

Education, Children and Families Policy Committee

Meeting held 26th February 2023

PRESENT: Councillors Dawn Dale (Chair), Mohammed Mahroof (Group Spokesperson), Mike Chaplin (Substitute Member), Karen McGowan (Substitute Member), Ann Whitaker, Maleiki Haybe, Ian Horner and Paul Turpin (Substitute Member)

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Councillors Nighat Basharat, Jayne Dunn and Maroof Raouf sent their apologies. Councillors Mike Chaplin, Karen McGowan and Paul Turpin attended as substitutes.

2. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

2.1 The Chair reported that two appendices relating to item 12 were not available to the public and press because they 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 report 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 2nd of November 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 raised the issue of School Admissions, an item which was due to come to Committee in February. They stated that feedback had been given by parents that the information available on this subject could be improved. Councillor Dale stated she would be willing to set up a Task and Finish Group on this subject. Councillors Ann Whitaker, Nighat Basharat and Maroof Raouf volunteered to be on this group.
- 7.3 Members asked whether Race Equality had been placed on the agenda for next year's Policy Committee meetings. The Chair confirmed this would be looked at and stated that the Strategic Director of Children's Services would provide updates in their regular Update Report item.
- 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. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

- 8.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services which sought approval to determine the proposed admission arrangements for 2025/26, including the oversubscription criteria and co-ordinated admission schemes for primary and secondary schools.
- 8.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee:
1. The oversubscription criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for 2025/26 (including for external Sixth Forms)
 2. Proposed Admission Numbers for 2025/26
 3. The statutory Primary and Secondary co-ordinated admission schemes for 2025/26
- 8.3 **Reasons for Decision**
- 8.3.1 The recommendation to approve the proposed admission arrangements for 2025/26 will ensure that the Authority carries out its statutory duty to consult and determine its admission arrangements for the 2025/26 academic year, including:

1. The oversubscription criteria (Including external Sixth Forms)
2. The proposed Admission Numbers
3. The statutory Primary and Secondary co-ordinated admission schemes.

8.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

- 8.4.1 The Admissions Review was a City-wide consultation which asked whether the current admission arrangements were still supported and were still fit for purpose. There continues to be a high level of support for the current arrangements and the current arrangements continue to deliver a high level of preferences met.

For the 2023 intakes for example a total of 95.34% were offered their first preference primary schools compared to a national average 92.5%. A total of 99.08% were offered one of their three preferred schools. For Year 7 admission to Secondary school 88.46% were offered a preferred secondary school compared to a national average of 82.6%. A total of 96.29% were offered one of their three preferred schools.

9. 16-25 YEARS SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION SERVICE COMMISSION

- 9.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services which set out the statutory duties, provided an overview and sought approval from the Education, Children and Families Committee for the recommission of the 16-25 Supported Accommodation services.

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

- approves the commission of a 16-25 years Supported Accommodation Service from external providers, with an estimated cost of £33.1 million over a period of 4.5 years, as set out in this report.

9.3 Reasons for Decision

- 9.3.1 The Council has a statutory duty under the requirements to support Looked after Children and Care Leavers as contained in The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010.
- 9.3.2 The Council's existing framework contract for the delivery of the service will expire on 30th September 2024.
- 9.3.3 The Council wishes to re-commission the existing service for 4.5 years (1st October 2024 until 31st March 2029) with an estimated cost of £33.1 million.
- 9.3.4 Any re-commissioning of the service will seek the procurement and award of a 4.5-year contract in accordance with Public Contract Regulations 2015 and Contracts Standing Orders.

9.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 9.4.1 Do nothing - which we cannot as the provision of this Service is a statutory duty; therefore, we must deliver it.
- 9.4.2 Deliver the service in-house – we currently do not have the expertise or capacity to deliver the service in-house.
- 9.4.3 Do our own tender - which would be a collaboratively procured approach on the open market, through an open tender, as this would maximise the interest and competition and thereby return the most economically advantageous tender.

10. **PROPOSED CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2024/25**

10.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services which set out the key priority areas for capital investment for the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee and provides an overview of potential projects and priorities for the years 2024 to 2029, with an overview of anticipated developments and challenges up to 2052.

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

- 1. Endorse the proposals set out in this report.
- 2. Note that the proposals will now be included in the draft Capital Strategy to be submitted to Full Council for approval in March 2024 and, if approved:
 - a) Officers will work with Members to consult with relevant stakeholders (including with partners, staff, trades unions [if required] and in respect of equalities and climate change) on the proposals in this report to inform final project proposals;
 - b) Officers will work to develop any necessary detailed implementation plans for the proposals in this report so that the proposals can be implemented as planned; and
 - c) Approval for detailed proposals will be sought as part of the monthly capital approval cycle by the Finance Committee.

10.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 10.3.1 Members are asked to note the unsustainable financial position highlighted by the medium-term financial analysis presented to Strategy and Resources Committee in September 2023.
- 10.3.2 This report and its recommendations set out how capital projects can continue to be developed and delivered, despite the limited resources available and continue to deliver quality infrastructure for the people of Sheffield.

10.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

10.4.1 The Council is required to both set a balanced budget and to ensure that in-year income and expenditure are balanced. Committee is invited to comment upon and endorse the current proposals to form part of the Council's wider Capital Strategy for 2024/25.

11. EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE CLIMATE STATEMENT

11.1 The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services which aimed to do the following:

1. Respond to the Annual Climate Progress Report 2022/23 in a timely manner.
2. Restate the cross-party council commitment to taking what action we can to address the climate emergency, adapt our city and council for a changing climate and reduce emissions to achieve our ambition to be a net zero city and council by 2030.
3. Increase understanding of the impact climate change will have on committees, the opportunities that tackling climate change offers, and the contribution to climate and net zero action each committee is currently making and needs to make moving forward.

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

- (a) consider and, if not previously agreed, agree (with or without amendments) their respective statement to ensure that the proposed actions contained in such statement are reflected in their Work Programme.

11.3 Reasons for Decision

11.3.1 It is important that the response to the Annual Climate Progress Report is open and transparent in setting out the challenges which the local authority faces in making progress and clarifies future expectations on the part we all have to play in addressing climate change.

11.3.2 Committee do not currently have specific strategic goals for climate. The process required to develop these, and have the statements approved to be read at each committee meeting meant that option 5.2 was not feasible with the available resource and timeframe.

11.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

11.4.1 Not providing committee climate statements considered due to the resource required to collate.

11.4.2 Providing more detailed Committee Climate Statements that provided an overview of strategic climate goals, with each Chair then reading the committees statement publicly at their respective committee meeting following release of the report.

12. THE CHILDCARE REFORMS (SPRING BUDGET 2023)

12.1 The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services which provided Members with an overview of the Childcare Reforms announced in the Spring Budget 2023, sought approval for the Local Authority's next steps in delivering the requirements of the Childcare Reforms and sought delegations for the agreement to proceed to develop delivery plans in accordance with the Department for Education guidance and implement these.

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

- Noted the contents of the report regarding childcare provision and the Childcare Reforms announced in the Spring Budget 2023
- Approved the Council proceeding to develop the Extended Entitlement Delivery Plan and the Wraparound Delivery Plan as set out in the report
- To the extent that they require decisions not covered by existing officer delegations, delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Children's Services to: a. agree and implement the Extended Entitlement Delivery Plan as set out in sections 2.4 and 4 of this report; b. agree and implement the Wraparound Delivery Plan (subject to Department for Education's approval), as set out in sections 3.4 and 4 of this report; c. allocate grant awards above £50,000 from the Wraparound grant funding of £2.678m where set out in the Wraparound Delivery Plan and in accordance with section 4.5.2 of this report; and d. agree the strategy for the allocation of the capital Childcare Expansion Grant of £849,000 for Extended Entitlement and Wraparound Care provision prior to allocations being submitted for approval by the Finance Committee (as part of the Local Authority's Capital Approvals Process) as set out in section 4.5.3 of this report.
- Note the decisions at 3) above will only be exercised by the Strategic Director of Children's Services pursuant to the Childcare Reforms Governance Board's process as set out in section 5 of this report.
- Note that the Local Authority Delivery Support grant of £102,000 is to be retained centrally by the Local Authority, in accordance with the grant terms, to cover administrative costs for the implementation of the Extended Entitlement Delivery Plan as set out in section 4.5.1 of this report.
- Note that £294,000 (11%) of the Wraparound grant funding is to be retained centrally by the Local Authority, in accordance with the grant terms, to cover administrative costs for the implementation of the Wraparound Delivery Plan as set out in section 4.5.2 of this report.
- Note that a further update paper on the Childcare Reforms will be presented at a future Committee.

12.3 Reasons for Decision

12.3.1 Due to the short timescale for the implementation of the Childcare Reforms programme it is proposed that the Local Authority proceeds to implement option

2 above. By agreeing the approach to deliver the Childcare Reforms, as set out in this report, this will enable the Local Authority to commence the implementation process whilst the Extended Entitlement Delivery Plan and the Wraparound Delivery Plan are being finalised, which will ensure timely compliance with the Government's requirements. Further updates will be provided to the Committee in a future report.

12.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

12.4.1 Do nothing – this is not a viable option as the Local Authority would be in breach of its statutory duty to ensure that there is sufficient childcare for working parents/carers, or parents/carers who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 to 14, or up to 18 for children with special educational needs and disabilities. Doing nothing would mean that the Local Authority's existing childcare provision will be insufficient to meet the demands of the first phase of the roll out, which comes into effect in April 2024 (parents/carers are able to apply for this from 2 January 2024) as well as the second phase which is to be implemented in September 2024.

12.4.2 Proceed to implement the Childcare Reforms – as set out in the Recommendations section of this report. This option allows the Local Authority to start the implementation process, meet its statutory duties and be compliant with the Government's requirements.

13. CORPORATE PARENTING PLAN

13.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Strategic Director of Children's Services on the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2023-26. The report was outlined as follows:

Corporate Parenting is the term used in law to describe the collective responsibility to provide care for and support children in our care and our care leavers to ensure they have every opportunity to reach their full potential.

The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2023-26 demonstrates the Council's commitment to ensuring that the life chances of every child and young person in its care are improved in line with their peers. We will act as strong advocates to ensure their needs are met in the best way possible, and to prioritise access to resources. We believe that every child and young person in Sheffield should have the best possible start in life and the opportunity to thrive. We want to ensure that care experienced children and young people receive the right support, at the right time and in the right place.

When providing a service for our children and young people in care, we will challenge ourselves by asking, 'would this be good enough for my child?'

This strategy outlines our commitment to ensure that children are at the centre of our practice, that they feel safe and secure, have stability in their lives, that they are emotionally well and that we help them to achieve their full potential by supporting them in fulfilling their ambitions and aspirations.

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

1. Approve the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2023-26 as set out at Appendix 1.

13.3 **Reasons for Decision**

13.3.1 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.

13.3.2 We are accountable for the delivery of our strategy to: - Sheffield Children in Care Council and Sheffield Care Leavers' Union - Young People's Reverse Scrutiny Panel - Sheffield Corporate Parenting Board

13.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

13.4.1 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 corporate parenting 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.

14. SEND SEF AND TRANSFORMATION WORK

14.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Strategic Director of Children's Services which provided an overview to the Education Children and Families Policy Committee of the Special Educational Needs / Disability (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Self Evaluation Framework.

14.2 The Committee noted the report.

15. UPDATE REPORT FROM THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

15.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Strategic Director of Children's Services which provided a Strategic Director's update on the performance and governance of Children's services, including progress in meeting DCS (Director of Children's Services) accountabilities and delivering on our 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.

15.2 The Committee noted the report.

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