

Executive Scrutiny Committee

16 July 2009

Minutes



	<p>Members Present: Councillors David Yarrow (Chairman), Brian Crowe, Mary O'Connor and John Riley.</p> <p>Representative Member for Education Issues: Tony Little</p> <p>Apologies: Councillor Edward Lavery (Councillor Mary O'Connor substituting)</p> <p>Officer Present: Khalid Ahmed.</p>
3.	<p>Declarations of Interest: All Members declared Personal Interests in those Cabinet items relating to schools, as they were all Governors of various schools within the Borough.</p>
4.	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2009</p> <p>Agreed as an accurate record subject to an amendment to Minute No. 2 as amended at the Council meeting on 2 July 2009 – the last sentence, so that it reads: “These responses would be sent to Members of this Committee by email, and based on this information, Members would be asked to email or telephone the Chairman on whether they were content with the information supplied or whether they recommended the calling-in of the particular item. The majority of the Committee Members would have to agree to the call-in request for it to proceed. The Chairman would then advise the Head of Democratic Services.”</p>
5.	<p>Exclusion of the press and public: It was agreed that all items of business were considered in public.</p>

6.

Decisions of Cabinet – To consider the decisions made at the Cabinet meeting on for 16 July 2009

Members gave consideration to the Cabinet reports of 16 July 2009 and after careful consideration Members decided not to call-in any decision made by the Cabinet at their meeting.

However, officers were asked for clarification on a number of issues detailed in reports. These were:

Item 11 - Council Budget - 2008/9 Revenue and Capital Outturn - Could officers explain in more detail the £246k under spend in Education and Children Services, under Director & Youth Services, paragraph 3, page 243 of the Cabinet agenda? What was the reason for the staffing vacancies, have the posts been removed?

Subsequent to the meeting officers provided Members with the following response.

“£50k of this under spend was due to the departure in year of the Deputy Director for Learning and School Effectiveness. £65k was an adjustment following the centralisation of Early Retirement Charges which had been borne by the service. The under spend in Youth services was staffing costs associated with the new mobile bus. As the purchase was delayed, staff costs were not incurred until later in the year. There was a £40k under spend due to delayed recruitment in Connexions, a £30k under spend was reported this year. There was a further one-off saving in Connexions due to the early completion of a project”.

Item 11 - Council Budget - 2008/9 Revenue and Capital Outturn - Could officers explain in more detail the £281k Pressure in Education and Children Service, under Resources, Policy & Performance, paragraph 4, page 243 of the Cabinet agenda? What was the shortfall of the grant for Barnhill PFI and what were the additional payments?

Subsequent to the meeting officers provided Members with the following response.

“The grant shortfall on the Barnhill PFI amounts to approximately £140k. This represents the difference between the funding allocated to the Council via Revenue Support Grant and the amounts payable under the contract. The contract was reviewed during the course of the year. The payments required to the sinking fund had not been recalculated to take account of benchmarking data and some items had been charged to the sinking fund in error. Discussions were had with the contractor and an agreed amount to top up the fund was agreed by both parties”.

Item 12 - Council Budget - 2008/9 Revenue and Capital Outturn - Could officers explain the significant under spends on Extended Schools - New Grant and Early Years Foundation Stage - Surestart as detailed under Education and Children Service, Capital paragraph 7, page 245 of the Cabinet agenda? Members asked that for future reports there should be an extra column, giving for example, explanations on under spends/overspends.

Subsequent to the meeting officers provided Members with the following response.

	<p>“This was a three-year grant allocation and any under/over spends can be carried from one year to the next. The annual split of the allocation was determined by the DCSF and was not based on the Council’s expected spend. The programme was currently behind schedule due to delays in time involved to agree & allocate funding to schools, release of funding, procurement of tenders and planning permission”.</p> <p>Item 12 - Council Budget - Month 2 2009/10 - Revenue and Capital Monitoring - On pages 284 (paragraph 8) and 285 (paragraph 10) - Members asked for greater detail on these paragraphs. i.e. identifying the savings of £653k (paragraph 8) and what was the timescale for agreeing which areas the savings would be allocated to (paragraph 10)?</p> <p>Subsequent to the meeting officers provided Members with the following response.</p> <p><i>“The Education & Children’s Services Service Review identified that both outcomes for children could be improved and savings made through the development of prevention and early intervention services. There are a range of projects underway at different stages of implementation. These would also address the short-term pressures arising from Baby P. The LSCB Baby P project plan and the Children and Families Trust Plan set out the actions and report on progress. The group was undertaking complex profiling of costs and savings associated with these developments including reviewing grant allocations to seek any flexibility in applying the grant, for example, within the Early Years Service, to ensure services were focused on prevention and early intervention”.</i></p> <p>Resolved –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the decisions made by Cabinet at their meeting on 16 July 2009 be noted and no call-in be made of any decision. 2. That officers be asked to provide clarification on the issues outlined above. 	
	<p>Meeting closed at 9.00pm Next meeting: 24 September 2009 at the rising of Cabinet</p>	

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Khalid Ahmed on 01895 250833. Circulation of these minutes are to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.