

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, 15 December 2022 at 11.30 am at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Suzy Horton (in the Chair)

30. Apologies

There were no apologies.

31. Declarations of Members' Interests

Councillor Horton declared a non-prejudicial interest in that she is Vice-Chair of Governors at Craneswater Junior School.

32. Closure of the Inclusion Centre at Portsdown Primary School

Alison Critchley, Head of Sufficiency and Resources introduced the report explaining that the original proposal to consult on closing the unit at the end of the 2021/22 school year had been deferred by one year. She added that centre had provided a very good standard of education and that the children currently attending the unit will be moving up to secondary school or would attend the new, larger inclusion centre at Arundel Court Primary School.

Councillor Horton commented that the next step would be to undertake the statutory process to close the Inclusion Centre at Portsdown Primary School. She added that it had provided provision for 9 pupils with an Education Health Care Plan, and she wanted to record her thanks to the school for the standard of care and education it had provided. This had not been a factor in the proposal to close the centre which reflected changing needs in Portsmouth. The families involved had been communicated with throughout, and the decision to delay the closure to 2023 reflected this and allowed an extended transition period for the children.

DECISIONS -That the Cabinet Member:

- 1) Considered the responses from the pre-statutory consultation on the proposal to close the Inclusion Centre at Portsdown Primary School.**
- 2) Authorised the Director of Children, Families and Education to proceed to the publication and representation stages of the statutory proposal to close the Inclusion Centre at Portsdown Primary School.**

33. Dedicated Schools Grant 2022-23 Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring

The report was introduced by Alison Egerton, Group Accountant who noted that in October 2022 the Dedicated Schools Grant 2022-23 (DSG) budget had been revised. Overall, the budget is forecast to underspend by £752,000.

Councillor Horton commented that the use of some of the DSG balances over a three-year period to support the implementation of Relational Practice was to be welcomed. This would benefit all schools in the city.

DECISIONS: That the Cabinet Member noted the forecast year end budget position for the Dedicated Schools Grant as at 30 September 2022, together with the associated explanations contained within this report.

34. Children, Families and Education Portfolio 2022-23 Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring

The report was introduced by Angela Mann, Finance Manager, informing members that whilst the capital showed a projected £2.9m pressure, this was expected to be covered by the additional SEND Capital grant, so should break even. She noted however that the revenue budget was subject to pressures relating to the on-going impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, increased energy costs and other factors equalling £2.7 million in excess of the current revenue budget position.

Sarah Daly, Director of Children's Services and Education, commented that the long-term effect of the pandemic was continuing to have a significant impact on children in the city and this was therefore being felt in the financial position.

Councillor Horton commented that two pressures, Home to School transport and high cost placements, continued to be felt. The overspend on high cost placements is recognised as being a national challenge and it was a pity that the government had not been able to intervene as it would make a significant difference in the city.

Councillor Horton placed on record her thanks to officers for all their work in finding new ways to help support children and families while significant managing financial pressures.

DECISIONS - That:

- 1) The Cabinet Member noted the Children, Families and Education Portfolio forecast revenue and capital budget positions, as at the end of September 2022, together with the variance and pressure explanations.**
- 2) In consultation with the Cabinet Member, Directors continue to develop a savings plan which will eliminate the overspend currently**

being forecast, progress against which is monitored by the Cabinet Member and the Director of Finance on a regular basis.

35. School Funding Arrangements 2023-24

Angela Mann, Finance Manager, introduced the report noting the Department for Education's proposed changes to school revenue funding arrangements for 2023-24, including proposals to manage affordability.

DECISIONS - That the Cabinet Member:

- 1) Noted the Department for Education's proposed changes to school revenue funding arrangements for 2023-24, as set out in this report.**
- 2) Approved the proposals for implementing the local funding formula arrangements as set out in this report in particular to:**
 - a) Implement the National Funding Formula rates for both primary and secondary schools in 2023-24 as set out in Appendix 1.**
 - b) Implement a minimum funding guarantee (MFG) of at least 0.0% and up to +0.5% subject to affordability, for 2023-24 as set out in paragraph 5.13 of the report.**
 - c) The method of managing affordability as set out in paragraphs 5.14 to 5.18 of the report.**

The meeting concluded at 11.49 am.

Councillor Suzy Horton
Chair