

Education, Children and Families Policy Committee

Meeting held 2nd November 2023

PRESENT: Councillors Dawn Dale (Chair), Maroof Raouf (Deputy Chair)
Mohammed Mahroof (Group Spokesperson), Jayne Dunn,
Ann Whitaker, Maleiki Haybe, Ian Horner and Sioned Mair-Richards
(Substitute Member)

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Councillor Nighat Basharat sent their apologies.

2. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

2.1 The Chair reported that the presentation relating to item 8 was not available to the public and press because it contained exempt information described in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person. Accordingly, if the content of those parts of the reports were to be discussed, the public and press would be excluded from the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 No declarations of interest were received.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 The minutes of the previous meeting of the Education, Children and Families Committee, held on the 27th of September 2023, were approved.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

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

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

6.1 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 Members agreed that the Home to School Transport appeal would be added to the Work Programme following a review of Faith Schools and their proximity to homes in response to two referrals from the Admissions Committee.
- 7.3 The addendum 'Investing in Renewal Energy Projects' was presented. It was resolved that this item be placed on the work programme, with consideration of every opportunity for investing in renewable energy projects on Council land and buildings to generate energy and income.
- 7.4 **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.

8. 2024 TO 2027 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET

- 8.1 The Head of Service – Resource and Business Planning was in attendance to present a report which set out the budget pressures and challenges facing the services which fall under the Education, Children and Families committee area, and begins to develop a budget and resourcing action plan to mitigate these as far as possible. The report also highlighted emerging trends, growth in demand, and the rising complexity of the level of need for services which are directly impacting on the resource's requirement.

During consideration of this item of business, and in order for Members of the Committee to ask questions of the report, it was **RESOLVED:** That the public and press be excluded from the meeting and the webcast be paused before further discussion takes place on the grounds that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, if those persons were present, there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information as described in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

The meeting was re-opened to the public and press, and the webcast was recommenced, prior to the decision being taken by the Committee.

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

1. Notes the financial pressures for 24/25 detailed within this report and the new income available to mitigate them.
2. Notes the measures proposed in the report to mitigate these pressures and that they will be presented to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee as part of the Council's budget for 24/25.
3. Notes that Officers will work to develop any necessary detailed implementation plans for the proposals in this report so that the proposals,

once agreed, can be implemented as planned before or during the 2024/25 financial year.

4. Notes that it is proposed that there will be a further update at the December committee meeting.

8.3 Reasons for Decision

8.3.1 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 a balanced budget.

8.5 (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)

9. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY

9.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Children and Families which set out how Sheffield City Council would fulfil its role as a Corporate Parent and meet its statutory sufficiency duty by providing good quality homes that support children and young people and care leavers. It described the principles that were applied when seeking to commission the provision of secure, safe and appropriate accommodation and support, to children in care and care leavers over the coming three years. The strategy provided the underpinning principles that would inform how changing demand were to be addressed to ensure that there was the right mix of provision available that met the needs and enhanced the outcomes of children and young people, and balanced value for money for the local authority.

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

- approve the “Children and Families Sufficiency Strategy”, as appended to this report at Appendix 1.

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9.3 **Reasons for Decision**

9.3.1 The Children and Families Sufficiency Strategy will ensure the Council has set out its commitment in line with its duty to ensure that there is a range of sufficient placements which meet the needs of children and young people in care.

9.3.2 Approval of Corporate Parenting Board to undertake the monitoring and oversight of progress against the delivery plan, and annual review of the aspirations, will ensure consistent oversight of the delivery of the strategy and escalation as appropriate if issues arise.

9.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

9.4.1 Alternative option not to approve the new Strategy, is rejected. This would mean the Council does not have an accurate and up to date strategy that sets out its commitment in line with the sufficiency duty. Governance of the delivery of the strategy will not be articulated and understood and may result in failure to escalate issues as they arise.

10. **UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS ON THE RACE EQUALITY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS PERTAINING TO CHILDREN’S SERVICES**

10.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Children’s Services which showed steps taken to implement the Race Equality Commission’s recommendations. The report and presentation comprised of the following key elements:

- Links to the Corporate Strategy
- How Children’s Services was collaborating with each other, internal services and external partner organisations (such as Education Settings) to deliver to the recommendations of the Race Equality Commission)

10.2 Members asked that an amendment to the recommendations be made, as follows:

‘twice-quarterly’ rather than ‘twice yearly’

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

1. note the progress made, as set out in the presentation to the Committee, and to comment on the direction of travel.
2. agree to receive a twice-quarterly update on the progress made around the recommendations from the Race Equality Commission report

10.3 **Reasons for Decision**

10.3.1 To keep this important agenda alive and make it a city-wide pursuit.

10.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

Not Applicable

The Chair asked for a Working Group on this item and stated that an email would be sent to Members regarding this.

11. **SHEFFIELD CHILDREN SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22 AND 2022-23**

11.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services which set out yearly reports of the Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP), made up of the following three local safeguarding partners:

- Sheffield City Council: represented by the Director of Children's Services
- NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board: represented by the Chief Nurse
- South Yorkshire Police: represented by the Chief Superintendent District Commander

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

That the contents of the annual reports (appendices 1-3) be noted.

11.3 **Reasons for Decision**

11.3.1 It is important that the Committee are aware of the work of the Sheffield Children's Safeguarding Partnership and the content of the Annual Reports.

11.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

11.4.1 Not applicable

12. **UPDATE REPORT FROM THE STRATEGY DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

12.1 The Committee received 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 regarding progress in relation to the Council's Delivery Plan, key strategic events and issues on the horizon.

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

Notes the Strategic Director of Children's Services report and agrees key activity for the coming months.

12.3 Reasons for Decision

12.3.1 This report provides an update regards Children's Services activities for Members.

12.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

12.4.1 Not applicable