



Rutland County Council

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Minutes of the **SPECIAL JOINT MEETING of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held via Zoom on Wednesday, 26th January, 2022 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT:

Councillor G Waller (Chair)
Councillor P Ainsley (Vice Chair)
Councillor N Begy
Councillor K Bool
Councillor A Brown
Councillor W Cross
Councillor J Fox
Councillor R Powell
Councillor L Toseland
Councillor S Webb

APOLOGIES:

Councillor E Baines

ABSENT:

Councillor P Browne

**PORTFOLIO
HOLDER
PRESENT:**

Councillor S Harvey	Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Care
Councillor K Payne	Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Performance, Change and Transformation
Councillor D Wilby	Portfolio Holder for Education and Children's Services

**OFFICERS
PRESENT:**

John Morley	Strategic Director of Adults and Health
Dawn Godfrey	Strategic Director of Children and Families
Saverio Della Rocca	Strategic Director of Resources
Andrew Merry	Finance Manager
Jane Narey	Scrutiny Officer

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES RECEIVED

Councillor Waller welcomed everyone to the Special Joint Scrutiny Committee meeting and informed attendees that she would Chair the meeting and Councillor Ainsley would act as Vice Chair. Apologies were received from Councillor Baines and from the co-opted member Mr Andreas Menzies.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

3 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

There were no petitions, deputations or questions

4 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

There were no questions with notice from members

5 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

There were no notices of motion from members

6 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE FOR A DECISION IN RELATION TO CALL IN OF A DECISION

There were no call-ins

7 DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2022/23

Report No. 01/2022 was received from Councillor K Payne, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Performance, Change and Transformation. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The Special Joint Scrutiny Committee was asked to provide comments and views on the draft budget before the final budget report was recommended by Cabinet to Council in February 2022.
- Members had previously submitted questions regarding the budget to the Strategic Director for Resources and it was agreed that the questions and responses would be published with the minutes.
- Councillor Waller reminded attendees that as the Adults and Health and Children and Young People Scrutiny Committees discussions should relate to Appendix 4 – People Directorate Budget for 2022/23.
- Appendices 5 and 6 for the Places and Resources Directorates respectively would be discussed at the GIR Scrutiny Committee meeting to be held on the 27th January 2022.
- Councillor Powell queried the vacant posts that had been removed from the budget. It was clarified following discussion that only vacant posts no longer required were removed from the budget. The Strategic Director of Resources stated that the number of posts change from year-to-year, so the current year shows the difference between the last year and the current year e.g. Children's Services had 5 vacancies last year but 5 trainee social workers. The trainees were now qualified and had moved into the vacant positions so this year there was a reduction in the number of vacancies by 5. This has saved £126k which was the cost last year to employ interim staff to fill the 5 vacancies until the trainee social workers were qualified.
- Councillor Ainsley queried the £1 million deficit in the High Needs Block. The Strategic Director of Children and Families stated that the SEND Recovery Plan was in place. The plan provided support at a much earlier stage so that a child did

not need to move into the expensive high needs service. The recovery plan was proving effective and would reduce costs moving forward.

- It was confirmed that additional support would be required to undertake the Market Sustainability Assessment within Adult Social Care. The implementation of the Adult social care charging reforms was a massive piece of work involving all Adult Services, in particular the Commissioning Team and Revenue and Benefits Team.
- John Morley also reported that the Care Quality Commission (CQC) would begin inspections of Adult Social Care Services as from April 2023. Deprivation of Liberty (DoLs) forms would be replaced by Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) as from October 2022. This would be a very specialist service requiring specialist staff and admin staff to support this service as it would be covering Children's Services as well as Adult Services.
- Councillor Waller requested that updates regarding forthcoming legislation changes be given by Directors at Member's Briefings e.g. CQC inspections, LPS, Integrated Care Systems (ICS) and Primary Care Networks (PCN) etc.
- John Morley confirmed that the current staffing structure for Adult Services was correct due to a low staff turnover rate. The service had adapted successfully during the pandemic and would continue to be flexible and adaptable to ensure the service remained dynamic.
- The Strategic Director of Children and Families confirmed that the staffing structure for Children's Services had been adapted over the past two years within the budget envelope and would continue to be adapted as the need arises.
- The Committee thanked both Directors for the excellent work being undertaken by their staff and service areas.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee's comments and views on the Draft Revenue and Capital Budget 2022/23 be taken into consideration by Cabinet when recommending the final Revenue and Capital Budget 2022/23 to Council

8 FEES AND CHARGES 2022/23

Report No. 03/2022 was received from Councillor K Payne, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Performance, Change and Transformation. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- a) The Special Joint Scrutiny Committee was asked to provide comments and views before the report was sent to Cabinet in February 2022 for approval.
- b) Councillor Waller reminded attendees that as the Adults and Health and Children and Young People Scrutiny Committees discussions should relate to Appendix 1 – People Directorate proposed fees and charges 2022/23.
- c) Councillor Powell queried the actual cost of the DPA fee. The Strategic Director of Resources stated that this was supported by a cost breakdown. In other areas, if the costs base had not changed then to increase the annual cost in line with inflation was appropriate.
- d) Councillor Waller queried why Admissions fees were set and agreed by the Schools' Forum. The Strategic Director of Children and Families stated that it was a Schools' Forum responsibility to discuss and agree financial issues relating to schools. Agreement from Rutland schools was important if the Local Authority were to cover its costs.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee's comments and views on the Fees and Charges 2022/23 be taken into consideration by Cabinet when recommending the Fees and Charges 2022/23 to Council

9 DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING

The next ordinary meeting of the Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee would be on Thursday, 17th February at 7pm

The next ordinary meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee would be held on Thursday, 24th February at 7pm

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The Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.57 pm.

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MEMBERS' QUESTIONS – PEOPLE DIRECTORATE

Whilst the offering of savings of £126K from Children's Services is cautiously welcomed, please could the vacancies being withdrawn be specified and certainty be given as to how these roles are to be covered by existing posts?

I am mindful that much was made from the outcome of our last Ofsted report about recruitment and I wish to seek assurances that officers are not overstretched and that we wouldn't be placed in a detrimental or critical position without these posts bearing in mind we do not know the true outcome of the impact of Covid and the impact it may have caused our children and young people.

All decisions regarding savings have been taken in the context of wanting to ensure that we do not put children at risk and that we are able to address the issues raised in our previous Ofsted inspection. The recent focused visit from Ofsted indicates that we have been successfully able to do that.

The majority of the saving relates to the removal of 1 management post from early help service and the removal of budget for 5 student social workers. This budget is able to be removed as our student social workers have now all qualified and have taken up permanent social work vacancies in children's social care.

What is the backup plan should these roles in the future be deemed necessary?

The budget includes a 1% contingency for demand led budgets so, should the need arise, we could look to access this. Having access to this contingency is particularly important given that we are making savings and clearly are carrying a risk that we cannot always control "demand". As you say above, there may be longer term impacts rising from Covid that we have not yet materialised and we are monitoring this closely.

14.1.5 Is it correct that there is now only one maintained school, and are there any risks associated with its financial position in the next 12 to 18 months?

The Council current has two maintained schools; however, a school has started the process to join the Rutland Learning Trust (Multi Academy Trust). There is no date for conversion yet. There is one maintained school remaining and this is a voluntary aided school, meaning it has support of diocese. There are currently no financial concerns with the school.

P58 and p59. Removal of vacant posts in Adults and Children's. Why? If they were not needed, why were they in the budget anyway and if they are needed why are they removed? Concern that some departments cut too tight in terms of staffing which risks delivery of services.

Because we are showing how the 22/23 budget has been created. In 21/22 these posts were in the budget and were deemed needed. We worked hard to change practice and manage demand so now we are stating we can remove the posts hence they are not included in the 22/23 budget and shown as a saving.

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