

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Education and Skills held at
2.30 pm on Thursday, 17 January 2019

Present:

Members: Councillor K Maton (Cabinet Member)
 Councillor P Male (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Employees (by Directorate):

Place M Salmon

People P Barnett, S Heawood, K Nelson

Public Business

11. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

12. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2018 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

13. Co-ordinated Primary and Secondary School Admission Schemes for 2020/2021

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) that sought consideration of the co-ordinated Primary and Secondary School Admission Schemes for 2020/2021.

The Department for Education required Local Authorities to determine the co-ordination schemes for school admissions in their areas and the admissions policies for community and voluntary controlled schools which were the responsibility of the local authority, by 28 February each year.

In April 2006, Cabinet agreed that consideration of reports on school admission arrangements would be delegated to the relevant Cabinet Member in years where there were no significant changes proposed to the admission arrangements. (Cabinet minute 253/06 refers). However, consultation was required by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 and the School Admissions Code (statutory guidance), where the local authority had not consulted for a period of seven years (Regulation 15). This report met that requirement.

There were no significant changes proposed for the co-ordinated schemes for 2020/2021. Details of both schemes had been circulated to all stakeholders as set out in statutory regulations and no requests for amendments had been received.

The Cabinet Member was asked to determine the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Primary, Infant and Junior Schools in Coventry for 2020/2021 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report and the Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Secondary Schools in Coventry for 2020/2021 as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

The Cabinet Member noted that a range of changes were being consulted on for the community and voluntary controlled school admissions policies and that these would be the subject of a separate report that would be submitted to the Cabinet in February 2019.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Skills and Education approves:

- 1) The Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Primary, Infant and Junior Schools in Coventry for 2020/2021 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.**
- 2) The Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Secondary Schools in Coventry for 2020/2021 as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.**

14. Library Service Budget Reductions

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) that sought approval of a series of Library Service budget changes which were required to ensure compliance with the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The changes focussed on reductions in the staffing of a number of libraries, the adoption of new ways of working and a reduction in resources purchased by the Library Service. The proposals did not include any changes to the number of libraries or their opening hours.

Proposal to reduce expenditure included the following:

- Reduce staffing in Aldermoor, Caludon, Canley and Coundon libraries to single staffing. Staff would be supplemented by a small peripatetic team who would support the delivery of library activities and provide some support to staff and volunteers in these libraries.
- Reduce staffing in Central Library by introducing a 'Library Express' model which would rely on self-service and limited staff supervision of the library from 9am-11am Monday to Friday and on Sundays.
- End the provision of most hard copy newspapers and all hard copy magazines and support users to move to digital access either in the library or at home.
- Generate additional income from the introduction of a privately run café within Central Library and an externally funded Visa scheme.
- Reductions in other fixed budgets and a review of management and non-front line posts.
- A change to library fines to move the age at which users were expected to pay from aged 8 years to 16 years.

The Council had already made some progress in the recruitment of volunteers to support service delivery. In addition plans were being developed to establish "Friends of..." Groups for libraries, focusing on Aldermoor, Caludon, Canley and Coundon libraries initially, in order to stimulate volunteering and explore the potential for greater community involvement in the running of community libraries.

The proposal to remove fines for those under 16 years reflected the Service's view that particularly for families with limited incomes, library fines were a disincentive for children to continue library use after fines were introduced at age 8.

Alternatives to the proposals in the report included the closure of a number of libraries, reductions in the opening hours of some or all libraries and further reductions in the books and other resources purchased by the Service for the use of borrowers.

The Council's emphasis had been on maintaining library access and the Service had taken the view that further reductions in opening hours (following changes introduced in 2017) or closing libraries would produce a negative impact in a number of vulnerable communities across the City.

A Libraries Update had been considered by the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) at their meeting held on 29th November 2018 that included proposals for Library Service budget changes (their minute 41/18 referred) and a briefing note setting out the recommendation of the Board was appended to the report. The Board requested that the Cabinet Member, when making decisions about Library Service budget reductions, was recommended:

- 1) To ensure that the safety of the public, staff and volunteers, should be prioritised, especially in areas that suffer from anti-social behaviour.
- 2) To consider carefully the importance of thorough risk assessments when making decisions about lone working.
- 3) To note that the Board felt there should not be one person working in a building, particularly in areas with high levels of anti-social behaviour.

Whilst further work was planned on developing new ways of working, a short summary of the proposed approach, that took account of the issues raised by the Scrutiny Board, included the practical provision of equipment, changes to procedures and practices and targeted support from other library staff. The approach was set out in Appendix A to the report.

RESOLVED that Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:

- 1) **Agrees to the proposals to reduce expenditure in the Library Service through changes focussed on reductions in the staffing of a number of libraries, the adoption of new ways of working and a reduction in resources purchased by the Library Service, as follows:**
 - **Reduce staffing in Aldermoor, Caludon, Canley and Coundon libraries to single staffing. Staff would be supplemented by a small peripatetic team who would support the delivery of library activities and provide some support to staff and volunteers in these libraries.**

- **Reduce staffing in Central Library by introducing a 'Library Express' model which would rely on self-service and limited staff supervision of the library from 9am-11am Monday to Friday and on Sundays.**
 - **End the provision of most hard copy newspapers and all hard copy magazines and support users to move to digital access either in the library or at home.**
 - **Generate additional income from the introduction of a privately run café within Central Library and an externally funded Visa scheme.**
 - **Reductions in other fixed budgets and a review of management and non-front line posts.**
 - **A change to library fines to move the age at which users were expected to pay from aged 8 years to 16 years.**
- 2) Requests that a review be undertaken 3 months after implementation of the proposals and that a report on the outcomes of the review be submitted to a future meeting of Cabinet Member for Education and Skills.**

15. Outstanding Issues

There were no outstanding issues.

16. Any Other Items of Public Business

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.00 pm)