pupils and drive for continual improvement.

Should the Council decide to permanently expand the school, it would need to consider opportunities to improve the existing infrastructure including traffic management to address the school's inadequate on site car parking facilities for staff and visitors resulting in cars being parked in neighbouring roads causing congestion particularly at the beginning and end of the school day. It should be noted that for September 2012 admissions, some 85% of reception pupils live less than a mile from the school.

In considering the report and the comments made by officers, Councillor Lakha and the petition organiser, the Cabinet Member confirmed that:

- i) The measures to expand the school from September 2012 had been taken under the Authority's emergency powers to enable them to comply with their legal obligation to provide sufficient school places for pupils in the City.

- ii) Any future proposals for expansion of schools would be communicated to Ward Councillors, the local community and parents at the earliest opportunity.
- iii) He acknowledged the concerns raised regarding traffic congestion, parking provision and health and safety issues for the school following the increase in admission numbers and indicated that, although there was no budgetary provision to support the infrastructure of the school for September 2012, resources would be identified for any permanent expansion proposals.
- iv) The City Council had every confidence that the school would continue to deliver high quality teaching and learning to all pupils and that this would not be compromised due to the increase in admission numbers.
- v) Any proposals to expand the school permanently from September 2014 would follow the formal statutory process for consultation, prior to the City Council considering whether to publish formal Statutory Notices.

RESOLVED that after due consideration of the report and matters raised at the meeting, Cabinet Member (Education):-

- (1) Noted the petition presented to the City Council on 24th July 2012 from parents and local residents urging the City Council to halt the expansion of Ernesford Grange Primary School from September 2012 onwards.**
- (2) Confirmed the urgent measures already implemented to create an additional 30 reception places at Ernesford Grange Primary School for September 2012 admissions.**
- (3) Noted that a report will be presented to Cabinet in October 2012 which will consider whether to formally consult on proposals to permanently expand Ernesford Grange Primary School from September 2014**

15. Any Other Public Business

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 4.15pm)