

CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Education held on Monday, 9 July 2018 at 10.00 am at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Suzy Horton (Cabinet Member)
Councillors Tom Coles (Opposition Spokesperson)
Hannah Hockaday (Opposition Spokesperson)

20. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

21. Declarations of Members' Interests

Councillor Coles declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as he is on the Academy Advisory Board at Penhale Infant School.

22. Future school funding arrangements 2019-20

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The report was introduced by Beverley Pennekett, Finance Manager.

Councillor Horton said it was important to note that discussions on this had already taken place with the Schools Forum.

DECISIONS: The Cabinet Member:

- (1) Noted the progress being made towards the 2019 to 2020 local funding formula including the issue of the consultation to mainstream schools as set out in Appendix A.**
- (2) Noted the outcomes of the consultation issued to mainstream primary schools and agree the proposals set out in section 6.**
- (3) Noted that the Department for Education (DfE) are reviewing the methods of funding the local authority for Growth and the High Needs Block and a further update will be provided following the publication of information from the DfE.**
- (4) Noted the progress being made towards the strategic review of the High Needs budgets in light of the 2018-19 pressures.**
- (5) Noted the progress being made towards the review of early years funding for 2019-20 as set out in section 8.**

23. The Harbour School

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The report was introduced by Julia Katherine, Head of Inclusion.

Councillor Hockaday wished to place on record the excellent work done with Harbour School and added that the new headteacher has been doing an outstanding job. Councillor Horton endorsed this and said this was a good news story with the situation looking steady going forward.

Mr Stoneman added that Schools Forum members had been concerned about other schools in the same situation however he wished to reassure members that there were exceptional reasons for The Harbour School's deficit which led to the need for a staff restructure and changes to the curriculum. With regard to other schools the LA is closely monitoring schools and where there is any sign of schools moving towards a deficit, the Local Authority is going in early to arrange meetings with schools with follow up monitoring.

DECISIONS: The Cabinet Member:

(1) Noted the significant progress that has been made to address the financial and structural issues at The Harbour School, including predicting a balanced in-year budget for 2017-18.

(2) Agreed to use £868,258 from Dedicated Schools Grant balances to fund the remaining deficit in the Harbour School budget.

24. 2017-18 school balances report

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The report was introduced by Alison Egerton, Group Accountant.

Councillor Horton thanked officers for the report and said that it reinforced the point that monitoring taken place by the local authority is very effective.

DECISION: The Cabinet Member noted the level of maintained schools' revenue balances and capital balances as at 31st March 2018 as shown in Appendices 2 & 3 and the monitoring action taken by the council.

25. 2017-18 Dedicated Schools Grant Outturn Report and Revised Budget 2018-19

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The report was introduced by Alison Egerton, Group Accountant.

Councillor Hockaday thanked officers for the work that the finance department had done on this.

Councillor Horton said finishing with a positive balance is great but it was important not to become complacent as the backdrop is one of increased pressure.

DECISIONS: The Cabinet Member

- (1) Noted the year-end outturn budget position for the Dedicated Schools Grant as at the end of March 2018 and the variance explanations contained with the report.**
- (2) Approved the revised Dedicated Schools Grant budget for 2018-19 as set out in Appendix 1.**

26. School Modernisation Programme 2018-2019

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The report was introduced by Chris Williams, Pupil Place Planning & Capital Strategy Officer. Mr Stoneman added that the school modernisation programme only applies to local authority maintained schools for which the LA continues to have statutory responsibilities in terms of the maintenance of school buildings. For the sufficiency projects, the strategy in place makes no distinction between academies or maintained schools.

In response to a question from Councillor Hockaday regarding Priory School, Mr Stoneman advised that the school is part of the Bohunt Education Trust. The Trust has put forward a proposal to reduce the planned admission number of the school from 250 to 225. The LA has objected to the proposal which has now been lodged with the office of the schools adjudicator and this process is ongoing. He added that the LA is very sympathetic to what the school and the Trust is trying to achieve and recognise that space is constrained on the site, but reducing the admission number would leave the LA with a large capital bill in order to try and replace the school places and this funding is not available. The DfE would not take this into account in terms of any future basic need allocation unless there was an agreement about the reduced capacity of the school.

DECISION: The Cabinet Member noted the progress on the school modernisation "urgent condition" projects and the secondary school sufficiency projects (as set out in the report and in Appendix A).

27. Education budget monitoring outturn report 2017-18

(TAKE IN REPORT)

The report was introduced by Beverley Pennekett, Finance Manager. Mr Stoneman added that the directorate would not be looking to make any call on the surplus that has been carried forward for Education due to the extent of existing budget pressures.

In response to a question from Councillor Hockaday about concerns of the overspend of the home to school transport budget, Mr Stoneman said that the LA had consulted on changes to the policy last year and these changes were now in place from September. This removed the discretionary elements with the hope that this would balance the budget. However, the numbers of eligible pupils is increasing so the pressure will remain. The full picture will not be known until the autumn when the transport arrangements have been firmed up, but it is clear this will be an ongoing pressure.

DECISIONS: The Cabinet Member:

- (1) Noted the Education Portfolio outturn position for 2017-18 of £348,000 under the approved cash limit provision and the capital programme position at the end of the financial year.**
- (2) Noted the existing commitments against the underspend therefore reducing the amount in the portfolio reserve to support future service pressures.**
- (3) Noted the potential cash limit pressure for the 2018-19 financial year; and that this will continue to be monitored and reported regularly during the year.**

The meeting concluded at 10.35 am.

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Councillor Suzy Horton
Chair