

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education held on Thursday, 11 March 2021 at 4.00 pm as a virtual meeting.

Present

Councillor Suzy Horton (in the Chair)
Councillors Terry Norton
Jeanette Smith
Judith Smyth

10. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

11. Declarations of Interests

Councillor Horton declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as she is a governor at Craneswater Junior School. Councillor Norton declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as he is employed at Mayfield School through a cover agency, his partner is employed at Mayfield School and his daughter attends it. Councillor Smith declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as she is a paid official for Hampshire branch UNISON and represents support staff in Hampshire schools.

12. Quarter 3 Children, Families and Education Portfolio Budget monitoring

The report was introduced by Angela Mann, Finance Manager.

In response to a question regarding the effect on families due to the underspends, Angela advised that a big area of the underspend was Home to School transport due to schools being only partially open during the pandemic and the risks around infection which were making parents of SEND children very anxious. In relation to Looked After Children this was due to the additional grant income received during the year that was not budgeted for.

Alison Jeffery said that due to the Covid restrictions, some disabled young people could not receive some services that were part of their package such as the befriending service. PCC worked with Enableability to stand up more services and put in place one to one activity sessions. Those families were under particular pressure as a result of the pandemic and subsequent restrictions. Sarah Daly added another effective measure put in place was the Outreach service to ensure the authority kept in touch with families. Also the triangulation between the service and the schools. There was a very good support system in place to ensure the families needing the most support received this and this was still continuing.

In response to a question regarding the Home to School Transport service, Mike Stoneman said that there were no concerns with any of the transport operators throughout the pandemic. The operators that the authority contracts with would have had their own arrangements and no doubt would have furloughed some of their staff whilst schools were partially closed. In terms of the passenger assistants employed by the authority, it was confirmed that no-one was furloughed and the passenger assistants were deployed elsewhere.

DECISIONS:

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education noted the Children, Families and Education portfolio forecast revenue and capital budget positions, as at the end of December 2020, together with the variance and pressure explanations.

13. Dedicated Schools Grant 2020-21 Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring

The report was presented by Alison Egerton, Group Accountant.

DECISIONS:

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education:

Noted the forecast year-end budget position for the Dedicated Schools Grant as at 31 December 2020, together with the associated explanations contained within this report.

14. Schools Capital Programme and School Place Planning update

The report was introduced by Chris Williams, Pupil Place Planning & Capital Strategy Officer.

In response to a question regarding the adaptations to Court Lane Infant School, Chris Williams explained that the child is in Year 1 currently and the provision is being made to the year 1 area. The £15k is a one off payment and covers the life of the adaptations as the child moves through the school. Phase 2 for the scheme will come into the year 2 area and the child's parents have been fully involved with the adaptations and see it as a great benefit.

In response to a question about the inclusion capital grant, Chris Williams explained that this is a new grant and is intended as an annual grant to schools to enhance and encourage the inclusion offer within schools. This might include adaptations for certain pupils to compliment the schools accessibility strategies to make a difference to inclusion for all pupils in the school. The limit is £10k per grant with the intention that this will run on a bidding process with schools having the opportunity to put in a bid that compliments their inclusion offer. Mike Stoneman added that all schools will be notified of the inclusion capital grant shortly.

In response to a query over the amalgamation of Manor Infant School, Councillor Horton said that for any amalgamation it is around economies of scale and identity of being a through school. She felt that it was important that the amalgamation helps with continuity and transitions and the operation of the school. Chris Williams added that there have been a number of similar changes in statutory process where schools have changed their age range. This seems to help significantly with the operation of the school and this was not an unusual situation.

Councillor Horton said she was grateful for the £3.5million investment for SEND and AP accommodation which included the inclusion capital grants at the recent Full Council budget meeting and acknowledged that the schemes identified are now being progressed.

DECISIONS:

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education:

- 1. Noted the progress on the school modernisation "urgent condition" projects, the secondary school sufficiency projects and the special school sufficiency projects.**
- 2. Approved the schemes agreed with the Lead Member since the last report.**
- 3. Agreed to commence a statutory process on a proposal to change the age range of Manor Infant School from 4 to 7 years to 2 to 7 years.**

The meeting concluded at 4.35 pm.

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Councillor Suzy Horton
Chair