

MINUTES of a meeting of the **CABINET MEMBER – CHILDREN’S SERVICES AND SAFEGUARDING** held on 8 June 2021.**PRESENT**

Cabinet Member - Councillor J Patten

Also in attendance – Councillors A Dale, R George, G Hickton and N Gourlay

01/21 **MINUTES RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Young People held on 13 April 2021 be received.

02/21 **REVENUE OUTTURN 2020-21** The Cabinet Member was informed of the revenue out-turn of the Young People’s portfolio for 2020/21.

The net controllable budget for the portfolio was £129.322m including additional allocations of £7.223m to fund the impact of Covid-19. The revenue outturn statement for 2020/21 showed a year-end overspend of £3.592m. Reserves of £0.204m which have no further commitments against them have been released during 2020-21 to offset this overspend. After the application of these reserves the revenue outturn was an overspend of £3.388m.

The outturn position included £1.390 million of Dedicated Schools Grant income transferred to contribute to costs incurred within Children’s Services supporting Early Help services and children with additional needs.

The significant areas which make up the outturn were detailed in the report.

Key variances included Placements for Children in Care/Unable to remain at home (overspend £7.875m); Children’s Safeguarding services (underspend £0.014m); Early Help and Preventative services (underspend £2.336m); Home to School Transport (overspend £1.m); Education Support services (underspend £0.655m); Pensions payable to former teachers and other staff (overspend £0.321m); and Unallocated budget (underspend £3.189m. These figures include all additional costs incurred due to Covid-19 and the funding provided to cover those costs. Identified Covid-19 costs and their funding sources were detailed in the report.

The value of the savings initiatives which have been identified for implementation in the current year was £3.013m and these were detailed in the report. It was calculated that £1.215m of savings have been achieved by the year-end.

Growth items and one off funding in the 2020-21 budget included Social Worker recruitment (£1.300m ongoing, £1.300m one-off); Placement demand Pressures (£11.000m ongoing); Home to School Transport SEN (£1.000 ongoing);

£0.971m one-off); SEND assessment and planning (£0.600m ongoing); Increase in Special Guardianship placements (£0.336m ongoing); Foster Carers (£0.100m ongoing); Care Leavers (£0.498m one-off); Child Protection (£0.500m ongoing); Children in Care Legal Proceedings (£1.100m one-off); Support to Achieving Great Futures (£0.108m one-off); Preventative Support to Families (£1.000m one-off); Elective Home Education (£0.207m one-off); Service Transformation (£0.438m one-off); and Quality Assurance SEND & Fostering (£0.214m one-off).

Details of the earmarked reserves totalling £6.912m and the debt position were also reported.

RESOLVED to note the report.

03/21 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT OUTTURN 2020-21

The Cabinet Member received a report on the Revenue Budget outturn of the Dedicated Schools Grant (Young People portfolio) for 2020-21. The significant areas of expenditure and key variances were detailed in the report.

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and 6th form grant income received by the Authority in 2020-21 was £368.032m. This, together with the release of holding rates refunds in respect of school of £0.721m, totalled income available to fund expenditure of £368.753m in 202-21.

Full year expenditure amounted to £370.037m and compared with the income there was an overspend of £1.284m. However, this included an underspend of £1.370m which was ring-fenced to schools and a further £0.850m underspend of school growth funding, £0.322m of which has been earmarked to contribute to pre and post opening grants to planned new schools. The overspend falling to the Authority was therefore £2.976m.

The Authority would report a DSG deficit reserve at the end of 2020-21 of £6.187m. Other DSG committed reserves totalling £5.030m offset this deficit reserve within the Authority's accounts and the reported DSG position was a net deficit reserve of £1.157m.

Following consultation with Local Authorities (LA) and other stakeholders, the Department for Education have amended the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations and a DSG deficit must be carried forward to be dealt with from future years' DSG income, unless the Secretary of State authorises the LA not to do this. The Schools Forum as a first step agreed in January 2020 to allocate only some of the 2020-21 Pupil Growth fund within the Schools Block. The Forum agreed to leave £1.325m of the £3.428m grant for 2020-21 unallocated as a positive contribution towards the shortfall and the reported position for 2020-21 reflects this contribution.

RESOLVED to note the report.

