

# SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

## POLICY COMMITTEE DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Wednesday 21 June 2023 by the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee.

### **Agenda Item No**

#### **8. SHEFFIELD THRESHOLD OF NEED REFRESH 2023**

8.1 Mark Storf was in attendance to present a report which sought to approve the refresh of Sheffield City Council's Threshold of Need Guidance.

8.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee: -

- Approve the revised Threshold of Need Guidance for Sheffield City Council use, with a view to it also being adopted by partners across Sheffield

#### **8.3 Reasons for Decision**

8.3.1 Sheffield City Council is a key partner in Safeguarding the Children, Young People and Families of Sheffield. Safeguarding Children is everyone's responsibility and revisions to the Threshold of Need Guidance will support professional, partners and individuals to make better decisions when identifying risk, identifying the appropriate level of interventions required and making more informed referrals. Approval of Sheffield City Council's involvement in the publication of the updated Threshold of Need Guidance will reduce inequalities and contribute to Sheffield Safeguarding Children's Partnerships meeting its objectives.

#### **8.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

8.4.1 Not to approve Sheffield City Council's involvement in the publication of updated Threshold of Need Guidance. This option was rejected. In Sheffield safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility and revisions to the Threshold of Need Guidance will support professional, partners and individuals to make better decisions when identifying risk, identifying the appropriate level of interventions required and making more informed referrals. The revision will also support Sheffield Safeguarding Children's Partnership realise it's objectives.

#### **9. FUTURE OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT – SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL ACTIVITIES AND CONTRACTING WITH LEARN SHEFFIELD**

9.1 Steve Middleton was in attendance to present a report which followed the report presented to Committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December which presented options for the future funding of Sheffield City Council school improvement activities and outlined further investigative work that needed to be undertaken as to how best to deliver these activities. The purpose of this report was to update on the outcome of that further investigative work.

9.2 **RESOLVED:** That the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee: -

- Agrees that the council should continue to directly deliver some statutory school improvement services according to established practices and processes.
- Also agrees that the council should not now look to insource all school improvement services and notes that whilst the current contract for school improvement activities through Learn Sheffield will expire on 31st August 2023 officers will look to move forward the proposal for a new contract for limited school improvement activities from 1 September 2023 for two years.
- Notes that SCC will continue as a member of Learn Sheffield and remain the 'supervising authority' for Learn Sheffield.

(NOTE: The result of the vote on the resolution was FOR - 7 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 2 Members.)

9.3 **Reasons for Decision**

9.3.1 SCC has been forced by changes to school improvement strategy and funding at a national level to reconsider how services are provided. The current contract arrangements will soon expire, and the current funding arrangements are no longer available. The School Forum have agreed that they will no longer fund school improvement with Learn Sheffield through de-delegation.

9.3.2 The recommended option will allow SCC to continue delivering quality services to its maintained schools, in a context where the School Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grant has affected funding. This recommendation is in alignment with the latest DfE guidance in Schools Causing Concern and "Reforming how Local Authorities School Functions are funded" (DfE 2021).

9.3.3 The recommendation will enable SCC to:

- Make effective use of a significantly reduced financial resource.
- Know its schools by further developing its own monitoring and intervention processes in collaboration with Learn Sheffield.
- Continue to develop a strong relationship with its local partner, Learn Sheffield
- Continue to maintain strong relationships and offer support to school leaders and governors.
- Ensure support, challenge and intervention is matched to need and provided in a timely manner.
- Continue to coordinate and integrate statutory school improvement services with other services provided by the council such as inclusion and SEND.
- Have confidence that SCC is fulfilling its core statutory school improvement activities

9.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 9.4.1 Insourcing - If SCC were to provide no further investment in Learn Sheffield, SCC would need to develop its own strategic approach to statutory school improvement and fulfil all statutory school improvement activities currently provided by Learn Sheffield. This would require a significant increase in capacity and activities within SCC and associated impact on budgets as well as disruption to service continuity. Learn Sheffield are an established and trusted partner with School Company status and have offered services that are affordable within existing budgets.