

Children and Young People’s Services Select Committee

11 January 2018 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Cloake (Chairman)

Mrs Bennett	Mrs Jones	Mrs Mullins
Mr Blunden	Mrs Le Rossignol	Mrs Pendleton
Mrs Dennis	Ms Lord	
Mr High	Mr Marshall	

In attendance by invitation: Mr Burrett (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills [and Deputy Leader]), Mr Hillier (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People), and Mrs Sparkes (Adviser to Mr Hillier).

Apologies for absence: Mrs Hall, Dr Holt, Mrs Ryan and Mr Wickremaratchi.

Declaration of Interests

58. In accordance with the code of conduct Mr Blunden declared a personal interest as a member of the West Sussex Schools Forum.

Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

59. Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th November 2017 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Urgent Matters – Secretary of State

60. The Committee noted that on 8 January 2018 Damian Hinds MP replaced Justine Greening MP as Secretary of State for Education. The Chairman requested the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills invite Mr Hinds to visit West Sussex at the earliest opportunity.

Responses to Recommendations

61. The Committee considered responses from the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, this included an additional tabled response on Post-16 Transport Charges that had only recently been finalised (copy appended to the signed minutes).

62. Resolved – that the response be noted.

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

63. The Committee considered a tabled paper which was a new version of the Forward Plan, February – May 2018 (copy appended to the signed minutes). This version of the Forward Plan was not included in the Committee papers as it had been published following the statutory despatch of the agenda.

64. The Committee requested the decision regarding Special Educational Needs and Disabilities provision at Maidenbower Junior School considers the impact on the affected children, and that this should be referenced in the report.

65. Resolved – that the Forward Plan be noted.

Outcome of school funding review 2018/19 consultation – local formula and changes to funding arrangements for special support centres (SSCs)

66. The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills reiterated to the Committee the difficult position the County Council was in as a result of the new National Funding Formula (NFF). He noted that the distribution of the funding was an extremely complex subject, but that the County Council's aim is to allocate in as fair a way as possible.

67. The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Children, Adults, Families, Health and Education, and the Director of Education and Skills. The report was introduced by Deborah Myers, Director of Education and Skills. Jeanmarie Long, Principal Manager, Compliance, took the Committee through a Powerpoint presentation (copy appended to the signed minutes) which updated them on the current position. The main points included:

- The 2018-19 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) settlement proved the situation remained very challenging.
- The autumn term consultation, which took place between 13 November and 1 December 2017, saw a marked increase in response rates (from around 20% to 58.8%). The 3 briefings saw a high level of attendance, particularly from school governors and head teachers.
- The High Needs block in particular continues to be an area of cost pressure and tension.
- A consultation for the spring term is likely to be launched by February 2018.
- Disapplication requests are pending, the outcome is likely to impact the Cabinet Member decision about changes to school and high needs funding in 2018/19.

68. The Director of Education and Skills advised the Committee that she, the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, and the Strategic Finance Business Partner met with 7 West Sussex Members of Parliament (MPs) on 19 December 2017. The purpose of the meeting was to explain the detail of the NFF's impact on the funding of West Sussex County Council. A summary of the key points communicated, and arising out of the meeting included:

- The WorthLess campaign has a large following of parents and schools. The campaign has highlighted the funding situation of West Sussex schools compared to other LAs in the country.

Agenda Item No 2

- The MPs were provided with relevant school budget data that related to their particular constituencies. This demonstrated the effect the NFF has on their specific geographical areas.
- The MPs requested that school funding be added to the agenda of the January 2018 WSCC MPs briefing to further consider how MPs and the Council could work together to address the issues of concern.
- 7 of 8 invited MPs attended the meeting, and it was seen to have been a very productive meeting for all attendees - MPs, officers and the Cabinet Member.

69. The Committee made comments including those that follow:

- The Committee agreed there was insufficient funding for West Sussex schools and expressed concerns about what this could mean for the children of the County, including high needs children (pupils requiring Education, Health and Care Plans [EHCPs], Pre and Post-16 specialist placements).
- The future of smaller schools throughout the County and their sustainability was considered. It was noted by officers that all schools are reviewed regularly and are considered on an individual basis, and that no decisions had been made.
- Members highlighted the significant lack of resources in schools. There were concerns about the possibility of high needs children being placed into mainstream schools and in turn questioned the safety of staff and pupils. As a disapplication request with the Secretary of State is pending, the Committee may wish to meet again to consider this issue.
- The Director of Education and Skills reported that she had recently appointed a new Head of Inclusion to support and develop the capacity of schools. This would secure greater inclusivity and support them with being better able to meet a wide diversity of learning needs.

70. Resolved –

- i. That a single meeting Task and Finish Group (TFG) be established to report to the Cabinet Member on the School Funding consultation when the outcome of the appeal is known.
- ii. The TFG membership will comprise: Mrs Dennis, Mr High (Chairman), Mrs Jones, Mr Marshall, Mrs Mullins and Mrs Pendleton.

Business Planning Group Report

71. The Committee noted the report and requested an update on the potential expansion of Easebourne Primary School, and the situation regarding the proposed new Horsham Free School. The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills advised that:

Agenda Item No 2

- The decision had been made not to expand Easebourne Primary School at this time due to the level of concerns raised in the community, and other options for accommodating the additional children of primary age in the area were now being explored. St Mary's Catholic Primary School in Bognor Regis and Felpham Community College were approved for expansion to provide additional places from September 2019.
- The Director of Education and Skills advised that meetings with head teachers, Highways and Horsham District Council were underway to review the delivery timeline of the new development. A temporary secondary school site is being considered in North Horsham to enable the opening of the new Bohunt Free School by 2020, if not before.

72. Resolved – that the report and proposed work programme be endorsed.

Date of next meeting

The Committee noted that the next scheduled meeting will be held on 14 March 2018 at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 12.00 Noon.

Chairman