

SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Monday 3 August 2020 at 6.00 pm

Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

Held in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020; and conducted according to the Council's Standing Orders for Remote Meetings and those set out in the Council's Constitution.

Committee Members present: Councillor J. Murray (Chair)
Councillor A. Nawaz (Vice-Chair)
Councillor K. Ferguson
Councillor K. Hussain
Councillor L. Jeavons
Councillor W. Rasab
Councillor I. Robertson
Councillor S. Samra
Councillor I. Shires
Councillor M. Statham

Portfolio Holders present: Councillor M. Bird – Leader of the Council
Councillor R. Martin – Adult Social Care
Councillor T. Wilson – Children's Services
Councillor C. Towe – Education & Skills

Other Members present: Councillor D. Barker
Councillor T. Jukes

Officers present: Sally Rowe, Executive Director – Children's Services
Andrea Potts, Director, Commissioning and Early Help
Craig Goodall, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Matt Powis, Democratic Services Officer

WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, and explaining the rules of procedure and legal context in which the meeting was being held. He also directed members of the public viewing the meeting to the papers, which could be found on the Council's Committee Management Information system (CMIS) webpage.

Members and officers confirmed that they could both see and hear the proceedings.

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor S. Ditta.

259/20 **SUBSTITUTIONS**

Councillor I. Robertson substituted for Councillor S. Ditta.

260/20 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

There were no declarations of interest or party whip for the duration of the meeting.

261/20 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 (AS AMENDED)**

There were no items of business that required the exclusion of the public.

262/20 **CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION ‘FUTURE OF STANLEY’S NURSERY, BIRCHILLS’**

The Chairman opened the meeting and explained the format.

The Call-in Members, informed the Committee about the reasons for the ‘call in’ and heard representations from the Portfolio Holders for Children’s Services and Education and Skills.

The call-in members elaborated on their reasons for the call in. They urged Cabinet to keep the nursery open due to the nursery been located in a deprived ward and the negative impact this would have on its service users. The majority of which had protected characteristics. The argument was put forward that early years education was vital to preventing long-term disadvantage. This situation was exacerbated by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The Children’s Commissioner has identified early years provision as a key sector in addressing the effects of the pandemic. Investing in this nursery now could save the council and its partners money in the long term.

The Portfolio Holders explained it was an unfortunate situation but the budget pressures on the nursery meant it had not been possible to balance the budget for a number of years. The importance of early years education was acknowledged and it was noted that there were sufficient nursery places in the area to accommodate the displaced children who would all be assisted to find alternative places.

Following a debate, it was **moved** and duly **seconded** that:

‘In light of the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the recommendations made in the Children’s Commissioners report ‘Best beginnings’ and the support made to these recommendations by the LGA. Plus the commitment made in the Conservative Party Manifesto for the 2019 General Election to champion Family Hubs we urge the

Cabinet to reconsider the closure of this setting and identify alternative funding that will sustain the centre and thus support local people to improve their lives.'

On being put to the vote via roll call the motion was declared carried.

Resolved (by roll call):

In light of the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the recommendations made in the Children's Commissioners report 'Best beginnings' and the support made to these recommendations by the LGA. Plus the commitment made in the Conservative Party Manifesto for the 2019 General Election to champion Family Hubs we urge the Cabinet to reconsider the closure of this setting and identify alternative funding that will sustain the centre and thus support local people to improve their lives.

263/20 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 25 August 2020.

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.30pm.

Chair.....

Date.....