Rutland County Council



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RECORD OF DECISION AT A MEETING OF THE CABINET

Tuesday, 17th October, 2017 at 9.30 am

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Decisions published on Thursday 19 October 2017

Decisions will be implemented on 27 October 2017 unless the Call-in Procedure as outlined in Procedure Rule 206 is invoked.

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PRESENT: Mr T Mathias Mr R Foster

Mr A Walters Mr D Wilby

APOLOGIES: Mr O Hemsley Mr R Clifton

OFFICERS Mrs H Briggs Chief Executive PRESENT: Mr D Brown Director for Places

Mr S Della Rocca Assistant Director – Finance

Mr A Edwards Head of Property Services (For part of the

meeting)

Mrs A Grinney Revenue and Benefits Manager (For part of

the meeting)

Ms K Kibblewhite Head of Commissioning (For part of the

meeting)

Dr T O'Neill Director for People and Deputy Chief

Executive

Mr S Westwood Independent Chair of the Leics & Rutland

Local Safeguarding Children Board and

Safeguarding Adults Board

Mrs N Taylor Acting Corporate Support Team Manager

IN Mr G Brown Ward Member Ketton

ATTENDANCE:

343 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND/OR HEAD OF THE PAID SERVICE

There were no announcements from the Chairman or Head of Paid Service.

344 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

345 RECORD OF DECISIONS

The Record of Decisions made by Cabinet on 10th October 2017, copies of which had been previously circulated were confirmed by Cabinet.

346 ITEMS RAISED BY SCRUTINY

The Chairman had not been formally notified of any items raised by Scrutiny.

347 LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD AND SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

Report No. 185/2017 from the Independent Chair of the Leicestershire & Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board and Safeguarding Adults Board was received.

The Director for People, Dr T O'Neill, introduced the report, the purpose of which was to advise the Cabinet of the key findings of the Annual Reports of the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board (LRLSCB) and the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Adult Board (LRSAB) for 2016/17 for information and comment.

The Annual Reports were to be presented for approval to a joint meeting of the Boards on 20th October 2017. Any comments or proposed additions and amendments made by the Cabinet would be addressed in the final reports before they were presented to the Board and subsequently published. The final report would be the report of the Independent Chair who must publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. This was a statutory requirement under section 14A of the Children Act 2004.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- i. Mr S Westwood, Independent Chair of the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board and Safeguarding Adult Board summarised the report highlighting that:
 - Key messages were stated in pages 5 and 6 of the report;
 - More work was required in ensuring that financial and domestic abuse was recognised and people were made aware of how to respond when cases were identified;
 - There should be a focus on notification of safeguarding concerns for adults in health settings to ensure that agencies were reporting incidents to the Local Authority and analysis could be done on responses to these referrals. This was a general trend, not unique to Rutland;
 - As reflected in the inspection, Early Help Services were improving outcomes for Children in Rutland; and
 - The Board was committed to drive improvement and the business plan identified areas of focus.
- ii. Mr Foster confirmed that due to the close working relationship with the Board there were no surprises in the report, in spite of being a smaller authority issues in Rutland were given as much consideration as those in larger authorities;

- iii. Mr Walters requested clarification that although "Signs of Safety" is a valuable tool, it is only one tool which can be used in child protection and early intervention and should not be used in isolation from other information and evidence. Mr Westwood confirmed that Signs of Safety should be used to compliment the care planning process, it was aimed at building on the strengths in the family setting and engaging families and children in decision making, but should be used alongside other methods;
- iv. Mr Walters requested clarification on the need for improvement in support services for victims of domestic abuse, particularly children under the age of 13. Mr Westwood confirmed that work was required to establish clarity around the governance of domestic abuse; all agencies recognised this as an important area. It was appropriate for Community Safety Partnerships to take a lead role in this area and provision of support should be through partnership of existing services such as Schools and Police working together. Dr O'Neill confirmed that this area would be considered as part of a programme of Community Safety reviews due to take place this autumn. Support in this area may be too adult focused and there should be a whole family approach to the impact of domestic abuse, the reviews would identify the issues in this area and recommendations would be taken on board:
- v. It would be helpful to have comparative data going back over several years in order to highlight the areas where progress was being made;
- vi. The provisions of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 would be implemented by September 2019 and would abolish Local Safeguarding Children Boards. The Board had therefore started to look at the executive arrangements that would be required in order to approve the introduction of local arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

DECISION

1. Cabinet **NOTED** the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board and Safeguarding Adults Boards' Annual Reports for 2016/17.

Reason for Decision

1. The Safeguarding Boards had produced their Annual Reports for 2016-17 assessing and analysing the activity and performance of the Boards and partner agencies regarding safeguarding adults with care and support needs and children. These Annual Reports were presented to Cabinet for their information and input.

--o0o-Mr S Westwood left the meeting and did not return.
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348 FUTURE PROVISION OF HEALTHWATCH SERVICES

(KEY DECISION)

Report No. 186/2017 from the Director for People was received.

The Portfolio Holder for Safeguarding Children and Young People, Mr Foster, introduced the report, the purpose of which was to set out the requirements for Healthwatch provision within Rutland along with recommendations for the service model of Healthwatch delivery for Rutland; a move from the current grant funding to a

contract; and the procurement process for Healthwatch services to be delivered from April 2018.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- 1. It was important that the Healthwatch provision was able to cater for the unique needs within Rutland:
- 2. The £10,000 retention was part of the overall funding of £66,500 annual contract value. This retention was not intended to compromise the impartiality of Healthwatch, but to ensure that there could be mutual agreement on key issues which may require focus or investigation particularly in respect of joint working with neighbouring areas where there is cross over with health services. The retention would give the assurance that important and emerging issues were given adequate focus and that the Healthwatch provision provides best value for money;
- 3. Once the contract had been awarded there would be a discussion at the outset as to what the core business would be, set out in an overarching work plan, within the £56,500. Exceptional pieces of work identified throughout the financial year would draw on the £10,000 retention, the provider would be asked to provide costings for each piece of work to ensure that the budget was not exceeded; and
- 4. The contract would be reviewed after three years and a decision made on whether to extend annually from that point.

DECISION

- 1. Cabinet **APPROVED** the recommended service model of Healthwatch provision for Rutland.
- 2. Cabinet **APPROVED** the recommendation for Healthwatch services from 1st April 2018 to be awarded via a procurement process.
- 3. Cabinet **AUTHORISED** the Director for People, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with portfolio for Health and Adult Social Care, to award the contract resulting from this procurement in line with the Award Criteria as set out in Appendix C to Report No. 186/2017.

Reasons for Decision

- 1. It was recommended that the proposed model was accepted and that it was procured via an open tender process as this would provide assurance of commissioning the most appropriate provider and of value for money. The risks and benefits of the various options had been weighed up and it was believed that this represented the model which would be best able to meet Rutland's needs whilst delivering an appropriate and effective service.
- 2. In order for the procurement process to commence the award criteria needed to be approved by Cabinet. The criteria had been carefully considered to ensure that the provider successful in the process was capable of meeting the requirements and could deliver appropriate quality services in Rutland.
- 3. It was recommended that once the award criteria were approved, approval of contracts was delegated to the Director for People in consultation with the Portfolio Holder. Decisions would only be taken in line with Cabinet approved criteria.

Ms K Kibblewhite left the meeting and did not return. Mr A Edwards joined the meeting.

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349 CAPITAL MAINTENANCE - SCHOOLS

(KEY DECISION)

Report No. 184/2017 from the Director for Places was received.

Head of Property Services, Mr A Edwards, introduced the report, the purpose of which was to authorise the release of sufficient funding to enable the completion of a programme of works that addressed maintenance issues in the Schools that were required for completion over the next 18 months and support the smooth transition to Academy Status. The approvals requested would ensure that works could be completed with the minimum of delays.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- The recommendations ask for delegations to the Head of Property Services in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, all works would be subject to Rutland County Council Contract Procedure Rules;
- ii. Funds provided to schools undergoing academisation would be released subject to conditions and would be transferred in stage payments as elements of the works were completed. The scope of works would be defined and agreed in advance and any additional requirements would not be funded; and
- iii. In future there would be consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education for reports relating to Capital Maintenance within Schools.

DECISION

Cabinet AUTHORISED:

- i. The release of up to £410k of School Condition Allocation (previously known as Capital Maintenance Fund) to support the overall programme during Financial Years 2017/18 and 2018/19.
- ii. The Head of Property Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Growth, Trading Services and Resources and the Director for Resources to manage the programme of works and commit funding within an overall budget of £410k.
- iii. The Head of Property Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Growth, Trading Services and Resources to agree the scope of work necessary to support the conversion of schools to Academies.
- iv. The Head of Property Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Growth, Trading Services and Resources and the Director for Resources to agree the transfer of funds at a suitable point to a school undergoing Academisation.
- v. The Head of Property Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Growth, Trading Services and Resources and the Director for Resources to agree a contribution of up to 10% of the works costs on an annual basis to support the Locally Co-ordinated Voluntary Aided

Programme grant at St Mary's and St John's at North Luffenham during Financial Years 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Reasons for Decision

- 1. The release of funds as set out in Report No. 184/2017 would ensure that the Council could enter into a programme of works to address issues on Council maintained schools and support the transition, where applicable, to Academy Status
- 2. The proposed delegations would ensure that Rutland County Council would be able to move forward without delay.

--00o-Mr A Edwards left the meeting and did not return.
Mrs A Grinney joined the meeting.
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350 TECHNICAL REFORM OF COUNCIL TAX REVIEW

Report No. 165/2017 from the Director for Resources.

The Assistant Director – Finance, Mr Della Rocca, introduced the report, the purpose of which was to seek approval to change the Council Tax empty home discounts and the premium levied on empty homes that have been unoccupied for over two years with effect from 1st April 2018.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- i. The key drivers for undertaking the review were to maximise income received from Council Tax receipts in order to help avoid cutting services; to reduce the negative impacts caused by empty homes; and to ensure that Council Tax liability was applied in an equitable way;
- ii. 81% of those responding to the consultation indicated a preference for the Council looking to increase income before looking at reducing services;
- iii. 79% of those responding to the consultation indicated that individual circumstances should be taken into account and a discretionary discount should be applied to people suffering from genuine financial hardship;
- iv. The changes proposed in the report could yield just under £250k for the authority:
- v. The changes were due to be effective from April 2018, in the interim the Discretionary Fund Policy would be reviewed to ensure there was support for those affected by the changes and suffering financial hardship;
- vi. Applications through the discretionary fund would need to be means tested to ensure that only those with a genuine need would receive support; and
- vii. Those people that needed to move to residential care settings would be eligible for other discounts and so would not be disadvantaged by the changes.

DECISION

- 1. Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the discount for uninhabitable homes be removed and full Council Tax charged from 1st April 2018.
- 2. Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the discounts for empty homes be removed and full Council Tax charged from 1st April 2018.

- 3. Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the premium for long term empty homes be set at 50% from 1st April 2018.
- 4. Cabinet AUTHORISED the Assistant Director Finance, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for portfolio for Growth, Trading Services and Resources (except Finance), to amend the Local Council Tax Support Discretionary Fund Policy to provide support to owners of empty homes who were facing genuine financial hardship.

Reason for Decision

1. The empty home discounts and the premium had not been reviewed since 2013. Given the financial pressures that the Council was facing and its desire to reduce the number of empty homes in its area, it was recommended that the Council remove its discounts and increase the premium. The Council had undertaken a consultation and generally people were supportive of this.

351 ANY ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

No items of urgent business had previously been notified to the Chairman.

---0Oo--The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 10.40 am.
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