

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 20 JULY 2015

PRESENT:- Councillors Robert Wright (Chair), John Ballman, Oliver Donachie, Richard Hurley, Colin Lovell, Gemma McCracken, Kevin Parry, Maureen Penny, Stan Pajak, Vera Tomlinson and Chris Watts

Councillors Brian Mattock, Deputy Leader of the Council, Vice-Chair of Cabinet, Cabinet Member for Adult Health and Social Care, Brian Ford, Cabinet Member for Streetsmart, Fionuala Foley, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Russell Holland, Cabinet member for Finance, People and Performance, Emma Faramarzi, Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety and Alan Bishop were in attendance.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Des Moffatt and Carol Shelley.

7. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

8. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

9. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd June 2015, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

10. Consideration of Cabinet Decisions

The Director of Law and Democratic Services submitted a report introducing decisions arising from the Cabinet meeting held on 15th July 2015.

15. Future Special Educational Needs Provision in Swindon

Councillor Fionuala Foley, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, responded to a question put by the Chair and Councillors Maureen Penny, Chris Watts and Stan Pajak on the following matters:

- The process for a child to have a Special Educational Needs Statement and the budget process to fund the assessment
- The locations for special needs provision
- The allocation of teaching hours for Special Needs pupils
- The criteria to be met in order to receive help for a Special Educational Needs pupil
- The Special Needs provision within Swindon and outside of Swindon
- The stakeholders and parents involved in providing feedback to develop options for the future delivery of Special Educational Needs provision in

Swindon

Resolved – That Minute 15 of the Cabinet be noted.

16. Budget Management 2015/16 and Medium Term Financial Position

Councillor Russell Holland, Cabinet Member for Finance, People and Performance, responded to a question put by the Chair and Councillor Oliver Donachie on the following matters:

- Confirmation of whether it was a company or individual who would receive the £60,000 contribution from the Council to help in developing a detailed Delivery Plan to secure further significant regeneration in Swindon Town Centre
- The inclusion of the Heritage area within the regeneration Delivery Plan
- The involvement of 'backbench' members in discussions about budgetary issues, particularly within their role on Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Resolved – That Minute 16 of the Cabinet be noted.

17. Education Transport Policy 2016/17

Councillor Fionuala Foley, Cabinet Member for Children's Services responded to questions put by the Chair and Councillors Oliver Donachie, John Ballman, Chris Watts and Gemma McCracken on the following matters:

- The reasons why the proposed Education Transport Policy 2016/17 only provided for free home to school transport to pupils up to the age of 16 when education was offered to pupils up to the age of 18
- The use of free school transport vehicles outside of school hours
- The school transport help available for 16 year olds if they had no income or family
- The number of young people not in care, with no income and no family and the role of the Council in these circumstances

Resolved –

1. That Minute 17 of the Cabinet be noted.
2. That Councillor Fionuala Foley, Cabinet Member for Children's Services to confirm national guidance in relation to age limit for the provision of free home to school transport
3. That Councillor Fionuala Foley, Cabinet Member for Children's Services to investigate the Free School transport Policies of neighbouring Local Authorities and the number of requests for Free School Transport received.
4. That the information requested at (3) above be included in the Cabinet members Q & A report to be considered by the Scrutiny Committee in January 2016.

18. A Consultation about Short Breaks for Disabled Children, Young People and their Families

Councillor Fionuala Foley, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, responded to

questions put by the Chair and Councillors Vera Tomlinson and Oliver Donachie on the following matters:

- The increase in the price that families pay for the Aiming High Short Break services and an explanation of how the increase was reached
- The projected overspend from 2016/17 by the Aiming High Service and whether the proposed charges were included in the calculation
- The changes in cost for the Aiming High Service and possible variations in requests for the service
- The availability of the Aiming High Newsletter following its change to an electronic version only

Resolved – That Minute 18 of the Cabinet be noted.

19. *Pest Control Services*

Councillor Emma Faramarzi, Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety, responded to questions and observations put by the Chair and Councillors Vera Tomlinson, Stan Pajak and Chris Watts on the following issues:

- The removal of the tendering process from the new arrangements for the Pest Control Services
- The Council Service dealing with public concerns in relation to issues surrounding Japanese Knotweed
- Concerns of the public about how pests, particularly rats, are dealt with by the Council
- Response times to requests from the public over a weekend
- Response to concerns about Pests

Resolved – That Minute 19 of the Cabinet be noted.

20. *Independent Remuneration Panel Recommendation on Councillors' Allowances for 2016/17*

Councillor Brian Mattock, Deputy Leader of the Council, noted an observation by the Chair about his concerns that the allowances for Swindon Borough Councillors were lower than those in neighbouring authorities and he felt this put the Councillors in Swindon at a disadvantage

Resolved – That Minute 20 of the Cabinet be noted.