

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE DECISION RECORD

The following decisions were taken on Tuesday 27 September 2022 by the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee:

Item No

8. **EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BUDGET REPORT: OPTIONS FOR 23/24 BUDGET**

8.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children's Services. It set out the budget pressures and risks facing the services which fell under the Education, Children and Families committee area, and began to develop a budget action plan to mitigate these as far as possible. It provided recommendations for approval which would allow the service to contribute to Sheffield City Council's budget pressure.

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

- Note the financial pressures 2023/24 detailed within this report.
- Acknowledge the recommendation approved at the Strategy and Resources Committee on 5 July 2022 that "Policy Committees will be asked to develop savings / additional income options that cover their own pressures – in effect cash standstill" and to "require Policy Committees to report at their meetings in September on how they can balance their budgets."
- Note, as this Committee's initial response to the Strategy and Resources Committee's request, the set of budget proposals set out in this report and in appendix 1.
- Note that Officers will now work with Members to consult with relevant stakeholders (including with partners, trades unions and in respect of equalities and climate change) on the proposals in this report so as to inform final budget proposals.
- Note that Officers will work to develop any necessary detailed implementation plans for the proposals in this report so that the proposals, if ultimately approved, can be implemented as planned before or during the 2023/24 financial year.
- Ask to receive a further report in November that will set out the final budget for this Committee following consultation and any adjustments requested by the Strategy and Resources Committee.

8.3 **Reasons for Decision**

The recommendations put forward in this paper and appendix 1 are recommended for approval on the basis that they : -

- Are consistent with our agreed approach to demand management, sufficiency, and meeting our obligations to provide quality statutory

services which meet the needs of the child or young person

- Are consistent with our vision/strategy to provide services and opportunities which support each child and young person within Sheffield to meet their potential.
- Support the ongoing improvement of Education, Children and Family services in Sheffield
- Are guided by an evidence base, benchmarking and/ or trend data which identifies areas of spend where disinvestment, subject to individual review, can most likely be made without detriment
- Enable the Council to continue to meet its legal duties.

8.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 8.4.1 Do nothing - By undertaking none of the proposed actions, we would be unable to contribute to delivering a balanced budget.

10. **SPECIAL FREE SCHOOL BID TO SUPPORT SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES SUFFICIENCY**

- 10.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Commissioning Manager seeking approval to submit a joint bid with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, for a new special free school in Sheffield, ahead of the deadline on 21st October 2022.

This school would provide additional special school places for children and young people with needs relating to autism spectrum condition and communication/interaction.

To highlight the wider special educational needs and disability sufficiency position, ahead of a further report at a following committee date on this topic.

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

(a) Approval of joint bid with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council for new 200 place (100 places for Sheffield) primary-secondary special free school in Sheffield

(b) If a joint bid falls through ahead of the deadline on the 21st October 2022, a Sheffield only bid is submitted instead

(c) The committee endorses the principle of funding any abnormal site costs as a result of a successful bid from the High Needs Capital Allocation

(d) Further report on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities sufficiency to be presented at later committee

10.3 **Reasons for Decision**

The recommended option will deliver the following outcomes:-

- It is proposed that the joint bid is submitted as a new school will help meet forecast demand. A joint bid maximises chances of success. Through the special free school opportunity, the school can be delivered at a lower capital cost than it would be if reliant on Sheffield funds only
- Intended outcomes include increased availability of special school places, reduced inequalities and reduced reliance on high-cost independent placements.
- It is also proposed that a further special educational needs and disability sufficiency report is presented at a following committee meeting.

10.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

10.4.1 **Option One: No Bid**

Not submitting a bid was considered, however this was discounted due to the level of need that is forecast, the limited existing space that is available, and the opportunity to secure additional capital funding.

10.4.2 **Option Two: Sheffield Only Bid**

A Sheffield only bid was considered, this would have the benefit of a higher number of places. However, this would also increase costs for the Local Authority. The chances of success of a Sheffield only bid would also appear to be significantly lower than a joint bid with Barnsley.

Therefore, whilst submitting a joint bid is a risk itself, as this has not been done before, it would appear to be a risk worth taking to increase chances of success.

If a joint bid falls through ahead of the deadline on the 21st October, it is proposed that Sheffield only bid is submitted instead.

10.4.3 **Option Three: Post-16 Bid**

A bid for a special free school to provide post 16 places was considered. However, this bid was not developed as concerns were identified in relation to whether it would be successful.

Concerns included whether the Education Skills Funding Agency would

support the bid, as they typically support use and development of relationships with existing post 16 providers, rather than development of new providers.

It is also less clear where the school would fit into Sheffield's post 16 landscape, and more work is needed locally to improve this position. This links to the Accelerator Progress Plan following the local area re-inspection for special educational needs and disabilities in February 2022.

Further development of post 16 will be part of the wider sufficiency plan, presented to committee at a later date.

11. ENSURING A GOOD EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WHO CANNOT ATTEND SCHOOL BECAUSE OF HEALTH NEEDS – POLICY STATEMENT

11.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children's Services which presented a policy statement to ensure a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs.

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

(a) approves the proposed policy statement

11.3 Reasons for Decision

It is a requirement for the local authority to have a policy statement in place. By approving the statement, the local authority will meet this statutory duty.

11.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

The Local Authority is required to have a policy statement that is compliant with statutory guidance. The policy articulates practice in place for the local authority to meet its statutory duties.