

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Education, Children and Families Policy Committee

Meeting held 9 November 2022

PRESENT: Councillors Mick Rooney (Chair), Dawn Dale (Co-Chair),
Brian Holmshaw (Deputy Chair), Colin Ross (Group Spokesperson),
Peter Garbutt and Ann Whitaker.

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mary Lea, Anne Murphy and Gail Smith. No substitute Members had been nominated to attend.

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 During consideration of agenda item 12 – Early Years School Readiness Review (Item 11 of these minutes), Councillor Dawn Dale declared a personal interest in the item on the grounds that she works for an organisation which operates a community nursery.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 It was noted that (a) due to an administrative error which had led to an incomplete version of the minutes of the previous meeting being published with the agenda, these minutes had been withdrawn from consideration at this meeting and (b) the completed version of the minutes of the meeting held on 27th September 2022 would be submitted for approval at the next meeting of the Committee.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 No petitions had been received and no questions from members of the public were asked at the meeting.

(NOTE: Questions regarding home education, which had been received from a member of the public prior to the meeting, were withdrawn by the questioner immediately prior to the start of the meeting, in view of the fact that the Co-Chairs of the Committee and relevant senior officers had agreed to meet with the questioner to discuss his questions immediately after the conclusion of the meeting.)

6. WORK PROGRAMME

- 6.1 The Committee received an amended report, circulated and published on the day prior to the meeting, containing 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. It was highlighted that this is a live document which will be brought to each meeting of the Committee and Members' input to it was invaluable.
- 6.2 The Committee was asked to give consideration to the further additions or adjustments to the work programme presented at Part 2 of Appendix 1, and to any further issues to be explored by officers for inclusion in Part 2 of Appendix 1 of the next work programme report, for potential addition to the work programme.
- 6.3 Reference was made to the comments at the beginning of the meeting made by Councillor Brian Holmshaw referring to his previous requests for a report to be submitted to this Committee in relation to the opportunities register, which the Council had prepared to identify forward funding for each Council service, and it was agreed that a report on this matter, in so far as it relates to Education, Children and Families services, should be added to the work programme, to be submitted to the next or subsequent meeting.
- 6.4 **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, and with the addition of a report on the Opportunities Register pertaining to Education, Children and Families services being added to the work programme for submission at the next or subsequent meeting of the Committee.

7. SECONDARY PLACES PLANNING - AREA 5

- 7.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children's Services seeking agreement to proceed with secondary school expansion plans in Planning Area 5 in the east of the city, to address the forecast deficit of places in 2023/24 due to new housing and population growth.

Arising from consideration of the proposals in the report, the Director of Children's Services agreed to:-

- Arrange for school and early years' provision maps to be published on the Council's website; and
- Ensure that details of the planning work being undertaken with adjacent local authorities be included within the report to be submitted to the December meeting of the Committee on mainstream sufficiency, which will provide an

overview of the 3 year strategy to ensure sufficient provision across early years, childcare, primary, secondary and post-16 provision.

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

- (a) agrees the proposed secondary school expansion plans in Planning Area 5, which will enable the Local Authority to fulfil its statutory duty and ensure sufficient secondary places are available to meet the forecast demand in 2023/24; and
- (b) agrees for up to £5.5m of the remaining balance of Basic Need funding to be utilised to fund the proposed expansions.

7.3 Reasons for Decision

7.3.1 The proposed expansions in Planning Area 5 will contribute to:-

- Need for places: without additional places in the area, the impact on families of not getting a local place will be significant as well as the impact on neighbouring schools.
- Children's outcomes: the standard of education that are provided at the two schools is of a good quality – both schools are rated by Ofsted as "Good."
- Equality: the catchment area is characterised by deprivation and a higher proportion of Black and Minority Ethnic population. By increasing places at these two schools the needs of all children are met, in particular the needs of more vulnerable children and families located in the city.

7.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

7.4.1 A detailed Options Appraisal was undertaken to consider alternative options to help address the secondary deficits from 2023/24 onwards. This is set out in Annex 1 of the report.

8. SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION PROVISION

8.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children's Services seeking approval to commission an extension to the current Supported Accommodation (young people 16 to 25 years) Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) contract for Looked After Children and Care Leavers, for 18 months from 1st April 2023 to 30th September 2024. The current term of the contract is 1st August 2019 to 1st April 2023 (4 years), and the value of the extension is estimated to be £8.4m.

Arising from a question regarding quality assurance, the Committee was informed of the activities undertaken to ensure high quality support and accommodation was provided for Looked After Children and Care Leavers in the city, which included:-

- For 16 & 17 year olds, a pathway plan and care plan for care leavers,

overseen by a social worker, and continued access to an independent reviewing officer, meaning that individual needs are reviewed regularly.

- Strong liaison between children's services and the commissioning team in relation to sharing key intelligence, identifying and acting on any concerns identified; undertaking of regular spot checks of accommodation; and receipt of regular feedback from social workers and the Leaving Care service.

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

- (a) approves the commission of an 18-month extension (1 April 2023 – 30 September 2024) of the current Supported Accommodation (young people 16 - 25 years) DPS, with such variation having an estimated value of £8.4m;
- (b) requests the Director of Children's Services to consider, as part of the re-commissioning exercise, how providers who either lease the tenancies or own the buildings can be encouraged to be as environmentally-friendly as they possibly can; and
- (c) supports the principle of the introduction of an Ofsted inspection regime for Supported Accommodation.

8.3 Reasons for Decision

Commissioning an extension to the existing arrangements will ensure our statutory duty continues to be met whilst allowing time for a full re-commissioning exercise to be undertaken.

8.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

8.4.1 Not to proceed with an extension to the contract - the alternative option considered is not to proceed with the proposed extension, however, this raises the risk of an appropriately specified and monitored contract not being in place, which would be in breach of the Contract Procedure Rules (2015).

8.4.2 Additionally, the Local Authority will not be compliant in relation to its statutory duties to provide appropriate accommodation to Looked After Children and Care Leavers, therefore, this option is not recommended.

8.4.3 There are no additional implications arising out of the request to extend the current contract.

9. BUDGET POSITION FOR YEAR 2023/24

9.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Finance and Commercial Services providing an update on the progress of the 2023/24 budget process.

The report indicated that the financial pressures facing the Education, Children

and Families Policy Committee in 2023/24 amounted to £12.4m. Mitigations of £6.9m had been noted at the previous meeting of the Committee, leaving further savings of £5.5m needing to be found, and it was reported that this figure had now reduced to £3.4m in the light of further mitigations which had recently been endorsed by members of the Committee from all three political groups on the Council.

- 9.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee notes the update on the Council's budget position for 2023/24.

9.3 **Reasons for Decision**

The Council is required by law to set a balanced budget each year. This report is pursuant to that objective and is in line with the process and timetable agreed by the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee on 31 May 2022 and 5 July 2022.

9.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

The Council is required to both set a balanced budget and to ensure that in-year income and expenditure are balanced. No other alternatives were considered.

10. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - MONTH 6

- 10.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Finance and Commercial Services providing an update on the Council's financial monitoring position for 2022/23, as at Month 6 (30th September 2022).

The report indicated that the Council was forecasting an £18.6m overspend against the 2022/23 budget as at month 6, of which £6.5m related to services within the remit of the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee, and further detail on the breakdown of that overspend was set out in the report.

The Committee confirmed that, whilst work would continue on developing plans to mitigate in-year forecast overspends, as well as pressures on the 2023/24 budget, the safety of children in the city would remain of paramount consideration.

- 10.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee notes the Council's financial position as at the end of September 2022 (month 6).

10.3 **Reasons for Decision**

This paper is to bring the Committee up to date with the Council's current financial position as at Month 6 2022/23.

10.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

The Council is required to both set a balanced budget and to ensure that in-year

income and expenditure are balanced. No other alternatives were considered.

11. EARLY YEARS SCHOOL READINESS REVIEW

- 11.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children's Services on the findings of the Early Years School Readiness review and the actions taken to address the issues to date.
- 11.2 There were a number of key areas where the Committee was being asked to endorse the progression of strategic level activity to support the Council and partnership ambitions in terms of Ready Children, Ready Families and Ready Schools in raising the numbers of children who arrive in school ready for learning and life.
- 11.3 The Committee considered the findings of the review and the importance of Early Years in the long-term life chances of Sheffield Citizens within the wider context of planning and commissioning for Education, Children and Families.
- 11.4 Members of the Committee asked questions and made comments on various aspects of Early Years' provision, including - the importance of speech and language provision; community support and resilience; the proposed leadership role; input to the governance review; supporting parent and toddler group activities; the value of early years' investment; impact of SEND on school readiness; stakeholder involvement; contribution of climate benefits; and the role of the Family Hubs.
- 11.5 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee endorses the recommendations within the Early Years Readiness Review report, which include:-
- the development of a leadership role for Sheffield Early Years;
 - consideration and exploration of increased investment in Portage workers;
 - consideration and exploration of increased investment into Early Years Prevention services and Early Years SEND support;
 - Early Years SEND support integration into the wider early years system; and
 - further development of parental voice and influence in terms of service development using the opportunities presented by the development of Family Hubs.

12. ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

- 12.1 The Committee considered the Elective Home Education Annual Report covering the period July 2021 to September 2022.
- 12.2 Members of the Committee asked questions and made comments on various aspects of Elective Home Education, including – the nature of the support provided by the Council to home educators; quality assuring home education provision; resource availability; methods to identify children not in school; legal

recourse relating to school attendance; and liaison with early years provision.

- 12.3 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee notes the information provided on Elective Home Education.

13. INDEPENDENT REVIEW OFFICERS ANNUAL REPORT

- 13.1 The Committee received and noted the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report for 2021/22, which provided details of the IRO Service's activities, during that period, in support of the city's Looked After Children.

14. INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND THE COMPETITION AND MARKET AUTHORITY (CMA) CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE MARKET STUDY FINAL REPORT

- 14.1 The Committee received and noted the Executive Summary of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and the England Summary of the Competition and Market Authority's Children's Social Care Market Study Final Report issued in March 2022.

15. MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 JUNE AND 21 JULY 2022

- 15.1 The Committee received and noted the minutes of the meetings of the Education, Children and Families Urgency Sub-Committee held on 29 June and 21 July 2022.

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