

Meeting	Cabinet (Calling-In)
Date	25 November 2014
Present	Councillors Simpson-Laing (Vice-Chair), Crisp, Cunningham-Cross, Levene, Looker, Merrett and Williams
In Attendance	Councillors Brooks, D'Agorne, Galvin and Runciman
Apologies	Councillor Alexander

1. **Declarations of Interest**

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the register of interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interest which they might have in respect of the business on the agenda. No additional interests were declared.

2. **Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been eight registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme, and that three Members of Council had also requested to speak in relation to the Called-In item.

Lara Foster spoke in support of Castlegate as a user of the services provided. She asked the Cabinet to work with staff, partners and service users to continue to provide this important service for young people in the city

Hayley Robson spoke on behalf of the York Carers Centre, as a Young Adult Carer Worker working with young people aged 16-25 to support them in their unpaid caring roles. She stated that the Castlegate services were fundamental to young carers who found them of particular assistance and very accessible, and said that any changes would impact heavily on them.

Pip Nix expressed her full support for Castlegate and she shared her experiences of the services provided, pointing out their positive impact for vulnerable young people.

Hannah Jobling, a Lecturer in Social Work at the University of York, spoke to reiterate the points she made at the previous Calling-In meeting. She believed that Castlegate provided a strong partnership and played a vital role in early intervention for young people in the city. She asked Members to reconsider the proposals in order to provide an holistic approach in an informal setting.

Sarah Douglas spoke on behalf of the counselling service at York College and as manager of the intensive personal advisers, previously known as Connexions workers who worked with under eighteens. She referred to the increase in mental health problems suffered by young people, highlighting the fact that they found it extremely difficult to access services due to fear of stigma and confusion. She referred to her view of the unsuitability of West Offices and to the need for guidance and support not only for under 18's but for the 19-25 age group and for investment to save money in the future.

Ewan Main read a statement from the parents of a young person who had had received help from the Castlegate services, highlighting that the help received at Castlegate had been more effective than anything he had received elsewhere. He expressed his thanks for the immense support provided by the service.

Dr Alan Dunnett spoke as the former head of counselling studies at York University and on behalf of the city-wide third sector providers of counselling services. He considered West Offices to be unsuitable to provide anonymity for vulnerable service users. He said that young people would not want to attend multiple appointments but needed access to all services at one venue at a critical time in their lives.

Lynne Lacock spoke on behalf of the Counselling teaching team at York St John's University referring to her long association working with young people and those training to work with young people. She expressed concern at the loss of this holistic service which provided a life line for many students. She referred to the decline in similar services and to the mental

health problems students faced which put a strain on the University.

Councillor Brooks referred to the data in support of the proposals and expressed concern about the lack of consultation with both the York Mental Health Forum and the Learning & Disability Partnership. She felt the proposals were not supported by the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy and requested reconsideration of other options to protect an important service.

Councillor Runciman highlighted the importance of Castlegate in providing a recognised and well respected service. She referred to the need for early intervention when problems arose for young people and to the overwhelming support for the Castlegate services and she asked Members to delay closure to allow full consideration of all the options, including consultation.

Councillor D'Agorne spoke to represent the Green Party and as a Careers Advisor at York College referring to the inclusive and open door service Castlegate offered to all young people. He asked the Committee to work in partnership to find other models to ensure that budget cuts did not affect this vital service.

3. Called-In Item: Rewiring Of Public Services: Business Case For Children's Services

Members received a report which asked them to re-consider the decisions made by Cabinet, at their meeting held on 9 October 2014, in relation to the Children's Services, Education and Skills Transformation Programme. The decision related to approval of the Business Cases for Early Years, Services to Young People and the School Improvement and Skills Service and in particular the proposals for the services run from Castlegate.

Details of the Cabinet's decision were attached at Annex A to the report and the original report to the Cabinet meeting, attached at Annex B.

The decision had been referred back to Cabinet by the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee. This followed the calling-in of Cabinet's decision, firstly by Councillors Brooks, Douglas and Doughty on the following grounds:

- The current location of Castlegate is far less imposing than for example West Offices and the move would therefore be worse for young and especially disengaged people
- It is at odds with the Health & Wellbeing Strategy & Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and their emphasis on the greater need for counselling as a preventative service.
- It flies in the face of the government parity of esteem for mental health services.
- There has been inadequate consultation with the most affected groups.
- The budgetary savings may not materialise if, as a result of the change of location, the current uptake of the service is not maintained and the number of Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETS) rises.

Secondly the decision had been called in by Councillors Aspden, D'Agorne and Runciman who were opposed to the decision to close Castlegate and re-locate the remaining services to West Offices for the following reasons:

- When Castlegate opened 2007, it brought together a number of agencies and different funding streams to offer a comprehensive support service for young people in a user-friendly, accessible and flexible location.
- Through offering effective support and advice the centre has an outstanding track-record of helping keep young people safe, healthy, off drugs, out of the criminal justice system, in suitable accommodation and in work.
- This effective early-intervention is crucial in many areas, including mental health where half of all diagnosable conditions start by the age of 14 and 75% by the age of 21.
- The closure of Castlegate, cuts in services, and the re-location of remaining services to West Offices jeopardises all this work and abandons the commitment to effective early-intervention.

- West Offices – a large, public and corporate building – is not a suitable location for the services which will remain.
- This decision has been taken with little consultation or prior notice and without properly considering alternatives.
- We would urge Cabinet to withdraw the proposal and, at the very least, delay the closure of Castlegate in order to ensure that other options, such as suitable co-location with another service, can be considered.

The Chair referred to additional information which had been circulated at the meeting in support of the specialist and complementary expertise of the Castlegate staff from:

- Dorothy Frear, an educationalist and volunteer counsellor
- Kate Gibbon, Crisis Practitioner, Crisis & Access Service on behalf of her colleagues at Bootham Park Hospital

Councillor Galvin addressed the meeting on behalf of the Corporate and Scrutiny Management (Calling-In) Committee. He confirmed, that following consideration of all the reasons put forward for call-in of the decision and whilst acknowledging the budget pressures, there had been a high level of support for Castlegate and the services provided from the venue. Concerns had been raised that future services should be provided from an appropriate venue.

It was noted that CSMC had unanimously supported referral back of the decision with a recommendation that Cabinet withdraw the proposals and delay the closure of Castlegate in order to allow time for Officer's to bring forward a report detailing all options, including a suitable location and alternative funding options and for these options to be properly considered and consulted upon.

Councillor Looker, as Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Young People, confirmed that the concerns of service users and professionals, raised at previous meetings, had been taken on board. She expressed her support for a thorough examination of the services provided and consultation on possible alternative delivery methods followed by a report back to Cabinet in February 2015.

The Director of Children's Services, Education and Skills spoke to clarify details of the proposals and to welcome the opportunity to examine the current proposals in more detail. He confirmed his understanding of the issues and reiterated that the current proposals had been split into 3 parts, no changes were proposed to the statutory Connexions service for 13 to 19's, there was no suggestion of reduced counselling services and the personal support workers would continue to be available albeit in a different format from West Office's.

Councillor Williams, as Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance, confirmed that reconsideration would provide an opportunity to pause, reflect and undertake wider consultation on the proposals. He asked Members to note the budgetary implications and the need to consider this in any future options.

All Members acknowledged the range of issues raised and thanked all the earlier speakers for their comments and input into the meeting.

Following further discussion it was

Resolved: That Option a) be approved and that the Cabinet decision (Minute 48) in respect of the proposals contained in the Business Case for Children's Services for Castlegate be deferred in order to allow Officers to undertake the following work, prior to reporting back on refined proposals to Cabinet in February 2015:

- Consultation with service users and partners
- An outcome based statistics exercise at Castlegate
- Consideration of refined proposals by a sub group or YorOk
- Consideration of a refined proposal by a cross party group
- Submission of refined proposals to the YorOk Board

Reason: To enable the called-in matter to be dealt with efficiently and in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Constitution.

Cllr T Simpson-Laing, Chair

[The Meeting started at 5.00 pm and finished at 6.10 pm].