

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, 15th AUGUST, 2022

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

Councillor Galloway	- Executive Cabinet Member – Children's Services
Councillor McKeon	- Major Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor Sanders	- Minor Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor Wright	- Minor Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor Fletcher	- Minor Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor Newall	- Minor Opposition Spokesperson

Officers

Mr P. Rankin	- Deputy Director of Children's Services
Mr I. Walker	- Assistant Director – Social Care and Early Help
Ms T. Minshull	- Assistant Director – Commissioning and Integration
Ms L. Butcher	- Head of Finance
Ms A. Kelly	- Senior Lawyer
Mrs S. Bailey	- Principal Democratic Services Officer

11. 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.

12. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT – CHILDREN’S SERVICES – QUARTER ONE 2022/23

The Director of Children’s Services and the Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report which provided information relating to the projected financial position for the Children’s Department for the 2022/23 Financial Year as at Quarter One.

With regard to Revenue Expenditure, the report stated that the Revenue outturn position for 2022/23 for the Local Authority block was expected to be in line with budget after a contribution from reserves of £4.087m.

Revenue expenditure for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) was expected to be £1.651m less than the grant.

In relation to Capital Expenditure, the original Capital Programme approved at Council in February, 2022 totalled £23.203m. Expenditure as at Quarter One totalled £390,000.

Reserves were expected to be £21.892m as at 31st March, 2023. Of the £21.892m reserves, £19.296m related to capital monies held for future work on schools and -£1.82m related to schools’ balances and other DSG reserves. The remaining £4.416m was Children’ Services Revenue Reserves.

With regard to Strategic Redirections, the report advised that the Children Services Departmental savings programme of £9.291m had been identified in the February 2021 budget report to Council. Of these savings, £663k remained to be achieved. There would be close monitoring of the services which had been included in the savings accomplished.

The following savings had been identified and achieved in respect of the following savings option:

- review of staff within Education Services - £315k
- reduction in Legal Expenditure - £156k

The Executive Cabinet Member NOTED -

- (i) The projected financial position of the portfolio as at 31st March, 2023, the changes within the Capital Programme as now detailed and the Revenue Budget; 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; and**
- (iii) The strategic options proposed in section 2.2 of the report now submitted.**

13. VIRTUAL SCHOOL - EXTENSION OF ROLE, SUPPORTING THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH A SOCIAL WORKER

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which sought approval to for the establishment of a permanent post of Attendance and Inclusion Lead to the Virtual School structure.

The additional post was required as Virtual School Heads were being asked to take on a strategic leadership role in promoting the educational outcomes of the cohort of children with a social worker and those aged from 0 up to 18 years old who had previously had a social worker.

To enable the changes to happen, the report proposed to increase capacity within the Virtual School to have a more strategic overview by the establishment of new posts to effectively provide support, advice, and guidance to strengthen provision already in place for all children with a social worker.

Current and proposed structure charts were included in appendices one and two of the report.

The Executive Cabinet Member APPROVED –

- (i) The permanent establishment of an additional post of Attendance and Inclusion Lead (1FTE) to the Virtual School structure on the basis detailed in the report now submitted.**

14. UPDATE TO EXPANSION OF RUMWORTH SCHOOL

Further to Minute 34 of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet Member for Children's Services held on 12th April, 2021, the Director of Children's Services submitted a report which sought approval for the allocation of further capital support to expand pupil place provision at Rumworth Special School.

The report reminded the Executive Cabinet Member that £3.66M had been approved in October 2020 to support the physical expansion of Rumworth School. However, with a rise in inflation and the impact of Brexit and Covid, building and material costs nationally had significantly risen in the interim period.

In addition, the report advised that additional insurance costs were required for any minor building works over £250k and additional insurance was now required to cover the value and period of the works.

In this regard, the report provided a breakdown of the additional costs and sought approval for a revised sum of £4.806m for the Rumworth School expansion.

The Executive Cabinet Member APPROVED –

- (i) A sum of £4.806M of Departmental Capital Funding for Rumworth School to enable the creation of an additional 140 permanent special school places, on the basis detailed in the report now submitted.**

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

The background papers and reports in relation to the following item were considered confidential as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and that it be deemed that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in their exemption outweighs the public interest in their disclosure.

15. THOMASSON MEMORIAL SCHOOL REMEDIATION

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which sought approval for funding to support the undertaking of necessary repairs and re-instatement works at Thomasson Memorial Special School.

The report provided details of the damage to the School following an extensive leak during the Christmas/New Year break in 2021/22 which led the main building being closed since.

In this regard, the report outlined the ongoing discussions with the loss adjuster to meet the claim for damages and proposed that in the interim period, remedial works and necessary repairs be undertaken using the Department's allocated Capital funding prior to the start of the new academic year.

Full details of the associated costs and timescales were provided in the report.

The Executive Cabinet Member APPROVED –

The remaining works to repair and re-instate Thomasson Memorial School, on the basis detailed in the report now submitted.