

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES'
SERVICES
9th April, 2014**

Present:- Councillor Lakin (in the Chair); Councillor Roche.

Councillor Pickering was also in attendance.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ahmed and Beaumont. Councillor Beaumont was absent as she was attending other Council business and representing Councillor Lakin at a CSE Forum in Barnsley.

D112. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No Declarations of Interest were made.

D113. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 5TH MARCH, 2014.

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families' Services held on 5th March, 2014, were considered.

Resolved: - That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as an accurate record.

**D114. RECOMMENDED PROVIDER FOR THE CONTRACT TO DELIVER
ADVOCACY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED IN
CHILD PROTECTION PROCESSES - RETROSPECTIVE APPROVAL.**

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Strategic Commissioner (Neighbourhood and Adult Services Directorate) that outlined a tendering process that had taken place in relation to the contract to deliver Advocacy for children and young people involved in Child Protection processes.

The report outlined the commissioning history relating to the area. A commissioning exercise had been undertaken in preparation of the contract ending on 31st March, 2014. The contract offered was for one year from 1st April, 2014 – 31st March, 2015 with the option to extend for a further year if desirable.

An outline of the commissioning exercise had taken place and the responses were shared. Three bids had been received and were graded against the criteria.

Using a rigid application of the evaluation criteria, Barnardo's were confirmed as the successful bidder. A soft-challenge had been received from the Rights 2 Rights Service, which had led to a re-evaluation of the submissions. The same outcome was achieved and the bid submitted on

behalf of the Rights 2 Rights Service was found to contain insufficient detail and did not deliver against all of the criteria required.

The Strategic Commissioner confirmed that all contracts in place were subject to robust performance management and that this would continue.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and its content noted.

(2) That Barnardo's, the successful bidder for the contract, be endorsed to deliver Advocacy Services for children and young people involved in Child Protection processes.

D115. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 28TH FEBRUARY, 2014.

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Finance Manager (Financial Services, Resources Directorate), which provided a financial forecast to 31st March, 2014, based on actual income and expenditure to 28th February, 2014.

Overall, the Directorate was estimating a £968,000 over-spend outturn position at the end of the 2013/2014 financial year. This now represented a reduction of £156,000 since the January budget monitoring report.

This over-spend position had increased since the time of writing the submitted report, when it was originally reported as £768,000 over-spent. This was due to continuing discussions relating to the Academisation of Rawmarsh Community School. When the report had been written it was estimated that the School's £100,000 deficit would be transferred to the Local Authority on the completion of their sponsored academisation. It was known at this point that the deficit was higher but it was thought likely that the deficit could be reduced. Following further discussions with the Headteacher and Business Managers of both Schools involved, it was now likely that the deficit would be approximately £300,000. Robust financial management would be in place following the School's academisation. The Local Authority would monitor the budget on a weekly basis and the School would only be allowed to undertake essential spend on staffing, utilities and health and safety items.

The forecast overspend was largely due to the continuing pressures in Safeguarding Children and Families' Services due to the needs-led nature of the budget, Disability Services and the Directorate-Wide budget.

The report provided an update on the main areas of variance and outlined the main pressures and areas of under-spend and/or over-spend for each Service.

A number of continuing budget management actions were being taken to avoid costs: -

- Proactive management concentrating on avoiding costs relating to placements for Looked After Children, the Fostering Framework and through block commissioning and negotiation of placements was taking place. These efforts had achieved savings of £714,000 to February, 2014;
- The Multi-Agency Support Panel was continuing to make efficient multi-agency management actions and decisions, and continuing to avoid costs wherever possible;
- The Invest to Save Programme in Fostering and Adoption Services was continuing to be effective and increase the number of in-house fostering placements and adopters;
- Agency costs had increased compared to the same period in the previous year primarily as a result of covering vacant posts within Safeguarding Children and Families' Service, and covering sickness absence and maternity leave to ensure that safe staffing ratios were maintained. Recruitment was underway in relation to vacant posts to save on agency costs;
- The recruitment of Social Workers and Team Managers was also considered. The timescales involved often meant that posts could not be filled as soon as they became vacant. However, the recruitment and retention of Social Workers was not currently uncontrolled or unpredictable in Rotherham. The Department for Education's data had shown that Rotherham's turnover of social care staff and use of agency was one of the lowest in the region;
- Non-contractual overtime for Children and Young People's Services had increased compared to the same period in the previous year as a result of the need for fully trained staff to maintain cover in residential homes. Agency staff could not cover these posts due to training requirements and service-users' need for consistency;
- Consultancy costs had decreased compared to the same period in the previous year.

Based on previous Budget Monitoring feedback from the Cabinet Member, the January 2014 report contained a breakdown of the different placement types that existed for the years 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14 to February, 2014. The breakdown noted the number of out-of-authority placements that existed, the average placement cost, independent fostering agencies and in-house fostering placements.

The report informed the Cabinet Member of current risks and uncertainties relating to the Service's budget: -

- The recruitment of in-house fosterers and adopters was a continuing focus for the Service, but these could only go forward if the quality of the placement was sufficient;
- It was intended that placement costs were reduced, however, the decisions around selecting a placement were always made in the best interest of the child/children.

The Cabinet Member was disappointed that Children and Young People's Services' estimated over-spend position had once again increased after continued work had reduced it to £768,000. He referred to the legislation that compelled local authorities to be responsible for the deficits of schools that were becoming sponsored academies and was mindful that the overall Children and Young People's Services' over-spend increase was due to Rawmarsh Community School not being able to reduce their budget deficit within the period agreed.

Resolved: - (1) That the latest financial projection against the budget for the year based on actual income and expenditure to 28th February, 2014, be noted.

(2) That a report be presented to a future meeting of the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families' Services outlining individual school's budget monitoring reports.

D116. ADMISSIONS CONSULTATION OUTCOME IN RESPECT OF ENTRY IN THE 2015/2016 ACADEMIC YEAR.

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Principal School Admission, Organisation and Special Educational Needs Assessment Service Officer (Schools and Lifelong Learning, Children and Young People's Services Directorate) that outlined the consultation that had taken place on the School Admission Policy/Co-ordinated Scheme for the admission year 2015/2016. The Policy had to be finalised by 15th April, 2014.

Minute No. D55 (Admissions Consultation in respect of entry in the 2015/16 academic year) of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families' Services that took place on 16th October, 2013, refers.

The School Admission Policy/Co-ordinated Scheme for the admission year 2015/2016 included sections relating to: -

- Admission Criteria for Community Schools;
- Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements (including Admissions Criteria);
- Waiting Lists;
- Catchment Areas;
- Fair Access Protocol (FAP);
- Statutory Closing Dates;
- Report to the Schools Adjudicator.

An outline of the 2015/2016 Admissions Policy was provided: -

- No changes were planned to the Admissions Criteria for 2015/2016;
- The closing date for admission to Secondary School on 1st September, 2015, would be 31st October, 2014. The closing date for

admission to Primary School on 1st September, 2015, would be 15th January, 2015;

- No alterations to existing catchment areas were proposed, although it was noted that discussions would be taking place with stakeholders regarding the catchment area of the new central primary school. A report on this would follow to the Cabinet Member in due course;
- Consultation had already taken place by either prescribed alteration process or via the annual admissions consultation in relation to amendments and alterations to school admission numbers.

The Principal Officer requested that the draft 2015/2016 Admissions document be approved and published on the Council's website.

Resolved: - That the Admission Arrangements for the 2015/2016 school year, as included in the submitted report, be agreed following the end of the consultation process.

D117. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families' Services take place on Wednesday 21st May, 2014, to start at 9.00 a.m. in the Rotherham Town Hall.