

SUBJECT:	Recommendations from CYP Select
MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	24th Cabinet 2016
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	None

1. Purpose:

To refer to cabinet the outcomes of the CYP select call-in, which reviewed the funding formula report, considered by cabinet on 3rd February, specifically the £250k proposed reduction in funding for Mounton House School.

2. Recommendation:

Cabinet consider recommending to council phasing the £250k reduction in funding over a longer period than the proposed implementation date of 1st April 2016 as permitted under para 16 standing orders within the council's constitution.

Cabinet ensure that the funding situation of Mounton House is reviewed regularly to ensure that the school is achieving its recovery plan and appropriate support is provided by the Local Authority.

Regular update reports to be provided to CYP Select Committee, on the financial and non - financial position of Mounton House School at which both the Executive head, chair of Governors and cabinet member will be invited to attend in line with a timetable as agreed by the cabinet member.

3. Key Issues

Members of the CYP select committee were concerned regarding the proposal to withdraw £250k of funding from the school, the immediacy of the proposed reduction, coupled with the current absence of a strategic review for the school. The select committee called in the funding formula cabinet report where cabinet agreed the reduction in funding in order for the situation at the school to be considered in more depth.

CYP Select considered the matter at its meeting of 22nd February and received information from both officers, the cabinet member for education, and The Chair of Governors and Executive Head of Mounton House.

The main concerns identified by the committee were:

- Timing of the proposed reduction in funding, given the current financial deficit position of the school.

- The current uncertainty regarding the future of the school given the absence of a strategic plan and the impact of the reduction in funding on staffing levels now and in the future
- Concerns that the school has not been marketed to attract additional pupils.

The Cabinet member agreed that a further meeting would be held with members of the committee to discuss the situation further and that a report would be prepared for cabinet to consider the recommendations from that meeting.

The position regarding the £250 k reduction in formula funding was clarified for members i.e. the reduction in formula funding of £250k was agreed by full council on 21st January, as part of the council budget for 2016/17 and therefore the decision to remove the funding has already been made and cannot be overturned unless a specific recommendation is made by cabinet to council to reconsider the decision.(paragraph 16 of the Constitution standing orders)

At the follow up meeting Members of the select committee were reassured that the deficit funding situation at the school was recoverable and that officers from the local authority are working closely with the executive head and are confident that the school's finances can be brought back into balance and the school will be given the necessary time to enable this to be achieved.

The future of Mounton House is yet to be determined and is being considered in phase 3 of the ALN review which is on-going. The reduction in formula funding will have no bearing on the outcome of the review.

Welsh Government guidance surrounding the use of residential placements is clear in that local authorities should look to maintain children in their own communities and therefore it is whether that marketing the school would generate additional pupils from outside the county.

The cabinet member for education agreed to ensure that a time table of reporting was put together outlining when the CYP select committee will be updated regarding the operational and funding situation at the school.

4. Report Author :

Tracey Harry, Head of Democracy and Regulatory Services, on behalf of CYP Select Committee.