

## CABINET

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Tuesday, 20 June 2017 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 3.45 pm

**Present:**

**Voting Members:** Councillor Ian Hudspeth – in the Chair  
Councillor Mrs Judith Heathcoat  
Councillor Lawrie Stratford  
Councillor Steve Harrod  
Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale  
Councillor Yvonne Constance OBE  
Councillor David Bartholomew  
Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles  
Councillor Mark Gray

**Other Members in Attendance:** Councillor Liz Brighthouse (Agenda Item 6)  
Councillor Helen Evans (Agenda Items 6 & 7)  
Councillor Laura Price (Agenda Item 8)  
Councillor John Sanders (Agenda Item 6)

**Officers:**

Whole of meeting Peter Clark (Chief Executive); Sue Whitehead (resources Directorate)

Part of meeting Item	Name
6	Maggie Scott, Assistant Chief Executive; Lucy Butler, Director for Children's Services; Sarah Jelley, Senior Policy & Performance Officer
7	Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance
8	Steve Munn, Director of Human Resources

*The Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting, and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda, reports and schedule, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.*

### **40/17 MINUTES**

(Agenda Item. 3)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2017 were approved and signed as a correct record.

## **41/17 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

(Agenda Item. 4)

Councillor Howson had given notice of the following question to Councillors Harrod and Hibbert-Biles

“How many children taken into care over the past three school years and placed 'out county' have had to wait for more than two weeks to be taken onto the roll of a school in the area where they have been moved to and what is the longest period of time a child has waited for a place at a school in the area where they have been re-located to during this period?”

Councillor Hibbert-Biles replied:

“Over the past three years it has been exceptional for a Looked After Child to be taken onto the roll of an out of county school in under two weeks. Indeed, of the nine cases of primary age pupils we've looked at, the quickest a pupil was placed was 12 days (there were two) and the slowest was 77 days. For the 22 secondary age pupils the picture is even worse, with 3 weeks the quickest placement and a couple taking fully 6 months to get some of our most vulnerable young people into a stable school setting.

The main reason for this completely unacceptable state of affairs is that the Council has no power to direct an academy to admit a Looked After Child. The only way we can force an academy's hand is to get a direction from the Educations & Skills Funding Agency and this, as you can see from the foregoing times, can be a very long winded bureaucratic process. The fact that it takes so long for academies to admit our Looked After Children shows how doggedly our officers pursue the matter; I suspect that many other local authorities simply give up when they meet an intransigent academy that doesn't want to take responsibility for educating their vulnerable young people.”

## **42/17 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS**

(Agenda Item. 5)

Cabinet received a petition from Mr Scott Urban regarding Florence Park Children's Centre, in support of the Aspire & Nature Effect bid.

The Leader of the Council had agreed the following requests to address the meeting:-

Item 6 – Transition Fund – May 2017 - Ms Emma Kennedy, regarding St. Mary's Church, Chipping Norton;  
Ms Candida March, regarding Aspire bid  
Ms Elinor Sinclair,  
Mr Paul Roberts, regarding Aspire bid  
Ms Frazana Aslam, regarding Aflah Nursery bid

Councillor John Sanders, local councillor for Cowley  
Councillor Helen Evans, local councillor for Iffley Fields & St Mary's  
Councillor Liz Brighthouse, Opposition Leader

Item 7 – Provisional 2016/17 Revenue and Capital Outturn - Councillor Helen Evans, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance;

Item 8 – Staffing Report – Quarter 4 – 2016 - Councillor Laura Price, Opposition Deputy Leader

#### **43/17 TRANSITION FUND - MAY 2017**

(Agenda Item. 6)

In February 2016 the Council agreed to set aside £1m for creating a 'one off' fund to provide pump priming to support Children's Centres. It was agreed that a cross party group of county councillors would consider maximum benefit of this fund and bring proposals back to Cabinet for decision.

The working group have considered the applications under the third round of bids against the criteria outlined in the guidance notes and cabinet had before them a report setting out their recommendations to Cabinet

Ms Emma Kennedy, spoke in support of the bid from St. Mary's Church, Chipping Norton, highlighting that despite the perception of affluence it was a working town and suffered from poverty and rural isolation. The bid would provide a safety net and an open door for the most vulnerable.

In response to queries as to why local people would not use the ACE Centre Ms Kennedy commented that they focussed on a different age group. She added that the St Mary's project dealt with people from stigmatised groups who had built relationships at St Mary's School, were familiar with the environment and less willing to attend elsewhere.

Ms Candida March, spoke in support of the Aspire & Nature Effect bid highlighting the key role that the Florence Park building had in the community. The bid was about building a community hub where people were able to come together. Ms March expressed concerns over the Aflah Nursery project and the process resulting in today's Florence Park recommendation.

Ms Elinor Sinclair, expressed concerns over the transfer of Florence Park to Aflah Nursery which she felt did not meet the transition fund criteria.

Mr Paul Roberts, Chief Executive Officer of Aspire spoke in support of the Aspire & Nature Effect bid. He highlighted the experience Aspire had as a social/community enterprise and their desire to work with local groups. He hoped that as a minimum Cabinet would defer any decision to allow further discussion. Cabinet noted that this was the first bid by Aspire.\*

Ms Frazana Aslam, Director of Aflah Nursery spoke in support of their proposal. Ms Aslam commented that they had been a private early years

provider since 2014 and rated good in July 2016. The nursery had an open admissions and recruitment policy. Ms Aslam added that there were currently 45 children on roll from 2 faith groups and of 14 different nationalities. Responding to questions from Cabinet Members Ms Aslam outlined the community activity they would undertake including parenting classes and workshops. They were conscious that the building was a community hub and would be open to all the community. The nursery had an inclusive admissions policy and had very rewarding relationships with parents not of the muslim faith. They took a very balanced approach to learning and did work on the whole range of faith celebrations and other events.

Councillor John Sanders, local councillor for Cowley expressed concerns at the make-up of the cross party working group which he felt had an over reliance on councillors with a finance focus. Councillor Sanders spoke against the Aflah Nursery proposal noting that it was a nursery school with a clear religious remit and did not provide the services of a children's centre. He accepted that the Nursery wished to expand but believed that this was a commercial undertaking that should be done through the open market. Councillor Sanders went on to support the Aspire & Nature Effect bid referring to the current sticking point of the San Remo contract. He believed that a solution could be found and suggested that the remaining funding be held and the position be reviewed again in 6 months. Councillor Sanders responded been advised that the Panel was meeting and had not been involved. He reiterated that as an existing service if they wished to expand they should do so but should not take the children's centres premises when there is a real need for an all inclusive children's centre.

Councillor Helen Evans, local councillor for Iffley Fields & St Mary's commented that a number of local residents had contacted her to express concerns about the transfer of the building to a private concern. She shared those concerns

Councillor Liz Brighouse, Opposition Leader, stated that there was confusion over several matters that in her view meant that it should not have come to Cabinet at this time. Councillor Brighouse referred to the Transition Fund and highlighted its purpose for open access, so communities could replace services being lost. There was nothing in it in relation to asset transfer. Councillor Brighouse further queried the terms of the Asset Transfer Policy suggesting that it related to voluntary community groups and not to commercial organisations. She hoped that the policies in place would be followed through. She expressed concerns that local councillors were not being involved. Councillor Brighouse asked that no decision be taken on Florence Park and that it be considered by political group leaders and discussed with local councillors, community leaders and the wider community. Councillor Brighouse indicated that her strength of feeling on this would mean that as Chairman of Performance Scrutiny Committee she would find it necessary to call in the decision if it was agreed today.

Responding to questions from Cabinet Councillor Brighouse expressed concerns about the openness of the process in general but felt that on the

matter of Florence Park it was a question of the transition fund being used for a purpose it was not set up for. There was no remit for asset transfer and other groups had not had the same opportunity.

Councillor Stratford as Chairman of the cross-part working group expressed disappointment at the perception that the process had not been open to members given the level of communication with them. He noted that the vast majority of recommendations had been agreed by all members on the cross party working group and stress that the process had been managed fairly across the County and the criteria had been the critical factor in considering applications.

During discussion Cabinet noted that the issue for the St Mary's bid was the level of duplication with the ACE Centre. A Cabinet Member questioned whether there was that much duplication feeling that the provision from St Mary's was different to that provided by ACE. Councillor Gray suggested that it would be sensible to defer a decision in order to undertake further investigation and review the services available and to be provided.

Cabinet considered at length the bid in relation to Florence Park and the proposed asset transfer. Cabinet clarified that Aflah Nursery were not seeking funding under the Transition Fund and that the transfer was proposed under the Asset Transfer Policy which did not exclude organisations for profit. Lucy Butler, Director for Children's Services informed Cabinet of the County Council's statutory responsibility to ensure sufficient supply of nursery provision and that the proposals met a statutory need. Maggie Scott, Assistant Chief Executive explained the background to provision of nursery places during the children's centre process and the current proposal from Aflah Nursery. Cabinet members commented that it seemed further work was needed with all parties to reach a solution.

Councillor Gray proposed that decisions be deferred in respect of Aflah Nursery and the Aspire & Nature Effect bid to enable work with both groups, local councillors and the City Council to see if a solution was possible. He noted that it was a large building and that Aflah Nursery were not seeking the whole of it.

**RESOLVED:** to

- (a) approve funding for the following bids:
- (i) Ambrosden 4 Children (Ambrosden Children's Centre);
  - (ii) Donnington Doorstep (Florence Park Children's Centre);
  - (iii) St Johns Church (Grove & Wantage Children's Centres);
  - (iv) HBC Superdads (Marston Northway Children's Centre);
  - (v) Henley Baptist Church (Rainbow Children's Centre);
  - (vi) Abingdon Baby Café (North Abingdon Children's Centre);
  - (vii) Abingdon Carousel (South Abingdon Children's Centre);
  - (viii) Sunshine Centre (Sunshine Children's Centre);
  - (ix) Witney Churches (Witney Children's Centre).

- (b) Approve funding for the following bids subject to buildings and leases being resolved:
  - a. Friends of Britannia Road (Britannia Road);
  - b. The Kings Church (South Didcot).
  
- (c) Approve the maximum 12 months' rent free period for the following buildings:
  - a. Ambrosden;
  - b. South Abingdon.
  
- (d) Defer decisions in respect of:
  - a. the proposal relating to Aflah Nursery
  - b. Aspire & Nature Effect bid
  - c. St Mary's Church Chipping Norton bidwith a further report to be submitted to Cabinet as soon as practicable.

\* Sentence added at the meeting of Cabinet on 18 July 2017

#### **44/17 PROVISIONAL 2016/17 REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN**

(Agenda Item. 7)

Cabinet considered a report that set out the provisional revenue and capital outturn position for 2016/17 and showed how actual expenditure and income for the year compared to the budgeted position. Figures shown in the report reflected those included in the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2016/17. The draft Statement of Accounts were authorised for issue on 31 May 2017, subject to external audit. The final Statement of Accounts will be submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee on 6 September 2017 following external audit and certification by the Director of Finance.

Councillor Helen Evans, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance thanked officers who had worked hard to deliver the savings. In supporting the recommendations Councillor Evans noted that this was the seventh year where the organisation had been required to find savings and that this inevitably impacted on services with the poorest being hardest hit. She highlighted overspend in children's services due to increased demand around looked after children. This was a national trend and it was important for the Council to continue to provide care and support. Councillor Evans queried the underspend in public health pointing to a rising level of public drug and alcohol use.

Councillor David Bartholomew, Cabinet Member for Finance also thanked officers and indicated that he would look into the question raised around public health and reply to her directly. In moving the recommendations he recognised the achievement in the light of challenges which was a reflection of the very strong financial management of this Council at all levels. He was a great believer in strong financial monitoring and the report did highlight continuing pressures. Action to manage these had been taken but ongoing demand was reflected in the 2017/18 budget. Councillor Bartholomew highlighted the virements requiring Council approval.

**RESOLVED:** in respect of the 2016/17 outturn to:

- (a) note the provisional revenue and capital outturn for 2016/17 along with the year end position on balances and reserves as set out in the report;
- (b) approve the creation of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Reserve as set out in paragraph 93;
- (c) approve the virements as set out in Annex 2a;
- (d) recommend Council to approve the virements greater than £1.0m for Children, Education & Families, Environment and Economy, Social & Community Services and Strategic Measures as set out in Annex 2a;
- (e) agree that the surplus on the On-Street Parking Account at the end of the 2016/17 financial year, so far as not applied to particular eligible purposes in accordance with Section 55(4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, be carried forward in the account to the 2017/18 financial year.

#### **45/17 STAFFING REPORT - QUARTER 4 - 2016**

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet considered a report that gave an update on staffing numbers and related activity during the period 1 January 2017 to 31 March 2017. It gave details of the actual staffing numbers at 31 March 2017 in terms of Full Time Equivalents. In addition, the report provided information on the cost of posts being covered by agency staff.

Councillor Laura Price, Opposition Deputy Leader thanked the County Council workforce for outstanding work at a time of huge reorganisations. She was pleased to see the reduction in agency staff and commented that part of that was about making permanent appointments where appropriate. She commented that it would be helpful to have an extra column in the annex in order to see the shift in agency staff.

Councillor Heathcoat in introducing the report highlighted that staff numbers were continuing to fall and where possible staff were redeployed although reducing numbers meant this was not easy. There was a rigorous challenge before recruitment but the transformation programme reduced the effects of reducing staff numbers.

**RESOLVED:** to note the report.

#### **46/17 APPOINTMENTS 2017/18**

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet had before them a report asking them to consider member appointments to a variety of bodies which in different ways support the discharge of the Council's executive functions.

.....

The schedule only refers to those appointments which are the direct responsibility of Cabinet to make. There are other outside body appointments that are the responsibility of the Remuneration Committee or local processes as appropriate.

**RESOLVED:** to:

- (a) agree appointments to the bodies set out in the Annex to this report with names to be supplied by Group leaders and the updated annex attached as an annex to these minutes;
- (b) agree that following a review of appointments a further report is submitted to the October meeting of Cabinet.

**47/17 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS**

(Agenda Item. 10)

The Cabinet considered a list of items for the immediately forthcoming meetings of the Cabinet together with changes and additions set out in the schedule of addenda.

**RESOLVED:** to note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing