

Cabinet (Calling – In) Meeting

25 November 2014

Report of the Assistant Director, Governance and ICT

Called-in Item: Rewiring of Public Services: Business Case for Children’s Services

Summary

1. This report sets out the reasons for the call-in of the decisions made by the Cabinet on 7 October 2014 in relation to the Children’s Services, Education and Skills Transformation Programme. In particular in relation to the Business Cases for Early Years, Services to Young People and the School Improvement and Skills Service which included proposals for the transfer of services for young people from Castlegate to West Offices.
2. The report also sets out the decision of the Corporate and Scrutiny Management (Calling-In) Committee (CSMC) which considered the call-in of the Cabinet’s decisions, at their meeting held on 31 October 2014 and asks Cabinet to re-consider its original decision based on the reasons for the call-in and the comments made by the CSMC (Calling-In) meeting.

Background

3. An extract from the Decision Sheet issued after the Cabinet meeting is attached as Annex A to this report. This sets out the decision taken by the Cabinet on the called-in item. The original report to the Cabinet meeting on the called-in item is attached as Annex B to this report.
4. Cabinet’s decision was called in, firstly, by Councillors Brooks, Douglas and Doughty for review by the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee (Calling-In), in accordance with the constitutional requirements for call-in, for the following reasons:
 - 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.

The decision was subsequently called in by Councillors Aspden, D'Agorne and Runciman for review also by the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee (CSMC) (Calling-In), in accordance with the constitutional requirements for call-in. These Members 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.
5. Consideration was given to the reasons for call-in of the Cabinet decision at the CSMC (Calling-In) meeting on 31 October 2014. Having heard from two of the Calling-In members, a number of speakers who expressed their opposition to the proposals, the Director of Children's Services, Education and Skills and the Cabinet Members concerned the following decision was made:

Resolved: That Option B be approved and that the decision of Cabinet be referred back with a recommendation that Cabinet withdraws the proposals and delays 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.

6. A petition opposed to the changes at Castlegate was handed to the Chair of the CSMC (Calling-In) at the meeting on 31 October 2014, together with details of the signatories comments (Annex C). The petition contained over 1,600 signatures, requesting the Council Leader to 'Review the decision to remove the provision of holistic information, support and counselling for young people 16-25 in York, provided by Support Workers, Careers Advisors and Counsellors at Castlegate.' Link attached
<http://www.change.org/p/james-alexander-review-the-decision-to-remove-the-provision-of-holistic-information-support-and-counselling-for-young-people-16-25-in-york-provided-by-support-workers-careers-advisors-and-counsellors-at-castlegate>
7. Receipt of this petition was also reported to the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee, at their meeting held on 10 November 2014, in accordance with the Council's new petitions arrangements agreed by Council on 9 October 2014. The Committee agreed to forward the petition to the Cabinet (Calling-In) meeting for consideration in conjunction with the recommendations of the CSMC (Calling-In) at paragraph 5 above.

Consultation

8. Councillor Galvin, as Chair of CSMC has been invited to attend the meeting to present the recommendations of CSMC (Calling In) and to

answer any questions in relation to the decision made by the Committee.

Options

9. The following options are available to Cabinet (Calling-In) Members in relation to dealing with this call-in, in accordance with the constitutional and legal requirements under the Local Government Act 2000:
 - a. To reconsider the original decisions of Cabinet, on the Business Case for Children's Services, from their meeting on 7 October 2014, to take account of the recommendations of the CSMC Calling-In meeting held on 31 October 2014 or any other further considerations ; or
 - b. To reaffirm the original decisions of the Cabinet meeting held on 7 October 2014.

Analysis

10. Cabinet will no doubt wish to give careful consideration to the reasons for call-in of the decision together with the recommendations of CSMC (Calling-In) as well as the strength of feeling demonstrated by the petition. Cabinet will wish to balance these factors against those arguments set out in the original Cabinet report which underpinned the decision which was called in.

Council Plan

11. There are no direct implications for this call-in in relation to the delivery of the Council Plan and its priorities for 2011-15.

Implications

12. The original report draws Members' attention to relevant implications and includes a community impact assessment which will specifically assist Members in ensuring that the Council complies with its public sector equality duties, with which Members are familiar.

Risk Management

13. There are no significant risk management implications associated with the referral back of this matter. Although, the delay in any decision making could have an impact on timelines for the delivery of the transformation of services identified.

Recommendations:

14. Members are asked to consider all the reasons put forward for calling in this decision together with the views of the Corporate and Scrutiny Management (Calling-In) Committee, from their meeting held on 31 October 2014, in relation to the decisions taken by Cabinet on 7 October 2014.

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

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**Report
Approved**



Date

17 November
2014

Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex A – Extract from the Decision Sheet produced following the Cabinet meeting on the called-in item.

Annex B – Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance, Rewiring of Public Services: Business Case for Children's Services, 7 October 2014.

Annex C – Comments of signatories from the change.org online Castlegate petition

Background Papers

None