

Education, Children and Families Policy Committee

Meeting held 21st June 2023

PRESENT: Councillors Dawn Dale (Chair), Mohammed Mahroof (Group Spokesperson), Paul Turpin (Substitute Member), Ann Whitaker, Maleiki Haybe, Ian Horner, Talib Hussain, Sioned Mair-Richards (Substitute Member), Nighat Basharat

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Maroof Raouf and Councillor Jayne Dunn

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 MEETING

4.1 Councillor Dale asked that Item 8.1 be altered to add a response as follows: 'Officers requested a deferral and the Committee agreed that this be brought to today's meeting.'

5. APPOINTMENT TO URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEES

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

(a) agrees to appoint Members to serve on the Education, Children and Families Urgency Sub-Committee as follows:

Cllr Jayne Dunn to fill a vacancy.

(b) as respects the appointment of Members to serve on the Urgency Sub-Committee or other Sub-Committees of the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee, where vacancies exist or in cases of urgency to ensure quoracy or representation, the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the relevant political group whip, be authorised

to appoint Members to serve on such Sub-Committees, as necessary, on the understanding that details of such appointments will be reported to the next or subsequent meetings of the Policy Committee.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

6.1 The Committee received 9 public questions from Racism Sheffield. The Lead Questioner, Fatima Salim, read many of the questions alongside other members of the group. Ms Salim asked:

‘Those who know racism happens behind the scenes, do nothing, or defend their position knowing that they are wrong, are just as complicit as the perpetrators. If this type of matter comes to the public arena, we want to know if politicians will apologise, whether staff will be held to account, or will this it all be brushed under the carpet?’

Councillor Dale provided a response as follows:

‘The recent Race Equality Commission in Sheffield has concluded that racism and racial disparities remain significant in the lives of Sheffield citizens. Sheffield City Council is committed to ensuring positive action is taken to address these issues. We are committed to becoming an Anti-racist City.

We are working hard to ensure we collect data and have measurable targets to monitor and oversee both how we deliver our services in the community and to POC but also how we look to employ people from our diverse communities. We are also a learning organisation that looks to educate and develop our leaders and learn from both good and bad experiences and where people believe they have been aggrieved. We will apologise when we get things wrong. We will look to learn and work in collaboration to get things right.

We are looking over the next year to work with Schools and MAT in partnership with Learn Sheffield to increase diversity on Governing Bodies to represent the communities and pupils they serve and also to focus on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion and to play their part in ensuring Sheffield is an anti-racist City.

We encourage all schools to ensure that there is a culture where racism can be reported and that it is thoroughly investigated, and appropriate actions taken. Sheffield City Council is committed to working with schools to ensure racism is challenged and inclusivity is at the heart of education across the city.’

6.2 Question two was as follows: ‘Everyone knows that POC have to work twice if not 3 times as hard just to be recognised if they want to be in leadership positions. Could you tell us how are you supporting current POC in leadership positions and how will you ensure they will always have a fair chance at

leadership so that young BAME students can have achievable aspirations?’

Councillor Dale provided the following response: ‘The Race Equality Commission in June 2022 stated that perceptions of bias emerged as a factor in how professionals across sectors experienced their working life. There is a commitment that Sheffield will be an Anti-Racist City. Over the next academic year Sheffield City Council will continue to work to ensure that there are equal opportunities to progress into leadership roles and we will actively engage with POC in leadership roles or aspiring to be leaders to understand barriers and together find solutions. Sheffield City Council with regard to the Family and Children’s Committee will again share the Race Equality Commission findings with all education institutions and childcare providers in the City and work with them to look at how we ensure that all our employees have equal access and opportunity for leadership roles.’

- 6.3 Question three was as follows: ‘How many headteachers do you have of colour in Sheffield? What support, safe space, have they been given? If not, why?’

Councillor Dale provided the following response: ‘Sheffield City Council does not hold the number of headteachers of colour working in the City. Each individual school whether Local Authority or Academy maintains its own record of this information as they are the employer. Sheffield City Council always looks to provide support when requested by the school as an employer. Schools however provide their own pastoral support to their employees and have their own Human Resource facilities. We however recognise this is possibly an area for development and will work with our education institutions and leaders over the coming year to identify and issues and work collectively including with employees and leaders of colour to find better solutions.’

- 6.4 Question four was as follows: ‘As there are only 4 POC headteachers currently in Sheffield, what has the head of education and offices done to protect them? If they are not protected, how do we expect our POC children to be protected?’

Councillor Dale provided the following response: ‘Sheffield City Council is committed to lead on becoming an Anti-Racist City. We value all our headteachers who work across the City in both Local Authority Maintained Schools and Academies. Headteachers are employed by their school organisation and as such are provided support by their Chair of Governors and Governing Body or Trust. The question suggests that more can be done to support Headteachers who are POC. The new Strategic Director of Children’s Services has offered an open invitation to speak to leaders and headteachers of colour over her first few weeks and will prioritise this to understand barriers and issues that are faced by these valued leaders in our City who role model possibilities and opportunities for our children.’

- 6.5 Question five was as follows: ‘What are you doing to support women of colour in senior positions in schools?’

Councillor Dale provided the following response: 'The new Strategic Director of Children's Services along with her team are committed to ensuring Sheffield is an Anti-Racist City. She has offered an open door to all leaders of colour to look at any additional support that can be offered and how we share good practice across all education institutions.'

6.6 Question 6 was as follows: 'We are aware of the race commission that Sheffield has just had. Can you tell us how systemic racism in the Sheffield education system is being monitored? And do officers and people in power know what this looks like?'

Councillor Dale provided the following response: 'Sheffield City Council commissioned the report and are acting on its recommendations. There are specific actions overseen by this committee to ensure we work towards an Anti-Racist City and organisation. Senior leaders work hard to understand the concepts of implicit and explicit racism and unconscious bias and look to listen and co-produce solutions with POC and with underrepresented groups in Sheffield. Senior leaders strive to actively promote equality, diversity, and inclusion.'

We are committed through our action plan to:

- Collect accurate data of school governance, leadership teams, teaching and support staff diversity for LA maintained schools
- Further develop EDI resources including guidance and training to support schools and schools' staff including racial literacy and cultural competency.
- Promote equality related awareness days across schools
- Work with Learn Sheffield to keep the REC as an agenda item on Governors, CEO's briefings to share and collate information and best practice.
- Governor and staff recruitment are anonymised and governors are brought together every 6 months to share practice/experiences. Continue to support and develop opportunities for governors from Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic backgrounds.
- Support the early years sector by convening regular meetings to address issues of race and EDI and signposting to agencies who can support them further.
- Support a Locality approach through our education localities. Develop a programme of inclusive engagement, linked to the local population, start with the priority areas where we know improvements are needed.
- Support the Early Years Sector through three twilight sessions as well as carry out setting visits to support on a one-to-one basis. We deliver training 'Introduction to ... Inclusive environments' which supports settings in creating a warm and welcoming environment within their early years provision.
- Whilst recruitment and retention in Early Years is a national issue, Sheffield is working with colleges and universities to encourage people into the workforce or to develop their skills further. To share good

practice, we deliver city wide networking events and briefings as well as training opportunities.

Sheffield City Council is committed to working with POC and with lived experience to ensure these are the right priorities for the coming year to ensure we promote an Anti-Racist approach across all our partners and educational institutions.'

- 6.7 Question 7 was as follows: 'Have senior council officers and members had training to understand what racism can look like and if an allegation is made is their tactic to defend rather than address?'

Councillor Dale provided the following response: 'The second action of the Race Equality Commission was that organisations need to invest in educating and developing leaders and employees. There is already training which is provided. Over the coming few months we will be reviewing this to ensure that it meets the requirement to become an Anti-Racist City. We will also work with schools through Learn Sheffield to review current race equality training to ensure it meets our objective.'

- 6.8 Question 8 was as follows: 'Are you aware that POC teachers will have more allegations made against them than white teachers. How is this being monitored in Sheffield? Do you value people in leadership and do you see this as a benefit to our young children?'

Councillor Dale responded as follows: 'Governing Bodies are responsible for complaints made about their school both by pupils, parents and their employees. As a Council that is leading an anti-racist approach we are committed to working with educational institutions to support this agenda. We value leaders and want to ensure that all communities in Sheffield are fairly represented and heard – this is essential on a number of levels and not least for our future generation both for their opportunities and the diversity they bring to our City.'

- 6.9 Question 9 was as follows: 'Like many industries, the education system in Sheffield is built on systemic and institutionalised racism. As it your responsibility, what has the head of education and officers done to ensure diversity amongst teachers and specifically within leadership?'

Councillor Dale responded as follows: 'The Race Equality Commission from June 2022 'The Race Equality Commission (REC) has concluded that racism and racial disparities remain significant in the lives of Sheffield's citizens. What has been shared with the Commission spans education, crime, justice and policing, sport and culture, health, business and employment, civic life and communities, and more. The perpetuation of racism, and racial disparities across sectors and major institutions in the city compel the Commission to restate the urgency to instigate positive measures and improvements in organisations and among its citizenry'. We are committed to addressing these issues and look to learn from lived experience to ensure we are an Anti-Racist City.'

The one year on actions that have been delivered to move the organisation and city closer to becoming Anti-Racist is being published imminently. This will and has included a focus by Council Officer's when visiting schools and education institutions to discuss the Race Equality Commission and possible implications. We have been reviewing the training package for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion meeting with providers to discuss possibilities. We have shared good practice about equality awareness days in schools which has been well received. We have been working with Learn Sheffield on raising the profile of Race Equality Commission recommendations and priorities. We have far more work to do in this area and will review our actions and also progress over the coming months working closely with members of the community and the Education, Children's and Families Policy Committee.'

- 6.10 Ms Salim expressed unhappiness with the answers provided by the Committee, and stated she felt they were formal. She asked the Committee to state what was being done currently to address racism in the Education system. Councillor Dale offered to create meetings with Racism Sheffield and encouraged the public speakers to attend future meetings and to hold the Committee to account if they felt commitments were not being met. Councillor Dale stated this had been added to the Work Programme and that this would be looked at over the coming year.

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. It was highlighted that the Committee had begun to consider items which would be included on agendas from March 2023 onwards.
- 7.2 Councillor Mair-Richards suggested that the References from Council or other Committees be added as an agenda item, rather than being included in section 2.0 of the Work Programme.
- 7.3 Councillor Turpin asked that the recommendations of the Race Equality Commission be added to the Work Programme. Councillor Haybe asked that Race as a wider issue be added to the Work Programme. He offered to create some wording.
- 7.4 Appraisal of Learn Sheffield to be added to the Work Programme, with a specific focus on what they are doing to address racial inequality.
- 7.5 Councillor Mahroof asked that SEND be added to the Work Programme.

7.6 Councillor Basharat asked that Home Tuition be added to the Work Programme.

7.7 Councillor Mair-Richards asked whether any Committee looks at Sheffield Children's Book Awards in Sheffield. Councillor Dale stated she would look into this, both within Education and within the libraries team.

7.8 **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, with the suggested amendments above.

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 13th 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.

9.5 (NOTE: During the discussion of the above item the Committee agreed, in accordance with Council Procedure rules, that as the meeting was approaching the two hours and 30 minutes time limit, the meeting should be extended by a period of 30 minutes).

10. ANNUAL UPDATE OF THE BUSINESS SUCCESSFUL FAMILIES PROGRAMME

10.1 The Committee considered a report of the Director of Integrated Commissioning which provided an annual update to the Education, Children and Families on the Building Successful Families programme, referred to nationally as the Supporting Families programme.

10.2 The Education, Children and Families Policy Committee noted the report.

10.3 Councillor Dale asked that this be added to the induction programme for new members to the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee.

11. 2022/23 FINANCIAL OUTTURN

11.1 Jane Wilby was in attendance to present a report which brought the Committee up to date with the Council's final revenue outturn position for 2022/23.

11.2 The Education, Children and Families Policy Committee noted the report.

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