

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

19 November 2020

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and was an online remote meeting in compliance with the Council Procedure Rules Relating to the holding of Remote Meetings and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Present:

Councillor: Leisa Smith (In the Chair)

Councillors: Lesley Hamilton, Brenda Harrison, John Lauderdale, Jim Lindridge, Sue Little and Shane Moore

Co-opted Members:

Joanne Wilson, Roman Catholic Diocesan Representative
Mark Tilling, Secondary Head Representative
Zoe Westley, Special School's Head Representative

Officers: Sally Robinson, Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services
Jane Young, Assistant Director, Children's and Families
Amanda Whitehead, Assistant Director, Education
Ann Turner, School Governor Support Manager
Sandra Shears, Head of Finance (Corporate and Schools)
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

20. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of David Turner, Primary Head Representative and Jo Heaton, Church of England Diocesan Representative.

21. Declarations of Interest

None.

22. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2020

Received.

23. Dedicated Schools Grant (Former Education Services Grant per Pupil) – Disapplication Request *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services and Director of Resources and Development)*

Type of decision

Key – tests (i) and (ii) apply – Forward Plan reference CJCS103/20

Purpose of report

To inform Members of the outcome of Schools' Forum held on 22 October 2020 and their decision in relation to the 2021/22 Education Services General Duties Rates.

To agree that the local authority should present a disapplication request to the Secretary of State in order to ensure that the local authority can discharge its statutory responsibilities.

Issue(s) for consideration

Members were advised that two other disapplication requests in relation to the high needs block and early years which had been included in the Forward Plan for consideration at this meeting had been removed from the agenda given that no transfer would be made.

The Schools' Forum had considered the local authority's proposal of a rate of £60 per pupil for statutory duties from the Dedicated Schools Grant in line with the Government's national funding arrangements. The Schools' Forum, did not agree to transfer the funding to the local authority as they considered that funding statutory duties from schools' budgets was a budget cut and that this should be funded by the Government. This has been a consistent view of Schools' Forum for the past four financial years. In each of these years, the local authority had successfully applied to the Secretary of State for disapplication of the Regulations which had resulted in the local authority being able to remove the required element of funding to ensure that statutory responsibilities were discharged.

In the discussion that followed Members expressed disappointment that schools and the local authority were placed in this position again and questioned whether the £60 per pupil was sufficient funding and whether there was an opportunity to secure additional funding from the Government. The Head of Finance, Corporate and Schools advised that whilst the £60 covered a proportion of the cost there was a funding contribution requirement from the local authority. Whilst noting the Schools Forum had

already written to the Government in relation to funding concerns, comments were reiterated in relation to the lack of sufficient resources to support statutory services and it was suggested that a letter be written to the Secretary of State on behalf of the Children's Services Committee seeking additional local authority funding to assist in this regard.

The following decision was agreed with no dissent.

Decision

- (i) That the 2021/22 funding rate at £60 per pupil/place be agreed.
- (ii) That the disapplication request to the Secretary of State to set the Education Services General Duties rate at £60 per pupil/place for 2021/22 be submitted.
- (iii) The Committee noted that this would be the fifth year the local authority had applied for disapplication and that the previous four applications had been successful.
- (iv) That a request for additional funding be sought from the Secretary of State, on behalf of the Children's Services Committee, to assist in delivering statutory services to schools.

24. To Nominate A Local Authority Representative to Serve on the Governing Body of High Tunstall College of Science *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To consider a nomination for the role of Local Authority Governor at High Tunstall College of Science.

Issue(s) for consideration

A schedule was submitted with the report setting out details of a vacancy that existed at High Tunstall College of Science together with details of the application received. One application had been received for the position, as set out in a confidential appendix to the report. **This item contained exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government), (Access to Information), (Variations Order 2006) namely, information relating to any individual (Para 1).** Discussions had taken place between the applicant, Chair of Governors and Head Teacher regarding the skills the applicant could

contribute to the Governing Body. The application was from a serving Governor whose term of office would expire in February 2021.

The following decision was agreed with no dissent.

Decision

The Committee approved the local authority nomination of the applicant as set out in appendix B in respect of High Tunstall College of Science.

25. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

The Chairman ruled that the following item of business should be considered by the Committee as a matter of urgency in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(B) (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 in order that the matter could be dealt with without delay.

26. Any Other Business – Covid 19 Update in Schools

The Chair advised that whilst she had agreed to a request that an update in relation to Covid 19 in schools be provided as an urgent item of business this would not be a matter for debate.

The Assistant Director of Education updated the Committee on the challenges faced by schools since reopening in September as a result of the current Covid 19 pandemic. Schools had remained open despite the significant challenges and were working very hard in extremely difficult times. Details of the measures in place to ensure schools were as safe as possible were outlined and it was highlighted that schools and the local authority had worked closely together to share information and work collaboratively. Evidence showed that transmission rates of the virus was low in schools and most pupils or staff who tested positive were contracting the virus outside of the school environment. Children and young people had responded extremely well despite the uncertainties. The impact and additional demands the virus had placed on the workforce were reported and thanks were conveyed on behalf of the Council to all staff for their dedication, support and care they continued to provide to the children and young people of Hartlepool.

The Chair expressed the Committee's appreciation and thanks to the workforce for their hard work and commitment to keeping children and young people safe in these unprecedented times.

Decision

That the information given be noted.

27. Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was reported that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 26 January 2020 at 4.00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 4.25 pm

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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