

# Education, Children and Families Committee

**10am, Tuesday, 6 March 2018**

## **Holiday Activity Programme for Disabled Children and Young People**

**Item number** 7.10

**Report number**

**Executive/routine**

**Wards**

**Council Commitments**

### **Executive Summary**

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The Council provides a Holiday Activity Programme for Disabled Children and Young People (“the playscheme”), which is commissioned by the council from an organisation called FABB. The service runs during school holidays and has been valued by families as a crucial support.

Since a new provider was commissioned in 2017, parents have expressed a range of views on two main issues; a) level of provision (4 weeks maximum not 6) and b) quality of service with the new provider. There have been a number of representations to members, including a deputation to the December 2017 Education, Children and Families Committee.

That committee agreed to set up a member officer group, which has met on two occasions (December 2017 and February 2018).

In the meantime, ongoing discussion between council officers and the service provider has concluded that it is not possible for the provider to continue to manage this service.

In order to offer continuity of service, the council varied the registration of its own care service in order to take over the running of the playscheme during the February holiday. The council will now bring the service in-house for the Easter and summer holiday playschemes.

Council officers are working intensively with the Care Inspectorate and the current provider on the new management arrangements for the service. FABB staff will be sub-contracted to the council in the first instance.

The council has also identified additional financial resources to extend the provision. As part of a wider consultation exercise, Council officers will continue engage closely with parents to determine how to make best use of this.

## Holiday Activity Programme for Disabled Children and Young People

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 It is recommended that the Education, Children and Families Committee note the contents of this report.

### 2. Background

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- 2.1 A play scheme service for children and young people with disabilities has been delivered in Edinburgh for around 15 years. It was originally run by parents before being delivered by the council as part of its early years service. Latterly it has been managed by the disability team in Children's Services. The aim is to create opportunities for disabled children and young people to participate in fun and challenging activities during the school holidays and to offer a break to families from their caring role. The service has the additional benefit of providing a greatly appreciated level of respite to families who would otherwise face significant challenges in caring for their disabled children for the full duration of every school break.
- 2.2 Further to end of the contract with the consortium which previously provided the service, Fabb Scotland were awarded the contract 3 July 2017 and commenced service planning on 18 August 2017. The contract duration is 43 months, with options to extend for a further two 12 month periods. The service has a number of delivery strands including overall programme management; supporting the inclusiveness of mainstream activity providers; playschemes for primary and secondary age children; activity days/residential trips; and specialist provision for those with challenging behavioural needs.
- 2.3 The playscheme is a discretionary service, not statutory. Due to the seasonal nature of the playscheme, staff are employed on short term contracts and while they are trained to an agreed standard, they are not trained or accredited in behaviour management programmes to the levels required by e.g. a special school or care setting.

### 3. Main report

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- 3.1 Fabb Scotland have, to date, had the opportunity to deliver two weeks of holiday provision in October 2017 and a further week in February 2018.
- 3.2 While most children attending these weeks had a good experience, there were a number of operational issues in the smooth running of the service. Since October 2017 Council officers worked closely with Fabb Scotland to learn from this experience and to use the learning to inform and improve future service delivery.
- 3.3 The Education, Children and Families Committee on 12 December 2017 heard a deputation from parents of children attending St Crispin's, Oaklands and Braidburn special schools. Pupils attending these schools are classed as being "severely disabled".
- 3.4 The deputation made three requests:
  - That funding be extended to ensure a full 6-week playscheme provision for all children with disabilities in Edinburgh
  - Or, if the above is not possible, that a third of playscheme places be protected to ensure the children and families with the highest levels of need continue to have access to a 6-week playscheme service per year
  - That it is clarified whether the contract for playscheme provision includes provision for those children with severe and complex needs and medical needs.
- 3.5 The committee agreed to set up a member officer group, which met on 21 December 2017.
- 3.6 Prior to the meeting of the group, there were representations to members from other parents of children attending special schools. Those parents attended a separate meeting on 20 December 2017 with the Convenor and Vice Convenor at which they raised various related issues regarding the operation of the playscheme.
- 3.7 The decision of the Working Group was not to change the scope or nature of the playscheme until all affected parties were consulted. In order to continue that consultation, the convenor and vice convenor have invited parents and officers to a joint meeting and are awaiting responses before confirming the date.
- 3.8 The other decisions of the group are detailed below:
  - To agree child profiles would be collected before the start of the playscheme in February 2018.
  - That a risk assessment is carried out for every child attending the playscheme and that this is shared with all members of staff working with that child.
  - To ensure the risk assessment is integrated into the Child Plan and that this is signed off by parents, kept on site and is updated with any daily changes as appropriate.

- To instruct senior management of FABB ensure that staff are aware and implement the recommendations within the Child Plan
- 3.10 Council officers in attendance were also asked to circulate a letter to all parents outlining:
- The qualifications of the management team and the workforce
  - How the services provided by the playscheme differs from school
  - The complaints procedure
- All actions above were implemented.
- 3.11 The member officer group met with parents on 7 February 2018.
- 3.12 Officers confirmed that the playscheme was set to run in the February 2018 break, and that a number of applications had been received, provision was being made for 40 children and that those children whose needs could not be met on this occasion would be allocated spaces in the Easter or summer school breaks.
- 3.13 Parents raised some issues regarding communication with the provider and officers undertook to resolve these with the provider. For example, parents prefer the use of group e-mail to communicate to all regarding any changes made; and it was suggested that the registration form be amended to allow parents to register a second or third choice of dates if the first dates were not available.
- 3.14 Officers indicated that the majority of children attending the playscheme to date have had a positive experience and parents were agreed that in order to maximise the benefit of the playscheme, we must work in partnership with the provider to build on strengths. It was also clarified that while the playscheme contract specifies that it will work with all levels of disability, it cannot be guaranteed that every child's need will be safely met and the provider must be given the discretion to take decisions on the admission of individual children subject to risk assessment.
- 3.15 Since then, taking everything into account, officers have agreed with the Convenor and Vice Convener that the council will now assume the full management of the playscheme for the Easter and summer breaks. The Registered Manager will be a council officer and we will sub contract the current workforce. We would then be involved in the recruitment for more staff with the provider. Some council staff will require to be back filled to work on this and we will do so using funds from the current contract.
- 3.16 The council now needs to consider, in consultation with all stakeholders how best to plan for future provision. In doing so we face a number of challenges including availability of sufficient workforce to further expand service and recent information from NHS indicating that, due to contractual changes, nursing staff currently supplied by them to support medical needs of children attending playscheme will not be available in future.

- 3.17 In order to improve engagement with parents of children affected by disability or additional support needs, officers are planning a series of engagement events starting in March 2018 which will give families an opportunity to participate in a wider conversation about how partners can work better together with families to improve life experiences for children and families affected by disabilities and additional support needs.
- 3.18 The council will work in consultation with families in order to plan for the future and decide on what options will best meet need in future. The Council will consider whether it is preferable to put a new service specification out to tender or to keep the service in-house and sub-contract pieces of work.

#### **4. Measures of success**

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- 4.1 Numbers of children using the playscheme.
- 4.2 Results of parental satisfaction survey.

#### **5. Financial impact**

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- 5.1 The total estimated value of the current contract to the Council, including extensions, is between £3,765,324 and £3,884,312 assuming annual inflation of 2%. Total annual spend to the council will depend on index linked price adjustments and parental contributions.
- 5.2 The contract is subject to parental contributions. The exact level of parental contributions is dependent on the number of children who attend the service. The estimate of £110,000 per annum is based on experience from the income levels in the current contract.
- 5.3 The council has identified additional funding of £400,000 to contribute to provision in 2018/19
- 5.4 Any additional allocation of resources in the current year will create a corresponding pressure in subsequent financial years.

#### **6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact**

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- 6.1 The holiday activity programme for disabled children and young people is a high-risk provision. The provider has therefore been required to evidence acceptable arrangements in respect of business continuity.
- 6.2 Assumption of management by council officers will reduce risk.

## **7. Equalities impact**

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- 7.1 An Equalities and Rights Impact Assessment (ERIA) was undertaken in March 2017, with due regards to the protected characteristics as detailed in the Equalities Act 2010. There were no negative impact outcomes.

## **8. Sustainability impact**

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- 8.1 No significant environmental impacts are expected to arise from this contract.
- 8.2 This procurement has adhered to policy on Sustainable Procurement and Implementing Community Benefits.
- 8.3 Community benefits offered by FABB Scotland includes training 8 young people, 4 disabled and 4 non-disabled to be paired or buddied up and provided a two week placement at the local HAP venue. Value is £4,480 if employed as junior leaders. The designated Contract Manager will be responsible for monitoring delivery and reporting of community benefits by individual providers.

## **9. Consultation and engagement**

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- 9.1 Fabb Scotland created a Parents Reference group which has met quarterly from November 2017.
- 9.2 The member officer group has engaged with parents regarding overall level of provision and allocation of places as agreed at the last committee.
- 9.3 Officers will run a series of wider engagement events with a range of partners agencies starting in March 2018.

## **10. Background reading/external references**

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- 10.1 None.

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## 11. Appendices

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None.