

Hampshire

At an Extraordinary Meeting of Hampshire County Council held at The Castle, Winchester on 26 April 2011.

Chairman:

p Councillor Carol Leversha

Vice-Chairman:

p Councillor Anna McNair Scot

Councillor:
p Frederick Allgood, JP
p Mrs Charlotte Bailey
p Ian Beagley
p Ray Bolton
p Alan Broadhurst
p John Bryant
a Ann Buckley
p Rita Burgess
p Adam Carew
p Christopher Carter
a Keith Chapman
p Peter Chegwyn
a Vaughan Clarke
p Adrian Collett
p Brian Collin
p Mark Cooper
a Sam Darragh
p Brian Dash
p Colin Davidovitz
p Phryn Dickens
p Alan Dowden
p David Drew
p Peter Edgar
p Dr. Ray Ellis
a Adrian Evans
p Keith Evans
p Liz Fairhurst
p Jane Frankum
p Mike Geddes
a Andrew Gibson
p Jonathan Glen
p Brian Gurden
p David Harrison
p Edward Heron
p Felicity Hindson, MBE
p Geoff Hockley
p Keith House
p Ronald Hussey

Councillor:
a Sam James
p Andrew Joy
p David Keast
p Mark Kemp-Gee
p Mel Kendal
p Roger Kimber
p Tim Knight
p Rupert Kyrle
a Keith Mans
p Peter Kent Mason
p Alexis McEvoy
p Robin McIntosh
p Roz Muschamp
p Pam Mutton
p Eric Neal
p Frank Pearce
p Roy Perry
p Jackie Porter
p Roger Price, JP
p Jenny Radley
p Stephen Reid
p Alan Rice, TD
p Steve Rippon-Swaine
p Angela Roling
p David Simpson
a Elaine Still
p Bruce Tennent
p Tom Thacker
p Christopher Thomas
p Ken Thornber, CBE
p Marilyn Tucker
p John Wall
p Alan Weeks
p John K. West
p Patricia West
p Sharyn Wheale
p Seán D. T. Woodward

182. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ann Buckley, Keith Chapman, Vaughan Clarke, Sam Darragh, Adrian Evans, Andrew Gibson, Sam James, Keith Mans and Elaine Still.

183. STATEMENT FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive advised Members that a legal challenge had been received regarding Children's Centres. Members were reminded by the Chief Executive that whilst there were proposals which had been the subject of public consultation, so far no decision had been made on the future of Children's Centres, and Members were advised to be mindful of this fact in their debate to avoid any suggestion of pre-determination.

184. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members who believed they had a personal or prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting were asked to declare that interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the County Council's Code of Conduct, to consider whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter is discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with paragraph 12 of the Code. The declaration should be made at the time of the relevant debate.

At this point in proceedings, the Monitoring Officer advised that Members should be mindful of two likely scenarios where they may have an interest:

- Member of Sure Start Campaign or signed Children's Centres petition;
- Involvement in the management of Children's Centres, for example, by holding a position on a Children's Centre Board.

The Monitoring Officer further advised that whilst the declaration of an interest was a matter for individual Members to decide, in her view in both scenarios such interests would amount to personal interests and would therefore need to be declared as such at the appropriate time, but further added that in her view any such interest would not be considered as prejudicial so as to stop Members from taking part in the debate and voting thereon.

185. CHAIRMAN'S PROPOSALS

Pursuant to Standing Order 19(e), the Chairman suspended Standing Order 21(a) to allow the deputations to be received.

Pursuant to Standing Order 19(e), the Chairman suspended Standing Order 17.1 to allow the Notice of Motion referred to in Minute No. 190 to be received.

186. DEPUTATIONS

The Council received deputations in the following order concerning the future of Children's Centres in Hampshire:-

- Rebecca Frost – Resident from Locks Heath, Hampshire;
- Clair-Louise McLennan – Resident from Eastleigh, Hampshire;
- Colin Smith - Carroll Centre, Winchester, Hampshire;
- Kirsty Aksoy-Gell – Resident from Lee on the Solent, Gosport, Hampshire.

187. LEADERS STATEMENT

The Leader addressed the Council to explain the background and purpose of the Extraordinary meeting which had been requisitioned by six Members under the terms of the Council's Constitution to discuss a Notice of Motion about the Children's Centre proposals.

He informed the Council that this meeting could not make a decision because the consultation responses had yet to be analysed and a report written. The consultation ended on 15 April. Secondly, he reported that because a legal challenge to the proposals in the budget had been mounted, all parties had been advised not to do anything that could compromise their respective positions.

Furthermore, he explained the background and impact of the reductions in Government Grant and how the proposals for Children's Centres were considered to be the most effective way to reduce costs while maintaining frontline services and access to them.

188. CHILDREN'S CENTRE BRIEFING NOTE

The Council received and noted a briefing note from the Director of Children's Services (Item 6 in the Minute Book) on Children's Centres, their background and purpose, and the process of consultation to date.

189. PETITION

The Chairman advised that a petition had been received and duly verified and acknowledged by the Chief Executive's department. Under the County Council's Petition Scheme if 32,000 signatures (circa 2.5% of the population of Hampshire) or more are received the petition can be debated in full Council. The requisite number of signatures had not been attained. However, the Chairman advised that as the Notice of Motion on the agenda related to the subject matter of the petition then she was minded to allow it to be referred to at the meeting.

190. **NOTICE OF MOTION CHILDREN'S CENTRES**

The following Councillors declared personal interests as either Members on Children's Centre Partnership Boards or as a result of being a Member of Sure Start Campaign or having signed the Children's Centres petition;

Councillor	Interest
Frederick Allgood J.P.	Grandson attends a Children's Centre and he also assisted his local centre
Mrs Charlotte Bailey	Supported Children's Centre with devolved Member budget and signed the petition
Alan Broadhurst	Supported Children's Centre with devolved Member budget and signed the petition
Christopher Carter	Supported Children's Centre with devolved Member budget
Brian Collin	Member on Children's Centre Board and donated money to the campaign
Brian Dash	Member on Children's Centre Board and signed petition
Phrynnette Dickens	Supported Children's Centre with devolved Member budget and signed the petition
Alan Dowden	Signed the petition
Liz Fairhurst	Voluntary work with local Children's Centre
Jane Frankum	Supported Children's Centre with devolved Member budget and Member on Children's Centre Board
Jonathan Glen	Member on Children's Centre Board
David Harrison	Member on Children's Centre Board
Keith House	Member on Children's Centre Board and signed petition
Andrew Joy	Supported Children's Centre with devolved Member budget
Mel Kendal	Supported Children's Centre with devolved Member budget
Roger Kimber	Member on Children's Centre Board
Carol Leversha	Supported Children's Centre with devolved Member budget
Peter Kent Mason	Signed petition and donated money via Hampshire Police Authority grant
Robin McIntosh	Supported Children's Centre with devolved Member budget
Roz Muschamp	Supported Children's Centre with devolved Member budget
Jackie Porter	Supported and raised profile of local Children's Centre
Roger Price J. P.	Member on Children's Centre Board and supported Children's Centre with devolved Member budget

Councillor	Interest
Jenny Radley	Supported Children's Centre with devolved Member budget
Bruce Tennent	Signed petition
Christopher Thomas	Member on Children's Centre Board and signed petition
Tom Thacker	Member on Children's Centre Board
Alan Weeks	Signed petition
Pat West	Supported Children's Centre with devolved Member budget
Sean D. T. Woodward	Member on Children's Centre Board

The Council considered the Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Jackie Porter, seconded by Councillor Chris Thomas, as follows:

"This Council recognises the importance of early years provision provided by Surestart and applauds the measurable, positive impact on the lives of children and families. The Council acknowledges the consequent strength of support for the existing Surestart Children's Centre provision in Hampshire and notes that the intended changes to the service by the County Council are at odds with the will of a large number of the residents. Further, it acknowledges the range of people helped by Surestart Children's Centres, from any parents who are terrified at the prospect of parenthood or are suffering from post natal depression to parents struggling to bring up children who have been diagnosed as having SEN or who are disabled.

Furthermore, this Council acknowledges that a child of four who is well adjusted socially and well developed in language, behavioural and social skills is more likely to be successful in later formal education and in the world of work after education. Investment in Early Years Intervention, using the intervention grant, we believe will reduce the burgeoning liabilities for child protection.

Therefore, this Council resolves to retain and promote the range and take up of services from pre-natal through to school entry in its Children's Centres.

Specifically:-

1. To reverse the intention of taking £6m out of the Surestart Children's Centres budget.
2. Calls for a proper internal review of staffing levels now that the service is just settling down before any final decisions are made.
3. To continue to integrate the services in Surestart Children's Centres with health and formal schooling and bring in further local partnerships with wider services aimed at supporting families with young children."

Councillor Stephen Reid, seconded by Councillor Peter Edgar, proposed the following amendment in accordance with Standing Order 27:

“Delete all after:

"This council recognises the importance of early years provision provided by Sure Start and applauds the measurable, positive impact on the lives of children and families.”

And insert:

“The Council welcomes the consequent strength of support for the existing Sure Start Children's Centre provision in Hampshire. Further, it acknowledges the range of people helped by Sure Start Children's Centres, including parents who are anxious at the prospect of parenthood or are suffering from post natal depression; parents struggling to bring up children who have been diagnosed as having SEN or who are disabled.

Furthermore, this Council acknowledges that a child of four who is well adjusted socially and well developed in language, behavioural and social skills is more likely to be successful in later formal education and in the world of work after education, and is providing effective and carefully targeted investment in Early Years Intervention. Using the intervention grant, we believe, will help reduce the burgeoning liabilities for child protection.

This Council recognises the economic pressures faced by the Coalition Government, as a result of the dire state of the national economy left by the former Labour government and accepts that the Coalition Government needs to bring public expenditure back under control and consequently has been obliged to reduce its grants to local councils.

In addressing these economic pressures this Council has never waived in its resolve to retain and promote the range and take up of services from pre-natal through to school entry in its Children's Centres recognising that the greatest need, and therefore range of services, will be in areas of economic and social deprivation and specifically:-

Declares its intention to maintain a comprehensive service of Children's Centres whilst seeking economies where possible in costs of management and other bureaucracy.

Welcomes the internal review of staffing levels now being undertaken by the Director of Children's Services in a quest to identify economies that will not adversely impact on front line service provision that will be enlightened by taking account of the responses from the current consultation on the Council's proposals.

To continue to integrate the services in Sure Start Children's Centres with health and formal schooling and bring in further local partnerships with wider services aimed at supporting families with young children.

Deplores the irresponsible and capricious behaviour of some opposition members who have misused the position they hold, to misrepresent the Council's intentions and have caused unnecessary expense, worry and anxiety, particularly amongst the young and vulnerable families at a critical time in their lives and who depend so much upon the support they receive from these facilities"

After a lengthy debate, the Amendment proposed by Councillor Stephen Reid to the Notice of Motion was put to the vote. The majority of Members supported the amendment which therefore became the substantive proposition, and the original Motion proposed by Councillor Jackie Porter was displaced.

The Council then voted on the substantive proposition. The majority of Members supported it and therefore it was carried.

RESOLVED:

That the Substantive Notice of Motion be adopted.

(The meeting closed at 3.10 p.m)