

EDUCATION BUDGET SUB-COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 2 May 2013

Present:

Councillor Neil Reddin FCCA (Chairman)
Councillor Nicky Dykes (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Nicholas Bennett J.P.

Councillor Stephen Wells, Portfolio Holder for Education

Also Present:

Dr Tessa Moore, Assistant Director: Education
Robert Bollen, Education Strategic Capital Manager
David Bradshaw, Head of Education and Care Services Finance
James Mullender, Senior Accountant

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lydia Buttinger and Councillor David McBride.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman noted that Declarations of Interest made by Members at the meeting of Education PDS Committee on 12th June 2012 were taken as read.

3 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions had been received from members of the public.

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 FEBRUARY 2013 AND MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman noted that a number of the issues arising from the minutes would be considered during the meeting.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2013 be agreed.

5 POST COMPLETION REPORTS

Report ED13055

The Sub-Committee considered a report setting out post completion reports on works carried out for the expansion of Bickley and Princes Plain Primary Schools, the rebuilding of The Highway Primary School and the creation of the Hawes

Down Centre. The Capital Programme Procedures required that a post completion review be carried out within 12 months of the completion of schemes that were included within the programme to assess whether the original scheme objectives were achieved, and whether the scheme was completed on time and within the original budget.

In reviewing the post completion reports, Members were concerned that all four projects had seen overspends on the tender estimate. One project had overspent by a significant amount and the Local Authority was currently pursuing a claim against its consultant to recoup some of these losses. The reasons for overspends varied across the projects and included spend on required furniture and equipment, the cost of accommodation moves, and additional tarmacing and roof works.

Members were advised that there was a set allowance for furniture and equipment for each school project and that this was only exceeded where there was an educational imperative to do so and where funds were available. The Head of Education and Care Services Finance noted that schools were required to fund any required items outside of the scope of their project. In response to a question from Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP, the Assistant Director: Education confirmed that where appropriate furniture and equipment were reused across the Local Authority's property portfolio to ensure efficient use of resources and reduce waste.

The Portfolio Holder for Education noted that costs had been incurred through out of hours electrical works in one project and queried whether this should be funded by the school. The Education Strategic Capital Manager confirmed that there had been some out of hours work undertaken in one project due to impact on school operation, but this cost had also been incurred to ensure the scheme was delivered on time.

Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP highlighted the importance of ensuring that the procurement process was robust in identifying all possible costs when developing the specification for any project. It would be useful for Members to have an overview of the Council's approach to project management, with a view to encouraging a holistic approach with a single oversight for all aspects of project delivery (including procurement) to minimise unforeseen project costs. Following discussion, Members requested that an overview of the Council's approach to project management be reported to a future meeting of the Executive and Resources PDS Committee.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) An overview of the Council's approach to project management be reported to a future meeting of the Executive and Resources PDS Committee; and,**
- 2) The findings of the below post completion reviews be recommended to the Education Portfolio Holder for approval:**

- **Expansion of Bickley Primary School by 210 pupils;**
- **Expansion of Princes Plain Primary School by 105 pupils;**
- **Rebuilding of The Highway Primary School; and,**
- **Creation of the Hawes Down Centre in West Wickham to provide a specialist facility to deliver services for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities and their families.**

6 ASSET MANAGEMENT PLANNING: SCHOOLS PLANNED MAINTENANCE

Report ED13056

The Sub-Committee considered a report setting out the proposed 2013/14 Education Planned Maintenance Programme and Suitability Programme.

The Local Authority had a five-year maintenance programme on education properties that was reviewed annually based on the funding available, condition of facilities and urgent items that had arisen during the year. The Local Authority also provided assistance to improve the security and suitability of schools as well as operating the Seed Challenge programme that part-funded priority works at Local Authority maintained schools in the Borough. The Education Planned Maintenance Programme and Suitability Programme and Seed Challenge Programme were funded by 100% Department for Education Capital Maintenance Grant.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The proposed 2013/14 School Planned Maintenance and Suitability Programme be noted;**
- 2) The list of schemes to be included in the 2013/14 School Planned Maintenance and Suitability Programme be noted; and,**
- 3) Officers be asked to develop a Seed Challenge Programme for 2014/15 for future consideration by the Portfolio Holder for Education.**

7 UPDATE ON THE BASELINE REVIEW OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Report ED13054

The Sub-Committee considered an information briefing providing an update on the baseline review of school improvement services. The services included in the review comprised School Standards and Achievement, Pupil Support, the Education Business Partnership and Children in Care. A formal consultation process had been undertaken in Autumn 2012 in response to proposals to rationalise and restructure these services where appropriate, with the new structure coming into effect on 1st April 2013.

In considering the baseline review of the Education Business Partnership, the

Assistant Director: Education confirmed that the service had been due to be reduced by 1.6 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) posts, but as there was a healthy income generated, the income target for the service had been raised instead, making a saving to the Revenue Support Grant of £91,150. There were now fewer statutory duties related to this service; however a lot of work was undertaken with young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) and young offenders which benefitted other Local Authority services. The Education Business Partnership also worked to support alternate provision for pupils in Year 10 and 11 who could not be placed in Bromley schools through signposting pupils to an appropriate package of support for their needs, which could include a work experience placement.

The Assistant Director: Education confirmed that Nina Newell, Early Years Manager had been appointed the Interim Head of Standards and Achievement and would be overseeing commissioning and quality assurance to fulfil the Local Authority's statutory duties of intervention and support in schools causing concern. Funding for the remaining vacant post in the service would be used to commissioning 15 day packages of work with schools that required support. The Assistant Director: Education confirmed that the Pupil Place Planning and Admissions role had been filled on an interim basis for two days per week. Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP highlighted the need to ensure that the target for increased online school admissions and free school meal applications continued to be prioritised.

The Pupil Support Team had been reduced from 17.7FTE posts to 7FTE posts to prioritise delivery of the Council's statutory duties, including supporting a Local Authority action plan for improvements in any school causing concern and delivering training and guidance required by the Department for Education for national assessments and tests. A small amount of essential school support continued in the form of early intervention in schools at risk of failing an inspection but the sold service element for school improvement was not full cost recovery and had been ceased.

The Assistant Director: Education advised Members that the Children in Care Team worked to fulfil the Council's statutory duties for supporting Looked After Children and for monitoring academic achievement of children in care. This service was considered essential and the service budget had been cut by the equivalent of 1FTE post.

In response to a question from the Portfolio Holder for Education around the level of attainment of Looked After Children in Bromley, the Assistant Director: Education confirmed that the progress of every Looked After Child in the Borough was tracked and that each Looked After Child had unique support and education needs. Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP suggested that the attainment of Looked After Children might be an area for the Education PDS Committee to consider in more depth in 2013/14. The Portfolio Holder for Education noted that the Children's Champion had been looking closely at this issue.

RESOLVED that the information briefing be noted.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members considered the Education Division Budget Book 2013/14, which would be provided to all Members of the Education PDS Committee following Annual Council.

RESOLVED that the issues raised be noted.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Education Budget Sub-Committee would be held at 7.00pm on Tuesday 23rd July 2013.

The Meeting ended at 7.48 pm

Chairman