

Lancashire County Council

Executive Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 7th January, 2014 at 2.00 pm in Cabinet Room 'D' - The Henry Bolingbroke Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Bill Winlow (Chair)

County Councillors

A Atkinson	M Green
A Barnes	S Holgate
Mrs S Charles	Mrs L Oades
D Clifford	J Oakes
B Dawson	D O'Toole
G Driver	R Shewan

1. Apologies

None.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-pecuniary Interests

There were no interests declared.

3. Minutes of the meetings 3 and 11 December 2013

Resolved: That the minutes of the meetings held on 3 and 11 December 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

4. Reports for decision by Cabinet

The Committee considered the following reports to be presented for decision by the Cabinet on 9 January.

a. Early Action Response

The Committee received a report setting out proposals for the establishment of an Early Action Response service, in collaboration with Lancashire Constabulary. It was proposed that £3m of the Strategic Investment reserve allocation for the provision of additional PCSOs would be re-aligned to support the approach (£1m for each of the next three years).

The project would at first be run as a pilot in three areas, Preston, Burnley and one further to be identified, and would involve the creation of 27 fte posts. Both the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Lancashire Constabulary were supportive of this approach, and discussions were also taking place with the two unitary authorities, as well as with Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector organisations.

The aim of the project would be to deliver a targeted response, offering preventative and early intervention services where they were most needed, and with the presence of the services and support which were most appropriate. The project would be closely monitored, and it was envisaged that the approach would save money for the organisations involved through reducing the requirement for more complex and costly interventions at a later stage when issues had reached "crisis".

It was confirmed that the initial project was focussing on those areas where data and intelligence indicated that the impact would be greatest. However it was felt that it would have a beneficial effect across Lancashire, and that the specifics of the project would be rolled out more widely following evaluation. The committee noted the report and confirmed the recommendations to Cabinet without modification or amendment.

Resolved: That the recommendations to be presented to Cabinet be confirmed without amendment or modification.

b. **Money Matters: The 2014/15 Budget and Financial Strategy 2015/16 to 2017/18**

A report was presented providing an update on the Council's financial strategy for 2014/15 to 2017/18, following on from previous reports to Cabinet.

This report provided details of the Local Government Financial Settlement announced on 18 December 2013, and provided an update on progress in bridging the savings gap in 2014/15 and the next steps in the budget setting process, highlighting the areas of risk remaining within the budget.

The Committee noted that the £3.506m funding for the care and urgent needs support programme did not appear in the Government's settlement for 2015/16, but that no further detail had been provided. It was reported that further clarification had been sought from Government, and that the Deputy Leader had written to the Secretary of State to make clear the importance of this funding for vulnerable individuals and families. The Committee agreed that cross party representations to government on this issue should be made.

The Committee confirmed the recommendations to Cabinet without modification or amendment.

Resolved: That

- i. the recommendations to be presented to Cabinet be confirmed without amendment or modification.
- ii. Representations be made to Government on the £3.506m care and urgent needs support programme funding

5. Forthcoming Individual Cabinet Member Key Decisions

The Committee considered the following key decisions due to be taken by individual Cabinet Members.

a. Schools Budget 2014/15

The Committee received a report setting out the Schools Budget for 2014/15, including the proposals for the Schools Block Budget, the Early Years Block and the High Needs Block. It was reported that the report would be presented to the Schools Forum on 14 January, and any comments would be considered by the Cabinet member at the decision making session the following day.

It was reported that the settlement announced for Lancashire was £843m, higher than anticipated, and an increase of around £11.7m from the previous year.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that statutory guidance made it impossible to amend an individual school's budget in year to take into account either in-year intake or a reduction in pupil numbers. It was also noted that, in areas where free school meals for all pupils had been piloted, there had been a decrease in those registering for Free School Meals (FSM), and therefore a reduction in pupil premium funding. It was recognised that the County Council would need to take steps to ensure that this was not the case when FSM for all KS1 pupils was introduced by the Government. It was confirmed that district councils had been contacted to support this aim.

The Committee confirmed the recommendations without modification or amendment.

Resolved: That the recommendations to be presented to the Cabinet Member be confirmed without amendment or modification.

b. Proposed Zebra Crossing and School Keep Clear Markings in front of St James Lanehead School, Briercliffe Road, Burnley

A report was presented setting out a proposal to provide a zebra crossing and 'School Keep Clear' markings on Briercliffe Road, Burnley. The Committee confirmed the recommendation without modification or amendment.

Resolved: That the recommendation to be presented to the Cabinet Member be confirmed without amendment or modification.

c. Recommissioning and Procurement of Home Care for Older People and People with Physical Disabilities

The Committee considered a report setting out proposals for recommissioning and procuring Home Care services. The Committee noted the extensive work that had gone on in the development of the proposals, including significant engagement and consultation with service users as well as providers. It was reported that this was a service provided to around 6000 people, costing approximately £50m a year.

A number of significant issues that needed to be considered were discussed, including the prevalence of zero hours contracts in the sector, concerns over travel times, the increasing complexity of the care required and being provided, high staff turnover, the need to set and monitor high quality standards amongst providers and engage providers as a partner in the health and wellbeing agenda. Fundamentally, the aim was to provide a choice of high quality services to service users.

The Committee confirmed the recommendations without modification or amendment.

Resolved: That the recommendations to be presented to the Cabinet Member be confirmed without amendment or modification.

6. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

7. Date of Next Meeting

It was confirmed that the next meeting of the Committee would be held at 2pm on Tuesday 21 January 2014 at the County Hall, Preston.

8. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved: That the press and members of the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there would be a likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972 as set out in the reports. It was considered that in all the circumstances the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

9. Proposed changes to the procurement of the Supply and Delivery of Library Stock and Other Library Materials

(Exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972. It was considered that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information)

The Committee considered a report on changes to the procurement of the supply and delivery of library stock and other library materials. The Committee confirmed the recommendations without modification or amendment.

Resolved: That the recommendations to be presented to the Cabinet Member be confirmed without amendment or modification.

10. Recycling Payments to Waste Collection Authorities (Recycling Credits)

(Exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972. It was considered that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information)

A report on the proposals for the future arrangements for recycling payments to the Waste Collection Authorities in Lancashire was considered. The Committee confirmed the recommendations without modification or amendment.

Resolved: That the recommendations to be presented to the Cabinet Member be confirmed without amendment or modification.

11. Contract for the Supply of Fresh Produce

This item was withdrawn.

I M Fisher
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston