

CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS NOVEMBER 2019

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

1. ADOPTION REPORT AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE 2018/19

Details of decision

The Cabinet Member noted the content of the Annual Report and the associated Statement of Purpose.

Reasons for decision

The Adoption & Children Act 2012 requires that Local Authority Adoption Agencies present regular reports of agency activity to elected Members. This report captures activity of the Surrey Adoption Service for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

(Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families – 5 November 2019)

CABINET MEMBER FOR ALL-AGE LEARNING

2. PETITIONS

Details of decision

That the response, attached to this decision sheet as Appendix 1, be approved.

Reasons for decision

To respond to the petition.

(Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning – 5 November 2019)

3. CREATION OF SPECIALIST CENTRES FOR PUPILS WITH COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION NEEDS (COIN) IN TWO PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Details of decision

The Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning determined the statutory notice, thereby bringing into effect the formal commencement of:

1. A specialist centre with 21 places for pupils with communication and interaction needs (COIN) at Worplesdon Primary School in partnership with Freemantles School.
2. A specialist centre with 21 places for pupils with communication and interaction needs (COIN) at Bell Farm Primary School.

Reasons for decision

A new specialist provision centre at Worplesdon Primary School would meet the demand for additional places for children and young people with communication and interaction needs (COIN). This is the first centre in Surrey that is being developed in partnership between a special school and a mainstream primary school. The two schools working in partnership ensure pupils benefit from the expertise of a special school as well as inclusion in a mainstream primary school.

A new specialist provision centre at Bell Farm Primary School would meet the demand for additional places for children and young people with communication and interaction needs (COIN).

(Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning – 5 November 2019)

Appendix 1

RESPONSE TO PETITION REGARDING COOL CLUB

I am writing to you following the devastating decision to close my daughter Poppy's special needs afterschool club Cool Club.

Poppy is 14 years old and is profoundly mentally and physically disabled with challenging behaviour. It was suggested by our Social Worker some time ago that Poppy would benefit from attending the afterschool club available in an attempt to improve our family situation. Since attending every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, not only has Poppy's personal and social development progressed beyond any expectations, it has also given my family the opportunity to have some quality time to do things that others may take for granted (like doing the grocery shopping or just having a quiet cuppa with a friend), knowing that Poppy is safe and happy enjoying valuable time out with her friends like any other mainstream school child. The activities are so thoughtfully organised, from swimming, trips to the local farm, Hever Castle and many more. All of which are simply not possible for Poppy to do after school without Cool Club.

Our children are extremely vulnerable and there are no other resources available to them where they are able to learn and grow through play in a safe environment after school. Only Cool Club offers everything that they need and have become accustomed to as part of their routine, which is vitally important for their wellbeing.

Poppy needs her Cool Club, as do the other special needs children at Clifton Hill. This most incredible provision has helped keep my family together and, without it, I really do not know how we will be able to cope. I know that I speak for many others who will also find life very difficult now that Cool Club has been so cruelly and thoughtlessly closed.

Response:

Surrey County Council wants to enable children and young people with disabilities and additional needs to join in safe, entertaining and interesting activities, while giving their parents or full-time carers an opportunity to have a short break from caring. For this reason, the Council funds a rich and varied programme of short breaks for families with children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Short breaks provide children and young people with SEND a positive opportunity to:

- relax and have fun with their friends
- develop new skills
- prepare for adulthood
- spend time away from their parents and carers

Short breaks also give families an opportunity to:

- have a break from their caring responsibilities
- spend time with other family members
- rest and recuperate

There are a range of short break opportunities available for families in Surrey from play and leisure, residential, personal support and family based. Approximately 2,200 children with SEND take part in these activities every year.

Surrey County Council's Short Breaks Directory lists over 50 organisations and schemes that support provide short breaks to children, young people and their families in Surrey. The majority of these services are run by organisations that receive funding from the Council.

https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/153743/Short-breaks-Directory-January-2018.pdf

Until July 2019, Surrey County Council funded Clifton Hill School to provide an afterschool club for 12 children ('Cool Club').

Unfortunately, despite widespread publicity by the school and the Council, the number of Surrey children attending the afterschool club at Clifton Hill had dwindled considerably. Only two Surrey children were taking up the 12 places that the Council was funding.

After detailed discussion with Clifton Hill about options, the school was unable to provide alternative arrangements and the Council took the decision to reinvest the funding that had been provided for the afterschool club into other short breaks provision in Surrey. The Council considered carefully the value of short breaks services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

By reinvesting the funding in other short break provision in Surrey, the Council was able to support a new Summer School for 25 children and young people with SEND in the west of the County; to offer short breaks to children on a long waiting list at a very popular Surrey scheme; and to support children to participate in an international sporting trip with excellent outcomes.

While this is disappointing news in the case of Ms Bailey's afterschool arrangements, Poppy continues to access other short breaks provision in Surrey. The Council has also offered Ms Bailey support to access further suitable provision.

Julie Iles
Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning
5 November 2019