

LEAD MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND INCLUSION, SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY

DECISIONS made by the Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability, Councillor Bob Standley, on 14 September 2018 at County Hall, Lewes

Councillor John Barnes spoke on item 4 (see minute 12)
Councillor Kathryn Field spoke on item 4 (see minute 12)
Councillor Trevor Webb spoke on item 4 (see minute 12)

9 DECISIONS MADE BY THE LEAD CABINET MEMBER ON 16 JULY 2018

9.1 The Lead Member approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2018.

10 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

10.1 Councillor Trevor Webb declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in that he is a coordinator of a Hastings music group.

11 REPORTS

11.1 The report referred to below is included in the minute book.

12 EAST SUSSEX MUSIC - PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

12.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Children's Services regarding the East Sussex Music Service and the proposed next steps for this service.

12.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to –

1) note and welcome the identification of new additional savings of £49,095 in 2018/19 (full year effect of £84,346 from 2019/20) which will put the service in a sustainable position to balance the budget and retain the small group and individual instrumental tuition service within the Music Service; and

2) agree that officers proceed with further exploration of making the Music Service sustainable in the longer term by considering whether to award a concession contract for the provision of the County's music service as detailed in the report.

Reason

12.3

1) We knew that the decision to consult on the closure of the instrumental part of the service would result in widespread public debate. Without a public consultation it is unlikely that we would have been able to find a positive way forward for the Instrumental tuition service.

2) The first task was to close the budget gap. This has been achieved by continuing with the plans to implement part of the proposals that had previously been consulted on and by the

identification of new savings which emerged through the public consultation. This will result in a balanced budget from 2019/20 which would allow time to explore an alternative business model in more detail. The number of people indicating that they would be prepared to pay more for lessons, in order to retain the instrumental tuition service, highlights the degree to which the service is valued and now provides us with greater confidence that we could potentially offset future modest increases in cost or loss of income.

3) Although all proposals that provided an alternative to closure were welcomed, having reviewed the Hounslow/Croydon model we do not consider this to be the best option for the future of the service as it would not deliver a substantial reduction in operating cost, would potentially reduce efficiency of delivery that has been achieved since restructuring in 2014 and would result in a loss of teachers' terms and conditions and a drop in salary for the majority of teaching staff.

4) The expression of interest that emerged through the public consultation, which has led to the option of awarding a concession contract, potentially to an existing music service, provides the opportunity to explore a model that would deliver significant efficiency in management and administration, providing a more robust financial position for the new organisation. It would also release funds to improve the offer to children and young people, particularly those in challenging circumstances, ensuring the Hub meets the government's requirement to support social mobility.

5) We have been appreciative of the private providers that came forward and of the thought they had clearly put into how they could scale up their current offer to children and young people across the county should the instrumental tuition part of the service close. We would be interested in continuing with this dialogue to explore opportunities to collaborate, to the benefit of all children and young people learning an instrument in the county.

6) The number of people who provided feedback through correspondence, signing of the petition and completion of the survey has demonstrated the degree to which the Music Service is valued and has highlighted the benefits to young people of playing an instrument and of being actively engaged in musical activities. Through the public consultation we have been able to find a positive way forward and it is hoped that we are now able to re-build trust and confidence in what we believe is a very exciting and financially sustainable future.

7) In light of the above the small group and individual instrumental tuition service will be retained within the Music Service. The Lead Member agreed that officers proceed with exploring the option of awarding a concession contract to provide a long-term sustainable future for the service.

8) The music service team are working closely with communications team to co-ordinate the announcement of a decision on the future of the music service and explain the financial changes which have prompted this recommended course of action. This includes plans to inform staff, stakeholders and the media.