

## EXECUTIVE MEMBERS & CHILDRENS SERVICES ADVISORY PANEL

THURSDAY, 7 DECEMBER 2006

### DECISIONS

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the Children's Services EMAP held on Thursday, 7 December 2006. The wording used does not necessarily reflect the actual wording that will appear in the minutes.

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision sheet please contact Melanie Carr – email: [melanie.carr@york.gov.uk](mailto:melanie.carr@york.gov.uk) , Tel No. 01904 552061

#### 5. LA GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS

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

Members were informed that individuals had been identified and were being processed for all of the vacancies indicated in Annex 1 of the report, except in the case of Bishopthorpe Infant School where a nominee was still being sought.

##### Advice of the Advisory Panel:

That the Executive Member be advised to appoint, or re-appoint Local Authority Governors to fill vacant seats as proposed in Annex One.

##### Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASON: To progress work in this area.

#### 6. SERVICE PLAN MONITORING 2ND PERIOD

Members considered a report which analysed performance by reference to the Service Plan, the budget and performance indicators (PIs) for all services funded through the Children's Services budget.

Officers updated Members and circulated a summary of the Children's Services portfolio which outlined the 2006/07 original estimates and latest approved budget together with details of Service Plan variations from the approved budget.

The report highlighted significant progress against a very challenging programme and identified some of the key achievements in the year to date:

- Within Access and inclusion, the number of young people on the

education otherwise register had fallen very rapidly and the level of provision had now increased with more young people attending the Pupil Referral Unit for more days per week than in the recent past. It was noted that this had been achieved largely through the willingness of secondary school head teachers to collaborate over the reintegration of much larger numbers of excluded pupils.

- A much improved level and quality of provision for minority ethnic groups, with support being provided for a rapidly growing number of EAL learners in school.
- A significant decline in the level of bullying reported in the school survey
- Best ever results in maths and science at Key Stage 3, and an increased number of pupils who had achieved 5 A\*-C at GCSE putting York in the top 20% of Local Authorities.
- An increase in the number of schools who had achieved a Healthy School standard
- Significant improvements to the systems the Authority had in place to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable children and young people across the city. Members recognised the excellent work of the Children's & Families Service which had achieved a consistently low level of unallocated cases, below the 2.5% target set.
- The development and refurbishment of Castlegate (One Stop Shop). Members were pleased with the progress made to date on that new facility which they recognised would be a significant asset and passed on their congratulations to the officers leading on the project.

Members noted that the reduction of £63k in the projected underspend on support required for statemented children was from School Based Additional Tutors and not School Based Area Teachers, as indicated in the report.

Members acknowledged the enormity of the work in Children's Services and the work that had gone into producing the report, but requested that other methods of presenting the information contained within the annex be considered as without colour it was very hard to follow. They also expressed concern over the significant number of staff absent on long term sickness.

In regard to the net projected overspend of £31k it was noted that officers would continue to work to identify further savings to bridge that remaining gap before the end of the financial year.

#### Advice of the Advisory Panel:

That the Executive Member be advised to note the performance of services within the Directorate funded through the Children's Services budgets.

#### Decision of the Executive Member:

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

REASON: To monitor and review performance in this portfolio area

## 7. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2ND PERIOD

Members considered a report which informed them of the likely out-turn position of the 2006/07 Capital Programme, based on the spend profile and information to the end of September 2006.

Updates on, and variations to, the schemes in the programme were outlined in paragraphs 5 to 24 of the report. Those variations had produced a gross capital programme for 2006/07 of £12.879m, of which £11.792m was funded externally, resulting in a net cost to the City of £1.087m.

In regard to the York High School Scheme, Members noted the increased costs and the need to identify further capital funding to meet the revised figures. It was recognised that the prudential borrowing mechanism was the only way forward.

Members noted that there was no slippage in the capital programme and thanked Officers for their work in achieving that, and in producing the report.

### Advice of the Advisory Panel:

That the Executive Member be advised:

- (i) To note the capital programme forecast out-turn for 2006/07, as shown in Annex A to the report.
- (ii) To approve the additions and amendments to the programme, as summarised in Annex A.
- (iii) To approve the use of prudential borrowing to increase the available funding for the York High School scheme, subject to the approval of the Schools forum and the Executive.
- (iv) Agree the revised capital programme as shown in Annex A, subject to the approval of the Executive.

### 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.**

## 8. 2007/08 BUDGET REPORT

Members considered a report which presented the 2007/08 budget proposals for Children's Services. It included :

- the Budget Book Service Plans for 2006/07 showing the original budgets at Annex 1

- the base budget for 2007/08 including the 2006/07 budget rolled forward and adjusted
- the allocation of pay and price increases for the portfolio
- Budget service pressure proposals and savings proposals for the portfolio area were shown at Annexes 2 and 3
- Fees and charges proposals shown at Annex 4
- Residential Homes, Foster Carers, Sharing Care, Adoption and Residence Order Weekly Allowances shown at Annex 5

Members considered the overall budget savings that needed to be made by the Authority. Having noted the proposals, the following points were raised:

- The impact of the budget on EDs was not necessarily apparent from the report and it was noted that if approved, the proposals would result in the loss of a post.
- The introduction of SIPs as part of a national programme had directly resulted in the loss of one Advisor post.
- The budget had been affected by the new way of DfES funding through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and that the estimated increase per pupil was 6.4%.
- the number of children being taught at home was expected to fall over the coming year with those remaining being taught in groups, leading to a reduction in the provision of home tuition.

Members acknowledged the amount of work that had gone into producing the report and thanked all who had contributed.

Advice of the Advisory Panel:

That the Executive Member be advised to:

- i. Note the above comments and recommend that they be considered by the Budget Executive on 16 January 2007.
- ii. Consider the budget proposals for Children's Services for 2007/08 contained in the report and recommend that consultation be carried out on the following prior to the Budget Executive on 16 January 2007:
  - 2007/08 Base Budget as set out in paragraph 14 - 20
  - Service Pressure Proposals as set out in Annex 2
  - Savings Proposals as set out in Annex 3
  - Fees and charges as set out in Annex 4
  - Residential Homes and Foster Carers, Sharing Care, Adoption

and Residence Order Weekly Allowances as set out in Annex 5

Decision of the Executive Member:

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

REASON: To begin consultation on the Children's Services budget for 2007/08.

**9. CAPITAL PROGRAMME PROPOSALS 2007/08**

Members considered a report detailing the proposed programme of capital expenditure for major and minor projects against the 2007/08 and 2008/09 DfES local Authority (LA) Formula Capital funding, as shown in Annex 1.

The report also included information on the Schools Access Initiative (SAI) for 2007/08. It was noted that 21 bids had been received totalling £458,685 and that these had been ranked and prioritised using an agreed criteria. As a result, a number of projects had been recommended as shown in Annex 2 and a programme of capital expenditure against the fund proposed.

The report informed Members of the results of the bidding round for capital support for Extended Schools to date and proposed a procurement route for the provision of a new building for Joseph Rowntree School under the BSF One-School Pathfinder Project scheme previously approved in September 2006.

Members noted that advice had been sought from the Assistant Director of Resources, Head of Property Services and he had recommended that the new school be procured through the national framework. This would allow the Authority to choose between six pre-selected construction partners who through the scheme, had previously built 3,500 schools in total and would have the capacity to deliver the new school on time and on budget.

Members expressed concern that the individuality of the York scheme must not be lost and that the ideas and requirements of those who would use the new school facilities must be taken into consideration. It was noted that a good level of consultation was in progress with all the interested parties.

Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member:

- i. Approve the proposed LA Formula Capital programme for 2007/08 and 2008/09
- ii. Approve the proposed Schools Access Initiative capital programme

for 2007/08

- iii. Note that the detail of the proposed Extended Schools Capital programme for 2007/08 and 2008/09 will be presented to EMAP in January 2007
- iv. Support the procurement for the new building for Joseph Rowntree School through the PfS national framework.

#### Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASON: To ensure the delivery of an effective capital programme supporting the priorities of the Council.

### **10. PLACEMENT STRATEGY**

Members considered a report which provided:

- Annual feedback upon the progress of the placement strategy for looked after children in York, which was originally agreed by elected members in October 2003.
- Information about the key issues relating to the adoption, fostering and residential care elements of provision for looked after children
- Statistical information about the adoption activity for City of York in the past year and provides an update on changes in the membership of the adoption panel.
- A specific recommendation regarding the ongoing development of the local specialist fostering scheme

Members welcomed a more direct involvement in the establishment of the strategy for placement services as it allowed them to fulfil their corporate parenting responsibilities.

The report detail that following inspection of the Local Authority children's homes, both homes had received positive reports and the Glen had received the highest level 4 for an inspection outcome. Members were pleased to see that this challenging and demanding service had been recognised externally and congratulated the staff at both homes on their good work.

The report detailed the five key changes from the implementation of the ACA 2002 and Members noted that the new regulations would help to standardise the adoption process.

The report highlighted how the fostering service was committed to increasing the number of foster carer households to 100 by 2009. It was intended that 28 of those would be specialist placements for severely disabled young people, and teenagers with the most challenging behavioural or placement difficulties.

#### Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member:

- i. Note the updated information in relation to the placement strategy for looked after children in York.
- ii. Agree the extension of the specialist fostering scheme to afford the scope for recruitment of up to 8 new households in the next two years to ensure the capacity to place young people locally and avoid the additional cost of placing young people with higher cost independent fostering agencies.
- iii. Note the information about the adoption activity in the past year.
- iv. Note the changes following from the implementation of the ACA 2002 and specifically the wider responsibilities to provide adoption support to families.

#### Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASON: To ensure an effective placement strategy for looked after children in York.

## **11. ARTS AND CULTURE STAFFING REVIEW**

Members considered a report which sought their views on the principles behind a proposed restructure of the Arts and Culture Service.

It was noted that the decision to implement the proposed restructure would be taken by the Chief Officer and the report detailed how the method under consideration would enable the service to face new challenges and would contribute to the significant saving that the Council needs to make in its Budget for 2007/8.

The principles for the re focus of the service were to :

- Increase active participation in the arts by widening access and diversifying the work
- Increase active participation rates improving the offer to young people
- Create safer and stronger communities through focused, targeted work, especially in those communities where active participation rates were low
- Focus festival work on community and arts development whilst working in partnership to promote the 'York - City of Festivals' brand.

Members considered the options contained within the report which would focus priorities and deliver the proposed budget savings. It was recognised that refocusing services would allow for a wider engagement of young people and the community, and would improve links to extended schools and performing Arts Centres. The options included the reorganisation of the Cultural Events team and the Arts Action team

under one manager resulting in the loss of one managerial post. Members were concerned about the effects that would have on service delivery but the report detailed that delivery would continue through partnership work. Having taken into consideration the letter of objection written by Unison, Members agreed that it was a realistic approach to making the saving which would have the least impact on delivering the service.

#### Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member note the comments on the principles set out in the report that underpin the proposed new staffing structure for the arts and Culture Service.

#### Decision of the Executive Member

**RESOLVED:** That the comments of the Advisory Panel be accepted and endorsed

**REASON:** *To secure the increased engagement of young people in the arts, the delivery of a Wider Opportunities programme in schools and that the service arm operates within the budgets set for 2007/08.*

## **12. 2 YEAR PATHFINDER BID**

Members considered a report which detailed the DfES Pathfinder Project for supporting disadvantaged 2 year olds in free Nursery Education Provision as part of a commitment to the Action Plan for the Ten Year Strategy 'Choice for Parents, the best start for children: Making it happen'.

The report informed Members that the Pathfinder had been granted to:

- Deliver 7.5 hours per week of free provision for disadvantaged 2 Year Olds.
- Provide 30 places for those children from January 2007 – January 2008 and 470 places from April 2007 – March 2008
- Ensure that there was a seamless transition from the pilot to the free entitlement which would usually mean that children commenced pilot provision the term after their second birthday if they were accessing a three term place.

Members asked for reassurance that the specific needs of each 2 year old would be considered as it was recognised that all principles of care were important not just learning and education.

The report highlighted that the following would be eligible for free places under the Pathfinder:

- Looked after children
- Children or Parents with special or additional needs (includes Mental Health)
- Children of teenage parents

- Children from very large families (5 or more)
- Children from families where there is unemployment
- Children living with single parents
- Children from the Traveller community
- Children from minority, refugee, Ghurkha, BME or service families
- Children whose family circumstances negatively impact on their early years experience (includes ill health)

Members were pleased to see that the project involved the integration of all the support services to aid the children and their families, and that the outcomes would be measured and evaluated to ensure that standards were raised across all settings.

The report also sought approval to extend the 3 & 4 year old Pathfinder Manager post by 7.5 hours and bring forward the 3 & 4 year old Pathfinder Development Worker and Data Administrator Posts from April 2007 to January 2007 to facilitate the development of this new Pathfinder.

It was recognised that combining the posts would provide continuity between the two Pathfinders and ensure a common quality framework. It was noted that there was no guarantee of provision at the end of the project but it was expected that the results would show the need to continue the service.

#### Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member approve combining the management of the 2 year old Pathfinder and the 3 & 4 year old Pathfinder

#### Decision of the Executive Member

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

REASON: To co-ordinate and manage the Pathfinder to ensure maximum efficiency

### **13. EARLY YEARS SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS**

Members considered a report detailing the contracts for awarding services previously provided through Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for the period April 2007 to March 2009.

Members were informed that a review of the process for awarding SLAs had recently been carried out to ensure compliance with the relevant financial regulations. The current SLA funded organisations had assisted that process by providing information on the relevant criteria for evaluating quotations and assisting in the creation new format for the tender documentation.

The report gave information on the selection criteria, an evaluation of the received quotations and made the following recommendations for awards:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Recommended Organisation</b>
Business sustainability support to voluntary organisations	York Council of Voluntary Services (York CVS)
Providing support to existing and potential childminders	National Childminding Association (NCMA)
Providing support to existing and potential pre-school playgroups	Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA)

In respect of the service to 'provide support to existing and potential out-of-school clubs' Members noted that the current provider who had assisted in creating the new process, had failed to present their quote in the new way. The report highlighted that none of the quotations received had met the selection criteria and as a result, it had not been possible to make a recommendation. The report detailed the remaining options:

- to investigate an in-house arrangement to provide the service
- to re-tender the service.

It was noted that both options would require further investigation and that would delay the awarding of the service. The report therefore proposed extending the current SLA with York Childcare for three months.

#### Advice of the Advisory Panel

That the Executive Member:

- i. award contracts for the period April 2007 to March 2009 to the following organisations:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Recommended Organisation</b>
Business sustainability support to voluntary organisations	York Council of Voluntary Services (York CVS)
Providing support to existing and potential childminders	National Childminding Association (NCMA)
Providing support to existing and potential pre-school playgroups	Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA)

- ii. Make no new SLA award in respect of "providing support to existing and potential out-of-school clubs", but to:

- a) Extend the current SLA with York Childcare for 3 months
- b) Vire the relevant funds out of the SLA budget and
- c) Instruct the Director of Learning, Culture and Children's Services to make arrangements to provide the required service either through in-

house provision or by re-tendering

Decision of the Executive Member

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

*REASON: To secure best value arrangements for these services.*

