

REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE No. 01/2014-15

COUNCIL 23 FEBRUARY 2015

Chair: Councillor Gideon Bull

Deputy Chair: Councillor Pippa Connor

INTRODUCTION

1. This report to full Council arises from the Special Overview and Scrutiny Committee Call-In meeting held on 20 February 2015 in response to the Call-in of decision CAB809, specifically resolution no. 3, taken by Cabinet on 10 February 2015.
2. The Call-In was submitted on 16 February 2015, at 15:20hrs, signed by Councillor Sarah Elliot and countersigned by Councillor David Beacham, Councillor Liz Morris, Councillor Gail Engert and Councillor Clive Carter.
3. Cabinet's decision CAB809, resolution no. 3, proposed that full Council, at its meeting on 23 February 2015, approve the 2015/16 revenue budget and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2015-2018, pending final inflation allocation to priority budgets. The MTFS can be found on pages 25-89 of the full Council agenda pack.
4. During consideration of the Call-In the Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the deputations from the following people/ groups:
 - a. Save Autism Services
 - b. Haynes [Day Centre] Relatives Support Group
 - c. Melian Mansfield and Zena Brabazon in relation to children's centre proposals
 - d. Seema Chandwani on the Youth Service proposals.
5. The Council has two options when considering this report:
 - a. The Council may decide not to take any further action, in which case the decision is implemented immediately.
 - b. The Council may refer the decision back to Cabinet, in which case Cabinet has 5 working days to reconsider the decision before taking a final decision.
6. Once a final decision has been made there is no further right of call-in.

WE AGREE that

1. The decision taken by the Cabinet on 10 February 2015 was inside the Council's Policy and Budgetary Framework and that further action should be taken.

2. The Council confirms its commitment for Bruce Grove Youth Centre. This commitment includes retaining the Youth Centre staff, employing qualified youth workers and keeping the centre open.
3. The proposal to close the Roundway Centre be withdrawn and £300,000 capital investment be earmarked from the Council's reserve funds to improve the building and keep it open.
4. The proposal to merge the Youth Service and the Youth Offending Team be deferred until a Youth Strategy is in place.
5. The proposal to close the Haven Day Centre be deferred for at least 12 months until a proper independent study is undertaken to ensure that Neighbourhoods Connect is capable of delivering the service that it has been commissioned for and that people with high care needs who would have used the Haven are confident that the Neighbourhoods Connect service delivers these outcomes and services instead.

The future of the Haven Centre should be the subject of a specific Cabinet report once Neighbourhoods Connect had been implemented and reviewed.

6. The proposed cuts to children's centres be deferred until an independent review is undertaken into the current services provided, including confirmation of how many children's centres will be closed and how services will be re-provided in order to prevent vulnerable children from not accessing services that they are entitled to.

Post-meeting point of clarification in relation to Recommendation b above:

The Council's Chief Financial Officer subsequently advised that an additional £730,000 per annum (revenue) would be required to keep the Roundway building open. This is on the basis that the saving proposal in the Cabinet MTFS report assumes the reduction of these revenue costs consequent upon closure.