

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Education, Children and Families Policy Committee

Meeting held 27th September 2023

PRESENT: Councillors Dawn Dale (Chair), Maroof Raouf (Deputy Chair)
Mohammed Mahroof (Group Spokesperson), Jayne Dunn,
Ann Whitaker, Maleiki Haybe, Ian Horner, Talib Hussain, and Nighat
Basharat

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 No apologies for absence were received.

2. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 No declarations of interest were received.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 The minutes of the previous two meetings of the Education, Children and Families, held on the 21st June 2023 and the 3rd July 2023, were approved as correct records.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 No public questions or petitions were received from members of the public.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

No Members' questions were received on this occasion.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

7.1 The Committee received the Committee's Work Programme for consideration and discussion. The aim of the Work Programme is to show all known, substantive agenda items for forthcoming meetings of the Committee, to enable this Committee, other committees, officers, partners, and the public to

plan their work with and for the Committee. Changes since the Committee's last meeting, including any new items, had been made in consultation with the Co-Chairs, Deputy Chair and Group Spokesperson, via their regular pre-meetings, and these were set out at the beginning of Appendix A of the report.

- 7.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix 1, be agreed, including the additions and amendments identified in Part 1.

8. SHORT BREAKS FRAMEWORKS CONTRACT EXTENSION

- 8.1 The Head of Commissioning – Children and Families was in attendance to present a report which sought approval to uplift the short breaks budget to create additional capacity within the service to meet the needs of children with disabilities and their families. The report sought approval to extend the current Framework Agreement for Short Breaks for 12 months until 31st March 2025.

- 8.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee approves the following changes to the existing commissioning strategy for Short Breaks: -

- an extension of the commissioning strategy for a period of 12 months (to 31st March 2025) at an estimated value of £754,110
- an increase in the budget/capacity for short breaks services from now until 31st March 2025 at an estimated cost of £302,556
- the addition of transition services at an estimated value of £100,852

8.3 Reasons for Decision

- 8.3.1 To seek approval from the Education, Children and Families Committee to extend the current Short Breaks service for a further 12 months, from the 31st of March 2024 to the 1st April 2025 and commission additional capacity and a Transitions short break for the remainder of 23/24 and 24/25 to meet current and projected demand. This ensures that the Council can meet its statutory duty to provide short breaks for all families that need the service without delay or disruption.

- 8.3.2 Extending the contract will enable a further year to test and review the current delivery model and gather a comprehensive data set including feedback from key stakeholders and opportunities for coproduction. It will allow Commissioning to broaden the scope of the Framework to streamline the Short Breaks Service offer and engage proactively with the market by developing a Market Position Statement to support sufficiency. Learning and strategic direction from the Governments Change Programme will also influence this process.

- 8.3.3 We have a statutory duty to provide short break services. They deliver improved long-term outcomes, keeping families together and enabling children to develop new skills. Children with disabilities and their families have been particularly impacted by Covid, and again with the cost of living rise. Extending the contract for 12 months minimises disruption and allows children to settle into their provision now it is fully compliant with the original specification post pandemic.

8.3.4 The Council requires short breaks in order to:

- meet the needs of our children
- to provide clubs and activities that our children look forward to going to
- offer a range of support in the form of short breaks so that families have a choice of what they feel will be helpful
- look at the local communities where these children live and belong to see if there are Providers that can offer varied and engaging short breaks
- to know what we can do so that existing clubs are inclusive of children with additional needs.

8.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

8.4.1 The Transitions short break and additional short break capacity could be tendered separately, outside of the Framework Agreement. This would be timely and less cost effective for the Council. Commissioning this separately would add further complexity and potential cost to the commissioning arrangements for short breaks and create confusion for the market place as existing Framework Providers would potentially bid for this work. The Framework Providers have already been tested and quality assured and the DPS allows for additional capacity to be sought through existing Providers.

8.4.2 A shorter recommissioning process is an option; by utilising current data and intelligence and conducting small scale stakeholder feedback and market engagement to mitigate the risk identified above. However, the services commissioned may not be based on sufficient evidence and stakeholder and market engagement which undermines the process. This option cannot guarantee that the services commissioned are evidence based, supported by key stakeholders or that the market is primed to deliver anything other than what they already deliver. This option greatly reduces the opportunity to broaden the scope of the Framework and incorporate the Governments learning from their Change Programme.

8.4.3 Short breaks are delivered in community venues around the city by providers with appropriate buildings and facilities, and the experience and infrastructure required to offer high quality, safe provision. Commissioning a short breaks model in this way supports the council's best value duty and ensures that the council has sufficient short breaks provision with a built in option to upscale to meet demand. It would be extremely challenging for the council to deliver such an expansive and specialised service across the range of venues in-house as the services are sessional and run on the same day and time each week across the city. Providers overcome this challenge Page 61 Page 12 of 12 by delivering a range of other services and contracts which make renting premises and hiring staff viable and provides consistency for children and families.

8.4.4 There are no additional implications arising out of the request to extend the current services.

9. EXCLUSION PREVENTION ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

- 9.1 The Committee received a report of the Commissioning Officer, Integrated Commissioning. The report set out the Exclusion Prevention Alternative Provision (AP) service and described how the services have been delivered to date.

This report then set out the proposal to commission a new Exclusion Prevention Alternative Provision service which will commence from April 2024, with additional capacity and improvements to the delivery model, to better meet the needs of children and young people and further prevent exclusion.

- 9.2 Members asked that an addition to the recommendations be made, as follows:

'has experience or a track record of working with young people from communities least served.'

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

- approves the commissioning of Exclusion Prevention Alternative Provision from an external provider which has experience or a track record of working with young people from communities least served for a period of three years and for an estimated value of £1.5m, as set out in this report, with the ability to increase capacity by up to £900,000 if additional funding can be identified.

9.4 **Reasons for Decision**

- 9.4.1 We recommend that an Exclusion Prevention Alternative Provision Service is commissioned from an external provider for a period of three years, in order to support vulnerable children to develop social and emotional skills and resilience to help them engage with learning and avoid exclusion.

- 9.4.2 This approach is in line with the proposed future model of delivery reviewed by Committee in January 2023, which recommends, among multiple strands of AP, targeted short term provision to assess and address the risks of exclusion.

- 9.4.3 The intended impact of the proposed commission is:

- Exclusion will be prevented for at least 85% children supported.
- A reduction in suspensions and improved attendance for children supported.
- Schools will have increased knowledge, skills, and capacity to meet the needs of children at risk of exclusion.
- Children will tell us they feel better able to cope at school, engage with learning and have a greater sense of belonging.
- Parents and schools will see positive change in their children.
- Reduced number of full-time places required at Sheffield Inclusion Centre (currently 300).

If this proposal is approved, members will be kept up to date on progress via

member briefings, and further updates as required.

9.5 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

9.5.1 Not recommissioning Exclusion Prevention AP was considered.

9.5.2 This was rejected as high-quality preventative AP is needed to mitigate against the increase in exclusions. Exclusion Prevention AP has been successful in the city in preventing exclusion for most children accessing. It is not affordable for AP on the AP Network to deliver provision of this kind without being subsidised, as a very high level of staffing is required.

9.5.3 Delivering the AP in house was considered.

9.5.4 This was rejected as specific expertise and extensive experience in reengagement / Nurture AP is needed to deliver high quality interventions. This level of expertise does not exist within current Council services and there would be a significant additional cost to developing this.

10. CITYWIDE APPROACH TO IMPROVING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

10.1 The Head of Access and Inclusion was in attendance to present a report which sought to raise the current challenges relating to school attendance with the Committee and to provide an update on current activity and future planned work to support and improve school attendance across the city. The report sought commitment from elected members on the importance of enabling good school attendance.

The Chair suggested a workshop on this item. Members agreed this would be useful for the Committee. The Head of Access and Inclusion asked Members to discuss these issues with schools ahead of the workshop.

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

- commit to play a role as system leaders on improving school attendance across the city working across Sheffield City Council and with partner organisations.
- commit to continue to support activity to improve school attendance.
- continue to work with officers to agree further actions which it can take which will positively impact on attendance outcomes in the City in line with the attendance charter and campaign.

10.3 Reasons for Decision

10.3.1 Children in Sheffield are consistently not attending school, risking future life chances and preventing academic success. More than that, education should provide a place of belonging, safety, fun and friendship for children and young people. Currently too many children are missing out on maximising those

opportunities. It is recommended that school attendance be a strategic priority to address this.

10.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

10.4.1 The alternative would be to continue to see attendance as a single service or school issue. This option has been rejected due to the range of challenges that are in place and the need to prioritise attendance at school.

11. **COMMISSION OF EDUCATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

11.1 The Committee considered a report of the Head of Service – ICT and DI – which set out the Education System and how it was provided. The report described the importance of the Education System and sought approval to commission an Education System. It set out the estimated upfront costs of implementation of the new system and the expected recoupment of these costs over the lifetime of the service.

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

- approves the commission of an Education System from an external provider for a period of 10 years and estimated value of £4.3 million.

11.3 **Reasons for Decision**

11.3.1 This commissioning decision enables the Council to commence active market engagement and begin planning for its requirements in 2025 and beyond.

11.3.2 This commission will also ensure:

- The continuance of the Council's key Line of Business System for Education;
- the Council meets its statutory duties;
- back-office functions can continue.

11.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

11.4.1 **Do nothing.** The Council requires an education system to deliver statutory services. Do nothing is not a viable option – the council must have an education system in place to execute its duties.

11.4.2 **Develop our own system.** This would be a significant undertaking, requiring skills and resources that the Council does not have access to. Those resources would have to be retained for future updates and functional changes as statutory requirements and business needs changed. The Council would also have to consider storage and retention of data. Security and role-based access would need to be managed.

11.4.3 **Repurpose an existing system (eg for Case Management).** While we have a Social Care Case Management System, this does not meet the requirements for

an Education System. It does not hold schools' data or modules for the many Services that use an Education System. This would require significant development and manual "workarounds" to deliver a suboptimal solution, if that were possible. For this reason, the supplier of our Social Care System has a separate Education System in its portfolio.

12. START FOR LIFE: EARLY YEARS STRATEGY.

12.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Commissioning Manager – Early Years and Early Help which included the New Sheffield Early Years Strategy 'Start for Life Sheffield 2023-8' for consideration and approval.

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

- consider "Start for Life Sheffield 2023 – 2028" (attached at Appendix 1) and agree its adoption as Sheffield's Early Years Strategy for the next 5 years.

12.3 Reasons for Decision

12.3.1 Sheffield is a great place to grow up and the new Early Years Strategy "Start for Life Sheffield" sets out how we will work together across the Early Years workforce to give all Sheffield children the start for life that they deserve. Setting out our ambitions from pre- birth to school life will support all children to have equality of opportunity to be healthy, happy, and safe. As such it is important for the Education Children and Families Committee members to have contributed to the development of the Strategy and provide final approval for its use as the city's Early Years Strategy.

12.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

12.4.1 The current Early Years Strategy that ended in March 2023 could have been refreshed. However, the level of change locally both locally and nationally in terms of the issues facing families, the impact of the pandemic and the national developments around EYFS and Family Hubs presented an opportunity to consult and co-produce a new Early Years Strategy that can positively impact on the lives of children and young people.

13. YOUTH JUSTICE OVERVIEW REPORT

13.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services which provided an overview to the three Youth Justice Service formal decision items.

13.2 The Committee noted the report.

14. YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE – APPROPRIATE ADULT SERVICE

14.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Integrated Commissioning

and the Assistant Director which set out the statutory duties, provided an overview and sought approval for the recommission of the sub-regional Appropriate Adult Service for Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley, and Doncaster Youth Justice Services.

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

- approves the commission of a external provider to deliver an Appropriate Adult Service as part of a joint commission with Rotherham, Barnsley, and Doncaster Youth Justice Services with an estimated cost of £351,540 to Sheffield City Council over a period of 4 years, as set out in this report.

14.3 **Reasons for Decision**

14.3.1 To support the development of a consistent service delivery and key services across the sub-region that supports the statutory requirements of the youth justice teams. By the four regional youth justices services joining together in a single contract (as joint contracting parties each being solely responsible for their respective service areas) for the appropriate adult service we are ensuring best value for money and cost effectiveness, and will be better able to achieve a higher standard of service throughout the region which is consistent with each YJS regions delivery plan as well as the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan. There is a statutory requirement set out within the national standards for the delivery of youth justice services which are subject to an inspection and audit regime for the provision of an Appropriate Adult Service, and these are as set out within the contract.

14.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

14.4.1 Do nothing - which we cannot as the provision of this Service is a statutory duty, therefore, we have to deliver it.

14.4.2 Deliver the service in-house – we currently do not have the expertise or capacity to deliver the service in-house, for the reasons stated above it is not economically viable for us to get the same resource level if we deliver the service in-house.

14.4.3 Do our own tender - which would be a collective collaboratively procured approach on the open market, through an open tender, as this would maximise the interest and competition and thereby return the most economically advantageous tender.

15. **YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE – REPARATION AND UNPAID WORK SERVICES**

15.1 The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Director and the Service Manager – Youth Justice Service which set out the statutory duties, provided an overview and sought approval for the recommission of the sub-regional

Reparation and Unpaid Work Service for Sheffield, Rotherham and Barnsley Youth Justice Services.

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

- approves the commission of an external provider to deliver a Reparation and Unpaid Work Service as part of a joint commission with Rotherham and Barnsley Youth Justice Services, with an estimated value of £256,200 to Sheffield City Council over a period of 4 years, as set out in this report.

15.3 **Reasons for Decision**

15.3.1 To support the development of a consistent service delivery and key services across the sub-region that supports the statutory requirements of the youth justice teams. By the three regional youth justices services joining together in a single contract (as joint contracting parties each being solely responsible for their respective service areas) for the reparation service we are ensuring best value for money and cost effectiveness, and will be better able to achieve a higher standard of service throughout the region which is consistent with each YJS regions delivery plan as well as the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan. There is a statutory requirement set out within the national standards for the delivery of youth justice services which are subject to an inspection and audit regime for the provision of restorative justice and unpaid work, and these are as set out within the contract.

15.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

15.4.1 Do nothing – which we cannot, as the provision of this Service is a statutory duty, therefore, we have to deliver it.

15.4.2 Deliver the service in-house – we currently do not have the expertise or capacity to deliver the service in-house, for the reasons stated above, it is not economically viable for us to get the same resource level if we deliver the service in-house.

15.4.3 Do our own tender – which would be a collective collaboratively procured approach on the open market, through an open tender, as this would maximise the interest and competition and thereby return the most economically advantageous tender.

16. **YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE – VICTIM ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICE CONTRACT**

16.1 The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Director and the Director of Integrated Commissioning which set out the statutory duties, provided an overview and sought approval for the recommission of the sub-regional Victim Engagement Service for Sheffield, Rotherham and Barnsley Youth Justice Services.

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

- approves the commission of an external provider to deliver a Victim Engagement Service as part of a joint commission with Rotherham and Barnsley Youth Justice Services with an estimated cost of £277,200 to Sheffield City Council over a period of 4 years, as set out in this report.

16.3 **Reasons for Decision**

To support the development of a consistent service delivery and key services across the sub-region that supports the statutory requirements of the youth justice teams. By the three regional youth justice services joining together in a single contract (as joint contracting parties each being solely responsible for their respective service areas) for the victim engagement service we are ensuring best value for money and cost effectiveness and will be better able to achieve a higher standard of service throughout the region which is consistent with each YJS regions delivery plan as well as the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan. There is a statutory requirement set out within the national standards for the delivery of youth justice services which are subject to an inspection and audit regime for the provision of restorative justice and victim services, and these are as set out within the contract.

16.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 16.4.1 Do nothing – which we cannot as the provision of this Service is a statutory duty; therefore, we must deliver it.
- 16.4.2 Deliver the service in-house – we currently do not have the expertise or capacity to deliver the service in-house, for the reasons stated above, it is not economically viable for us to get the same resource level if we deliver the service in-house.
- 16.4.3 Do our own tender – which would be a collective collaboratively procured approach on the open market, through an open tender, as this would maximise the interest and competition and thereby return the most economically advantageous tender.

17. **2023/24 Q1 BUDGET MONITORING**

- 17.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Finance and Commercial Services which brought the Committee up to date with the Council's outturn position for Q1 2023/24 General Fund revenue position.
- 17.2 The Committee noted the report.

18. **UPDATE REPORT FROM THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

- 18.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Children's

Services, which provided an update on the performance and governance of Children's Services including progress in meeting DCS (Director of Children's Services) accountabilities and delivering on statutory requirements. It also provided an update on progress in relation to the Council's Delivery Plan, key strategic events and issues on the horizon.

18.2 The Committee noted the report.