

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 DECEMBER 2017

Present: Councillor Bridgeman (Chairperson)
Councillors De'Ath, Philippa Hill-John, Joyce, Morgan, Phillips, Taylor
and Singh

Co-opted Members: Patricia Arlotte (Roman Catholic representative)
and Karen Dell'Armi (Parent Governor Representative)

35 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Carol Cobert and Rebecca Crump.

36 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

37 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting which took place on 10 October 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

38 : 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS - BAND B PRIORITIES - DRAFT CABINET REPORT

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment and Skills) and Nick Batchelar (Direction of Education and Lifelong Learning) to the meeting to present the report which the Committee indicated had been read and considered.

Members were invited to comment, seek clarification or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members welcomed with the level of investment for the Band B programme, half funded by Welsh Government and half by the Council. However, Members queried the plans to address the issues of capacity and school buildings and were advised that working is ongoing to address those issues, Band B will not address all the capacity and building issues faced by the authority.
- Members were advised that this is one of a series of reports which will be presented to Cabinet sought clarification as to whether the proposed rebuilding of Fitzalan High School would take place on the existing site or whether the school would be moved. Officers advised that any changes to the location of the school over a distance of 2 miles would require consultation and Cabinet determination, but it likely that Fitzalan High School will be rebuilt on the existing site.

Cabinet would firstly have to determine the priorities; followed by budget setting and consultation. As far as Fitzalan High School is concerned any

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rebuild would not result in a significant move or expansion, whereas in respect of Woodlands it would be necessary to consult with partners as to how provision is configured and a need to change the designation of the school.

- Members wanted reassurance that there would be a strong maintenance package contained in the tendering process and were advised that Cardiff is currently the host authority for the South East Wales Schools Capital procurement framework, which provides pre-qualified and experienced contractors. When considering both new build and refurbishment projects for schools it has now become clear, as a result of the learning from Band A, that standardised designs rather than bespoke or one off designs are the way forward, together with tendering in lots, or example 3 schools rather than 1. However, maintenance does not form part of the tendering process and therefore maintenance needs to be factored into the costs.
- Members queried what progress is being made with the maintenance backlog and were advised that Band B will not solve all the maintenance issues however, removing D rated school buildings will have an effect on the backlog.
- Member sought clarification in respect of some issues raised in relation to the use of facilities for community benefit, it was understood that a private company will be taking over the maintenance of some pitches and concerns had been raised as to whether community sports groups would be able to afford to use those pitches. Members were advised that at the present time no operational arrangements had been finalised in relation to maintenance.

AGREED – That the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet Member conveying the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

39 : QUARTER 2 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT - EDUCATION

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment and Skills) and Nick Batchelar (Director of Education and Lifelong Learning) to the meeting to present the report which the Committee indicated had been read and considered. Further Members were aware that the annual performance report for Cardiff Schools will be received by the Committee in January and that the full results will be available at that time and as a result indicated that they would comment, seek clarification or raise questions when the full report was available.

The Director wished to update Members that Eastern High School was not out of special measures and was demonstrating strong practice; Whitchurch and Radyr High Schools were out of monitoring and the results in relation to Trelai primary were awaited, although it is known that there have been significant improvements.

40 : QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT - CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Graham Hinchey (Cabinet Member for Children & Families) and Irfan Alam (Assistant Director of Children's Services) to the meeting to present the report.

The Cabinet Member was invited to make a statement in which he indicated that Quarter 2 had been reasonable good considering the pressures, the demands for services and the budgetary implications. There remains difficulties with the recruitment of staff, not just in Cardiff but across South East Wales; the Council is trying to secure 2 new homes; and there is an ongoing campaign to recruit foster carers. 2 years ago there were 555 looked after children, currently the figure is 802 and there has been an increase in the number of complex cases.

The Chair advised that Members had had the opportunity of considering the report and appendices and indicated that they did not intend to ask any specific questions during the course of this meeting. The Committee did not wish to be provided with the same information each month, they wanted clarification of the actual improvements being made.

AGREED – That the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet Member conveying the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

41 : WAY FORWARD

Members discussed the information received and identified a number of issues which the Chairman agreed would be included in the letters that would be sent, on behalf of the Committee, to the relevant Cabinet Members and officers.

42 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next scheduled meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee is 9 January 2018.

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