

Education, Children and Families Policy Committee

Meeting held 8 June 2022

**PRESENT:** Councillors Mick Rooney (Co-Chair), Mike Drabble, Peter Garbutt, Brian Holmshaw (Deputy Chair), Anne Murphy, Colin Ross and Ann Whitaker

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1.1 Apologies were received from Councillors Dawn Dale and Gail Smith.

**2. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

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

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

3.1 Councillor Peter Garbutt declared a personal interest in relation to item 7 on the agenda, as a Director (unpaid) of an organisation on the Alternative Provision Framework.

3.2 Councillor Anne Murphy declared a personal interest as a respite foster carer working as an addiction specialist.

3.3 Colin Ross declared a personal interest in relation to item 6 on the agenda as a Governor of Aldine House.

**4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS**

4.1 No public questions or petitions were received.

**5. BUDGET REPORT - MONTH 1**

5.1 The Director of Finance and Commercial Services presented the report, bringing the Committee up to date with the Council's financial position as at Month 1 2022/23. The report also sets out the proposed budget timetable for the development of the 2023/24 budget

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

(i) notes the Council's challenging financial position and the Month 1 position;

(ii) notes the budget timetable set out in the report, including the requirement for the Committee to plan to develop budget proposals over the course of the summer;

(iii) notes that the Strategy and Resources Committee agreed at its 31 May 2022 meeting to "require any Policy Committee that is forecasting an overspend on

their budget to develop an action plan to address the overspend in-year and ask the Finance Sub-Committee to monitor both the development of any required action plans and delivery against them”;

(iv) commissions work from Officers to develop and implement plans to mitigate overspend and deliver stalled savings plans to bring forecast outturn back in line with budget; and

(v) agrees to set up a series of meetings, outside the formal policy committee meeting schedule, to carry out the required work as per (i) and (iv) of this resolution; initially to involve the co-chairs, deputy chair and group spokespeople and then invitation to be extended to all committee members; to report back to the formal meeting in September 2022.

### **5.3 Reasons for Decision**

5.3.1 Under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Chief Finance Officer of an authority is required to report on the following matters:

- the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of determining its budget requirement for the forthcoming year; and
- the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

5.3.2 There is also a requirement for the authority to have regard to the report of the Chief Finance Officer when making decisions on its budget requirement and level of financial reserves.

5.3.3 By the law the Council must set and deliver a balanced budget, which is a financial plan based on sound assumptions which shows how income will equal spend over the short- and medium-term. This can take into account deliverable cost savings and/or local income growth strategies as well as useable reserves. However, a budget will not be balanced where it reduces reserves to unacceptably low levels and regard must be had to any report of the Chief Finance Officer on the required level of reserves under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, which sets obligations of adequacy on controlled reserves.

### **5.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

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

## **6. A FRAMEWORK ARRANGEMENT FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF ALTERNATIVE PROVISION IN THE CITY - ACADEMIC YEAR 2022-23**

6.1 The Head of Access and Inclusion presented a report seeking approval to commission an Alternative Provision (AP) framework agreement for the academic year 2022-23 to replace the current framework which has now come to an end; allowing the Council to complete its on-going review of the delivery of provision across the city with a view to creating a new AP arrangement beyond

2023.

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

(i) approves the commissioning of providers to deliver alternative provision services for use by Sheffield schools and services within the People portfolio such as Children Missing from Education and via Sheaf High Needs provision by way of an AP framework based on the proposals in the report.

(ii) Where no current authority exists, delegates authority to the Executive Director of People, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Commercial Services and the Director of Legal and Governance, to take such steps to meet the aims and objectives as detailed and set out in the report.

6.3 **Reasons for Decision**

6.3.1 The procurement an AP framework will ensure the consistency of quality of Alternative Programme provision, regulate costs and provide a uniform, coherent approach for the city

6.3.2 The proposal provides an opportunity to develop and provide appropriate AP programmes to all who would benefit from it.

6.3.3 The proposal provides an opportunity to develop intervention programmes where Alternative Programme providers can support vulnerable pupils' reintegration into a mainstream school-based curriculum and result in better learning outcomes.

6.3.4 The proposal provides an opportunity to develop programmes to enable vulnerable young people age 16 – 24 to achieve their educational goals in line with their Education Health and Care Plan.

6.3.5 Procurement of a new framework of one year's duration enables time to review the alternative provision curriculum offer within the city and ensure that it is fit for purpose.

6.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

6.4.1 There are risks associated with an unregulated use of Alternative Provision in the school sector. Specifically, secondary schools will continue to use providers which have not been subject to prior due diligence and on-going contract management. Furthermore, pupils would not receive a planned programme with clear learning outcomes.

**7. INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

7.1 The Executive Director of People, and the Director of Education and Skills gave a presentation introducing the Children and Families, and Education and Skills Directorates of the Council's People Portfolio. The presentation covered the

vision and ambition; areas of responsibility; legislative framework and statutory duties; performance; challenges and priorities for each directorate.

- 7.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Education, Children and Families Policy Committee notes the introduction to Education, Children and Families.

## **8. SEND REVIEW - GREEN PAPER CONSULTATION/WHITE PAPER**

- 8.1 The Head of Access and Inclusion and Assistant Director, School Effectiveness provided the Committee with briefings on the SEND Green Paper and the Schools White paper for information.
- 8.2 The Head of Access and Inclusion summarised the proposals in the SEND Green Paper, aimed at tackling the 3 key challenges currently facing the system: that outcomes for children and young people with SEND or in alternative provision are poor; navigating the SEND system and alternative provision is not a positive experience for children, young people and their families; and that despite investment, the system is not delivering value for money for children, young people and families.
- 8.3 The Head of Access and Inclusion explained that Sheffield was in the process of developing a response to the Green Paper consultation's 22 questions. The issue of how Green Paper consultation responses would be 'signed off' under the Committee System was raised and the Committee asked the Assistant Director, Legal & Governance to seek clarification on this.
- 8.4 The Assistant Director, School Effectiveness explained that the Schools White Paper - "Opportunity for all: Strong schools with great teachers for your child" - contained 2 new ambitions – a target of 90 per cent of children by 2030 leaving primary school with the expected standard in reading, writing and maths; and to increase the national GCSE average grade in both English language and in maths from 4.5 in 2019, to 5 by 2030. The Assistant Director, School Effectiveness provided an executive summary of the White Paper and confirmed that directional guidance from the Department for Education had not yet been received.
- 8.5 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Education, Children and Families Policy Committee notes the SEND Green Paper and Schools White Paper briefings.

## **9. WORK PROGRAMME**

- 9.1 The Executive Director, People, presented the work programme report for the Committee's comment and consideration, and explained that the item on Holt House funding, originally scheduled for this June meeting would be brought in September.
- 9.2 Councillor Rooney suggested that following the briefing on the SEND Green Paper, a discussion on SEND provision and mainstreaming be included on the work programme.
- 9.3 Committee members were keen for the work programme to include opportunities

for members to hear directly from a wide range of young people, including the Youth Parliament and young carers.

9.4 Councillor Drabble asked that an item on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services be included in the work programme.

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

1. With reference to issues raised in this report, consideration be given to any further additions or adjustments to the work programme presented at Appendix 3 of the report;
2. That the committee's work programme as set out in Appendix 3 of the report be agreed; and
3. Consideration be given to any further issues to be explored by officers for inclusion in part 6 of the next work programme report, for potential addition to the work programme

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