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AT A MEETING of the Hampshire 2050, Corporate Services and Resources
Select Committee of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle,
Winchester on Thursday 6 March 2025

Chairman:

* Councillor Jonathan Glen

* Councillor Rod Cooper	* Councillor Derek Mellor
* Councillor Prad Bains	* Councillor Rob Mocatta
* Councillor Graham Burgess	Councillor Tanya Park
* Councillor Adrian Collett	* Councillor Stephen Philpott
* Councillor Alex Crawford	* Councillor Stephen Reid
* Councillor Juliet Henderson	Councillor Patricia Stallard
* Councillor Keith House	* Councillor Bill Withers Lt Col (Retd)
* Councillor Peter Latham	* Councillor Malcolm Wallace

*Present

Also present with the agreement of the Chairman: Councillors Nick Adams-King, Leader and Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services. Jan Warwick, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services, Zoe Huggins, Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 (Climate Change, Culture and Partnerships) and HR, Communications and Performance, Roz Chadd, Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and Steve Forster, Executive Member for Education.

80. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Tanya Park and Patricia Stallard. Councillors Jackie Porter and Andrew Joy attended as the respective deputies.

81. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3, Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 5 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

82. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2025

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed

83. DEPUTATIONS

Deputations were received from the following, who all spoke against the recommendations:

- Heather Blades, Alfie Nelson and Jackie Davis
- Clare Martin
- Sara Willoughby and Kevin Harcombe
- Jennifer McCavour and 2 students from local schools
- Lin Gell
- Pamela Charlwood

County Councillors Lesley Meenaghan, Mike Ford, Pal Hayre and Joanne Burton also attended to speak as local Members.

The Chairman thanked the deputations for attending to speak and sharing their experiences with the Committee.

84. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman confirmed that Members had received correspondence from Eric Bidwell who did not support the proposed change of use of Stubbington Study Centre site.

The Chairman had also received correspondence from Derek Kelson who did not support the closure of the Stubbington Study Centre.

85. **PROPOSALS RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF A SPECIALIST SECURE WELFARE CHILDREN'S HOME - LESS EXEMPT APPENDICES**

The Select Committee pre-scrutinised a report going to Cabinet (item 6 in the minute book) on the provision of a specialist secure welfare children's home in Stubbington, Fareham.

During questions of officers, the following points were clarified:

- There were no current plans to invest further in Stubbington Study Centre
- An Asset of Community Value was being determined by Fareham Borough Council but the decision by Cabinet was around repurposing the site as opposed to selling it.
- Stubbington did not contribute to the Outstanding OFSTED of Children's Services and was a separate non statutory service. Swanwick was inspected annually by OFSTED.
- 25-30% of children placed at Swanwick were Hampshire children, and it was important to note that other Hampshire children were placed in other local authority secure homes.
- At any one time up to 40 local authorities are looking to place children in secure units with only one or two beds available.
- There was no alternative site for Stubbington Study Centre should the proposals be refused.
- The Government grant did not cover the purchase of land to facilitate a new site, but timescales and need was a driver for finding a facility.
- Hampshire had not put in a bid for the grant but had been approached due to the current relationship and Outstanding rating of Swanwick Lodge.

- The recommendation was based on the proposals around Swanwick Lodge and it was not possible to say whether the future of Stubbington Study Centre would have been up for discussion in any event.
- Although Swanwick is the secure home for the south region, because of demand and need, children placed at Swanwick come from across England and Wales .
- The financial figures in the exempt part of the pack could not be shared due to the commercial sensitivity – particularly around Stubbington Study Centre, which was in a competitive market. This was the view of legal officers, including the Monitoring Officer and disclosing it would be prejudicial.
- Swanwick Lodge was built around 1995/1996 and was coming to the end of its life, but would remain operative until the new building was complete in 2030.

At this stage, an amendment was proposed by Councillor Graham Burgess and seconded by Councillor Rob Mocatta as follows:

- Commend Officers for their hard work on identifying sites, emphasises the committee recognises the challenges of identifying any alternative sites within the time frame and the criteria prescribed by Government
- Recognise the pressing need for a secure children’s home to support Hampshire’s most vulnerable children
- Recommends Cabinet ask officers to review any additional sites which may become available as a consequence of recent or upcoming decisions
- Recommends Cabinet ask officers to approach district and borough council to see if they have any land holding which may offer a suitable site
- Recommends Cabinet request an extension of time from Department of Education to enable consideration of any alternative site

Councillor Malcolm Wallace then proposed an additional bullet point, seconded by Councillor Prad Bains as follows:

- The Select Committee recommends that Cabinet requests Officers to work with Stubbington Study Centre on a long-term business plan.

This was supported by Councillors Burgess and Mocatta to be incorporated as part of the original amendment.

In debate, Members felt that not enough work had been done on finding an suitable alternative and more research could be done. Some Councillors shared how work on the project could and should have started much sooner and in a more transparent way.

Members acknowledged the demand and importance of premises like Swanwick Lodge, but also recognised the benefits of Stubbington Study Centre to thousands of children each year.

The full amendment was voted upon and supported by the Committee and was therefore carried.

RESOLVED:

That the Select Committee::

1. Commends Officers for their hard work on identifying sites, emphasises the Committee recognises the challenges of identifying any alternative sites within the time frame and the criteria prescribed by Government
2. Recognises the pressing need for a secure children's home to support Hampshire's most vulnerable children
3. Recommends Cabinet ask officers to review any additional sites which may become available as a consequence of recent or upcoming decisions
4. Recommends Cabinet ask officers to approach district and borough councils to see if they have any land holding which may offer a suitable site
5. Recommends Cabinet request an extension of time from Department of Education to enable consideration of any alternative site
6. Recommends that Cabinet requests Officers to work with Stubbington study centre on a long-term business plan

86. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The meeting did not go into exempt session and therefore there was no requirement to move the resolution to exclude the press and public.

87. **PROPOSALS RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF A SPECIALIST SECURE WELFARE CHILDREN'S HOME - EXEMPT APPENDICES**

The exempt appendices were considered alongside the open report at the meeting.

Chairman