

Report of the Assistant Director, Governance and ICT

**Called-in Item: Alternative Services to those currently provided
by the Toy Bus**

Summary

1. This report sets out the reasons for the call-in of the decisions made by the Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Young People on 10 July 2013 in relation to the future of the Toy Bus and the alternative options available. The report to the meeting confirmed that the Toy Bus service had originally been offered as a saving for the 2014/15 budget round of savings. However with the need to find in-year savings Officers had explored the possibility of ceasing the service within this financial year

This cover report sets out the powers and role of the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee in relation to dealing with the call-in.

Background

2. The Decision Sheet issued after the Cabinet Member Decision Session is attached as Annex A to this report. This sets out the decisions taken by the Cabinet Member on the called-in item. The original report to the Cabinet Member on the called-in item is attached as Annex B to this report.
3. The Cabinet Members decision has been called in by Cllrs Runciman, Aspden and Ayre for review by the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee (CSMC) (Calling-In), in accordance with the constitutional requirements for call-in. The following are the reasons given for the call-in:

1. A lack of proper public consultation. The decision to cut the Toy Bus was taken at February's Budget Council, but the public consultation did not take place until May. The consultation indicated that the most popular idea was to keep the Toy Bus. Therefore, it is misleading to claim that the option chosen "is supported by the consultation process".
2. The Toy Bus is still a popular service used by 513 families in York (as of December 2012).
3. There is no detailed plan provided as to how the Mobile Library will incorporate a toy-lending service e.g. no layout plans and an admission from officers that "there is no detail at this stage". There is no commitment that there will not be a break in service before the end of the Toy Bus and the start of the Mobile Library service.
4. The Toy Bus provides a specialised and distinct space for children and parents to access toys. The trained staff on-hand are able to provide guidance to children, but also to provide advice to parents. The importance of helping parents to acquire the skills to play with their children and teach their children through play should not be underestimated. It is unclear if the new proposed arrangements would allow for this kind of interaction.
5. The detail on the need to replace the Toy Bus "in the foreseeable future" remains vague.
6. The yearly saving (excluding staff who will be redeployed) is just £14,589 - a relatively small price to deliver a popular service to some of the most vulnerable families in York and help to give our young children a good start in life. It is also clear that money invested in this age group brings long-term sustainable rewards for communities across the city.
7. The decision to cut this service is not consistent with the poverty strategy recently tabled by Cabinet.

In light of the above, the Liberal Democrat Group continue to oppose the decision to end the Toy Bus provision and the decision to cease this provision in the current financial year.

Consultation

4. In accordance with the requirements of the Constitution, the calling-in Members have been invited to attend and/or speak at the Call-In meeting, as appropriate.

Options

5. The following options are available to CSMC (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 decide that there are no grounds to make specific recommendations to the Cabinet Member in respect of the report. If this option is chosen, the original decisions taken on the item by the Cabinet Member on 10 July 2013 will be confirmed and will take effect from the date of the CSMC (Calling-In) meeting; or
 - b. To make specific recommendations to the Cabinet Member on the report, in light of the reasons given for the call-in. If this option is chosen, the matter will be reconsidered by Cabinet at a meeting of Cabinet (Calling-In) to be held on 30 July 2013.

Analysis

6. Members need to consider the reasons for call-in and the report to Cabinet and form a view on whether there is a basis to make specific recommendations to Cabinet in respect of the report.

Council Plan

7. 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

8. There are no known Financial, HR, Legal, Property, Equalities, or Crime and Disorder implications in relation to the following in terms of dealing with the specific matter before Members; namely, to determine and handle the call-in.

Risk Management

9. There are no risk management implications associated with the call in of this matter.

Recommendations:

10. Members are asked to consider the call-in and reasons for it and decide whether they wish to confirm the decisions made by the Cabinet Member or refer the matter back for reconsideration and make specific recommendations on the report to Cabinet.

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 12 July 2013

Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex A – Copy of the Decision Sheet produced following the Cabinet Member Decision Session on the called-in item.

Annex B – Report of the Interim Director of Adults, Children and Education to the Decision Session on 10 July 2013.

Annex C – Liberal Democrat written representations.

Annex D – Officers response on written representations.

Background Papers

None