

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

A record of decisions made by the Executive Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children's Services, Looked after Children, Safeguarding for Children and Young People, Schools and Early Years:-

MONDAY, 7th FEBRUARY, 2022

Following consideration of the matters detailed below in the presence of:-

Councillor Galloway	- Executive Cabinet Member – Children's Services
Councillor Donaghy	- Major Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor McGeown	- Minor Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor Sanders	- Minor Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor Wright	- Minor Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor Fletcher	- Minor Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor McMulkin	- Minor Opposition Spokesperson

Officers

Ms B. Brown	- Director of Children's Services
Mr P. Rankin	- Deputy Director of Children's Services
Ms G. Whitehead	- Assistant Director of Children's Services – Inclusive Education and Learning
Mr I. Walker	- Assistant Director – Social Care and Early Help
Ms T. Minshull	- Assistant Director – Commissioning and Integration
Ms L. Butcher	- Head of Finance - People
Ms A. Kelly	- Senior Lawyer

Mrs S. Bailey

- Principal Democratic Services
Officer

30. MONITORING OF EXECUTIVE CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report which provided an update on decisions taken at previous meetings of the Executive Cabinet Member.

The Executive Cabinet Member NOTED the report.

31. DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S FINANCIAL MONITORING 2021/2022 QUARTER THREE

The Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Children's Services submitted a report which provided information relating to the expected financial position for the Children's Department for the 2021/22 Financial Year as at Quarter Three.

With regard to Revenue Expenditure, the revenue outturn position for the Local Authority block was expected to be in line with budget following a contribution from reserves of £461k.

Revenue expenditure for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) was to be £2.292m greater than the grant available.

In relation to Capital Expenditure, the original Capital Programme approved at Council in February, 2021 totalled £17.573m. Expenditure as at 31st December, 2021 was £4.788m against a revised Programme of £11.471m.

Reserves were expected to be £21.168m as at 31st March, 2022.

Of the £21.168m Reserves, £20.617m related to capital monies held for future work on schools and -£5.723m related to schools balances and other DSG reserves. The remaining £6.274m was Children' Services Revenue Reserves.

The Executive Cabinet Member NOTED -

- (i) The expected financial position of the portfolio as at 31st March, 2022, the changes within the Capital Programme as now detailed and the Revenue Budget changes in year; and APPROVED –**
- (ii) The delegation of authority to the Director of Children's Services to call off on the framework(s) for the Capital Programme, as detailed in section 3 of the report now submitted.**

32. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT BUDGET REPORT 2022/23

The Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Children's Services submitted a report which summarise the position of the Dedicated Schools Grant 2022/23 and sought agreement for its allocation.

The report advised that extensive consultation had been undertaken with the Schools Forum and the report reflects the recommendations of the consultation and the Forum.

The report recommended the allocation of Dedicated Schools Grant via a local formula and incorporated changes resulting from the October 2021 census.

It included the transfer to the high needs block, de-delegation, growth fund criteria and central schools budget approvals as agreed by the Schools Forum.

The Executive Cabinet Member AGREED –

The allocation of the Dedicated Schools Grant, on the basis set out in the report now submitted.

33. TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which sought approval for a proposal to amend the Travel Assistance Policy in relation to Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities by aligning the current mileage allowance rate to the HMRC guidance mileage rate.

The report provided details in relation to the travel mileage allowance by the Council at a rate of 28 pence per mile based on two return journeys a day and how it was calculated. In exceptional circumstances, a flat rate could be offered where the cost to the Council of providing vehicular transport would be excessive and the parent was willing to take the eligible child but required a payment greater than 28 pence per mile to meet the true running costs of their vehicle. There were currently 17 individual pence per mile arrangements in place.

It was now proposed to amend the arrangements to reflect the HMRC guidance rate of 45 pence per mile based on 2 return journeys per day and which would also be in line with the allowances adopted by the majority of other Greater Manchester authorities.

The alignment would ensure that parents/carers were fully reimbursed for travel costs and may increase the uptake in parents/carers choosing this travel support option which may offer a more cost-effective solution for both parents/carers and the Council.

The Executive Cabinet Member APPROVED -

The proposal to amend the Travel Assistance Policy as it relates to Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities by aligning the current mileage allowance rate to the HMRC guidance mileage rate, on the basis detailed in the report now submitted.

34. DETERMINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS TO COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY-CONTROLLED SCHOOLS IN SEPTEMBER, 2023 AND REDUCTION OF PLANNED ADMISSION NUMBER AT THE GATES CP SCHOOL FROM 1ST SEPTEMBER, 2023

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which put forward the proposed admission arrangements for primary and secondary schools for September, 2023 and sought approval to the proposed reduction in the Planned Admission Number at The Gates CP School from 45 to 30 intake places with effect from 1st September, 2023.

The report advised that that current schemes in respect of admission into the normal years of entry into community and voluntary-controlled primary and secondary schools had been amended only to reflect the dates prescribed in the current Regulations.

The proposed updated arrangements for September 2023/24 academic year would be circulated to all schools, academies and neighbouring local authorities.

A copy of each proposed scheme was set out in the appendices attached to the report.

In relation to the Gates CP School, the report advised that pupil projections over the past few years for the Westhoughton primary area had shown a likelihood of reduced demand and falling rolls both in terms of reception and numbers on roll. These earlier projections were detailed at Appendix A to the report and had proven to be accurate as fewer pupils had been recorded on roll following subsequent pupil census returns.

In this regard, the report deemed it appropriate to look at reducing the Planned Admission Number at the School from 45 to 30 Intake places. It would be prudent to keep the situation under regular review as pupil patterns as the demand for places could change quite rapidly and because a high demand for reception intakes was presently identified for September 2025.

The Executive Cabinet Member APPROVED -

- (i) The proposed admission criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled primary and secondary school admissions for the 2023/24 school year, including the proposed reduction in the Planned Admission Number at The Gates CP School from 45 to 30 intake places from September, 2023; and**
- (ii) The co-ordinated admissions scheme for school admission, including in-year admissions, for 2023/24, on the basis detailed in the report now submitted.**