
MEETING	EXECUTIVE MEMBERS FOR CHILDRENS SERVICES AND ADVISORY PANEL
DATE	14 MARCH 2007
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS RUNCIMAN (EXECUTIVE MEMBER), JAMIESON-BALL (EXECUTIVE MEMBER), BRADLEY (CHAIR), ASPDEN, CUTHBERTSON, KIND STATUTORY CO-OPTED MEMBERS DR D SELLICK NON STATUTORY CO-OPTED MEMBERS MRS A BURN, MS B REAGAN, MR M THOMAS
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS KING, D'AGORNE MS F BARCLAY, MRS J ELLIS, MR M GALLOWAY, MS C DUFFY, MR A LAWTON AND MR J BAILEY

54. Declarations of Interest

At this point Members were asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they had in the items on the agenda. The following general personal non-prejudicial interests were declared.

Councillor Runciman:	Governor of Joseph Rowntree School Trustee of the Theatre Royal
Councillor Aspden:	Governor of Knavesmire Primary School. Member of National Union of Teachers (NUT) Teacher at Norton College, Malton, North Yorkshire
Councillor Bradley:	Governor of Poppleton Ousebank School
Councillor Cuthbertson:	Governor of Headlands Primary School Governor of Burnholme Community College
Councillor Kind:	Governor of Burnholme Community College Governor of Haxby Road Primary School
Dr D Sellick:	Governor of Derwent Infant & Junior School
Ms B Reagan:	Teacher at Joseph Rowntree School SENCO Secretary of York association of the National Union of Teachers
Mr M Thomas	Secretary of York Association of NASUWT

Mrs A Burn

Headteacher & governor of Yearsley Grove
School Secretary of the York branch of the
NAHT

Cllr Bradley also declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 9: Progress Report on Major Capital Schemes in York Secondary Schools as his son attended Manor School.

55. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January 2007 be approved and signed as a correct record subject to change set out below:

In minute 49 in the fifth paragraph the word employees was changed to read employers.

56. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

57. Service Plans 2007/2008

Members considered a report that sought approval for the Service Plans for Council Services that are wholly or partially funded from the Children's Services budget.

The Officer stated that service planning was now more complex, challenging and difficult to present and that Annex 1 (The Service Plans) was a shortened version of the final document.

Members made various comments on the Service Plan reports. It was noted that Members were pleased to see that the Education Development Service (EDS) continued to make progress with able, gifted and talented pupils. Members asked whether all schools would need to have learning platforms in place to ensure that Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) were implemented and Officers confirmed that all schools would need this.

Regarding the School Governance Service section of the report it was confirmed by Officers that they now had a good team of governance clerks and all previous staff issues had been resolved.

Members asked for an update on pupils outside of mainstream schools which was covered in the Access and Inclusion section of the report. Officers said that they were proposing radical changes at Danesgate and were proposing to restructure the pupil referral unit and were going to be extending the range of Key Stage 4 provisions for these pupils. The development of the Skills Centre at Danesgate was underway and this site would offer courses in construction, hairdressing and horticulture. This will be a more reliable source of provision which was a very positive move.

Members raised questions about the York Independent Living Travel Skills (YILTS) programme and asked if there was any further work planned for this area to help reduce the costs of Special Educational Needs (SEN) transport. The Officer responded that YILTS was a very positive programme and good for the children as well, giving them a sense of independence as well as leading to reduced costs for SEN transport by taxi.

In the section regarding the Youth Service Members asked if there was any additional information available and Officers said they were looking to support these families as well as forming partnerships to aid in the continuity of provision. A query was raised regarding the establishment of an Integrated Youth Support Service and merging with Connexions and the impact this would have on improving efficiency in future years. The Officer stated that it was too early to quantify these efficiencies yet.

Members raised a query about the percentage of growth regarding looked after children in the Children and Families section of the report and the Officer responded by clarifying that more looked after children are choosing to stay with foster carers until a later age and that they are happy to do so. There have been several inspections of the adoption service in York recently and the reports have been very favourable.

In the Section on Adult and Community Education Members raised concerns about the effectiveness of the in-house website for training. The Officer replied that as many Adult Education tutors are part time it allows the Council to make a very extensive provision that would be otherwise impossible.

Members stated that they were very pleased with the progress of the 2 year pathfinder in the Early Years and Extended Schools section of the report and agreed that the target of 500 children was ambitious. Officers responded that they wanted to give the best chance they could to all 2 year olds within the groups targeted.

In the ICT section Members noted that there were a vast amount of projects currently being undertaken and they raised concerns about prioritisation. Officers confirmed that work was going ahead to look at how effectively this could be managed.

Advice of the Advisory Panel:

The Executive Members are advised to approve the Service Plans as set out in Annex 1 of the report.

Decision of the Executive Members:

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To ensure that service and group managers are in a position to implement the strategic priorities for the directorate.

58. Local Authority School Governor Appointments

Members considered a report that provided information about the current position with regard to vacancies for Local Authority seats on governing bodies, listed current nominations for those vacancies (detailed in Annex 1 of the report) and requested the appointment, or re-appointment, of the listed nominees.

Advice of the Advisory Panel:

That the Executive Member appoint the LA Governors as proposed in Annex One of the report in order to fill vacant seats.

Decision of the Executive Member:

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To appoint School Governors.

59. Lottery Funding - Revision to Taking Play Forward Policy

Members considered a report that presented a revised version of the Taking Play Forward Policy. The Officer stated that this was a follow on report from the one presented at the Executive Members for Children's Services meeting in January 2007 and predominantly highlighted the developments in the policy. Some of the key changes have been:

- The age range of the policy now covers children and young people up to 18 years old
- The agreement that the Play Team are informed and will have a contribution and influence on the design and nature of any new development that will be funded through 106 payments.

Advice of the Advisory Panel:

That the Executive Member approve the revised Taking Play Forward Policy.

Decision of the Executive Member:

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To ensure that York has an up to date framework to promote and deliver play opportunities and to deliver a successful portfolio to the Big Lottery to enable our play sector to benefit from the funding on offer.

60. Purchasing from the Voluntary Sector

Members considered a report that sought approval for the purchase of Play services through service level agreements.

Officers said that the City of York was committed to Play. Applications for funding were received from Bell Farm Adventure Playground, SNAPPY and Playspace.

Members asked how Bell Farm Adventure Playground was progressing as there had been a few problems in the past. The Officer stated that its lack of shelter was one of the bigger issues and hopefully the funding could address this. The organisation had a very strong play development worker and was developing in a positive manner.

Members had a query concerning Playspace withdrawing their delivery of summer static play schemes and the Officer stated that they were aiming for more permanent and sustainable schemes.

Advice of the Advisory Panel:

That the Executive Member agree the award amounts for the three organisations as set out in the report to be issued initially for one year.

Decision of the Executive Member:

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To continue funding quality play provision across the city in line with the Taking Play Forward policy recommendations.

61. Future of School Organisation Committee and Local Admissions Forum

Members considered a report that informed them of changes introduced by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 regarding the abolition of the School Organisation Committee (SOC) and the revised responsibilities and functions of the Local Authority and Local Admission Forum (LAF). Members were asked to determine new membership arrangements for the Local Admission Forum.

The Officer stated that since the report had been written he had received a letter from the Department for Education Services (DfES) which said that the new Local Admissions Forum could not be implemented until 25th May 2007. The Officer had also made a telephone call to DfES to query that all maintained schools nominate a member and was awaiting a detailed response from them. Members supported the Officer in this and were very aware that if all schools nominated a member to attend this meeting and they all attended it could make for a very large, and possibly, unmanageable meeting.

The Officer also stated that events and information was changing on a daily basis and some of the finer details would not be agreed until a later date.

Members pointed out that there was no proposal to include representation from the local community or specific representation of teachers; the Officer confirmed this. Both Members and Officers agreed that there were weaknesses in the guidance at this stage and therefore it was important to look out for further developments and details regarding the implementation of this Forum.

Advice of the Advisory Panel:

That the Executive Member:

- Note the abolition of the Schools Organisation Committee and the new duties of the Local Authority and the Local Admissions Forum.
- Approve the proposed membership of the Local Admissions Forum set out in the table at paragraph 8 of the report.

Decision of the Executive Member:

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: to establish the Local Admission Forum

62. Major Capital Schemes Update

Members considered a report regarding recent progress with four major secondary school capital schemes in York (Huntington, York High, Manor and Joseph Rowntree Schools). The report also detailed a proposal from Fulford School to enter into a prudential borrowing arrangement with the Local authority in order to finance a scheme that would significantly improve teaching facilities.

Officers stated that there had been very good progress with the four major schemes stated above. He said that the proposal from Fulford School was very innovative. The main risk was that the Government would stop funding schools through devolved capital but he was confident that the governing body at the school had considered the proposal properly.

Advice of the Advisory Panel:

That the Executive Member:

- Note the updates to the major schemes within the Children's Services Capital Programme.
- Approve the amendment to the capital programme reported above and summarised in paragraph 25 of the report.

- Recommend to the Executive for approval the request from Fulford School to use prudential borrowing of £670k to fund part of the cost of the building project, and to include this in the capital programme.
- Recommend to the Executive for approval the revised capital programme summarised in the report.

Decision of the Executive Member:

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: In order to allow the effective monitoring of the capital programme.

63. Inclusion Strategy and services for disabled children and young people

Members considered a report that sought their approval for the Inclusion Strategy 2007-2010.

The Officer stated that this was the second Inclusion Strategy there had been in the City and the objectives of the last one had all been successfully achieved.

Members commented on the information in paragraph 24 of the Strategy regarding racism and asked what steps could be taken to make sure all relevant incidents were reported as such. Officers said that there was a willingness from Headteachers to address these issues and much was being done to try and ensure all racist incidents were logged accordingly.

Members raised a query regarding the amount of young people leaving mainstream education before the end of compulsory schooling and the Officer recognised that there was a need to reduce this number. There was now a reintegration panel in place which had been built on an agreement by secondary school Headteachers.

Members suggested an addition to the wording in paragraph 66 of the strategy and suggested that the second to last paragraph should read as follows:

Our current practice, which must also be maintained, includes promoting all schools as ones where children can achieve and providing advice and guidance for parents of children with learning difficulties and disabilities from Years 4 and 5 onwards to support them in making informed choices *about secondary education*.

Advice of the Advisory Panel:

That the Executive Member:

- consider the proposals and approve the Strategy document.

- Approve the amendment to the wording in paragraph 66 of the Strategy document.

Decision of the Executive Member:

RESOLVED: That the advice of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed.

REASON: To fulfil the requirement to set up the Local Authority's response to national guidance and legislation.

64. Chair's Remarks

The Chair gave thanks to both Officers and Members for their attendance at and commitment to the Executive Members for Children's Services meetings.

Cllr C Runciman
Executive Member for Children's Services

Cllr C Jamieson-Ball
Executive Member for Youth and Social Inclusion

Chair of Advisory Panel
The meeting started at 6.05 pm and finished at 8.20 pm.