

# **FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

21 MARCH 2019

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

**Present:**

Councillor Christopher Akers Belcher (In the Chair)

Councillors: Stephen Akers-Belcher, Paddy Brown, Kevin Cranney,  
Brenda Harrison, Ann Marshall, Leisa Smith and Mike Young.

Also Present: Councillor Marjorie James as substitute for Councillor Shane Moore;  
and Councillor Allan Barclay as substitute for Councillor  
Stephen Thomas in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.2.

Officers: Gill Alexander, Chief Executive  
Hayley Martin, Chief Solicitor  
Chris Little, Director of Finance and Policy  
Danielle Swainston, Assistant Director, Joint Commissioning  
Steve Hilton, Communications and Marketing Team  
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

### **120. Apologies for Absence**

Councillors James Brewer, Shane Moore and Stephen Thomas.

### **121. Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Stephen Akers-Belcher and Kevin Cranney declared interests due to their involvement in other organisations in the town providing youth services.

### **122. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2019**

Confirmed.

## **123. Use of Child Poverty Reserve – Proposed Extension of the Children’s 5 – 19 Activities Grant for 12 Months** *(Director Finance and Policy)*

### **Type of decision**

Key Decision (tests (i) and (ii) apply) (Previous general exception provisions apply).

### **Purpose of report**

To consider the potential use of the Child Poverty Reserve for the proposed Extension of the Children's 5-19 Activities Grant for 12 months.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The Director of Finance and Policy reported that the establishment of the Child Poverty Reserve was originally approved by Council on 10 December 2015 and authority delegated to Finance and Policy Committee to approve the use of these one off funds. The current uncommitted balance of this reserve was £35,000.

At the meeting in December 2018, the Committee agreed that a significant contribution would be made to this reserve from the windfall payment the Council would receive from the sale of the King John’s Tavern to JD Wetherspoon. The necessary legal processes were currently progressing between JD Wetherspoon’s and the owners of Middleton Grange Shopping Centre and while it was not anticipated that there would be any issues in relation to the completion of the legal processes, the Director highlighted the risk, however small, that the Council would not receive the windfall payment until this work was complete.

On 19 February 2019 the Children’s Services Committee considered a report (set out as appendix A to the report) which outlined a proposal to extend the Children’s 5-19 Activities Grant for a further period of 12 months. The Children’s Services Committee then referred this issue to Children’s Services Committee Working Group on 25 February 2019 and the notes from this meeting were considered by Children’s Services Committee on 19 March 2019 (and were set out as appendix B to the report).

Finance and Policy Committee was requested to consider the issues detailed in the appendices and determine whether they wished to support an extension of the Children’s 5-19 Activities Grant for a further period of 12 months.

The Chair indicated that the need for an additional meeting was due to the decision making in relation to the Child and Family Poverty Reserve funding being delegated to Finance and Policy Committee. The Chair stated that he had requested that the proposal put forward to this committee had to be

different to that considered by the Children's Services Committee so the recommendations referred to a new contract agreement with a requirement of match funding, new contract specifications agreed by Children's Services Committee and robust monthly monitoring together with an appropriate exit strategy. Individual organisations should also be able to access the funding; it did not require a consortium approach.

The Chair of the Children's Services Committee welcomed the change in tone of the report and recommendations over those that had been previously considered.

There was concern expressed by Members at the request for additional funding at a time when the Council was facing cuts. The proposal for matched funding was welcomed though it was proposed that the funding be only for 6 months rather than 12 and funding was only paid based on results. There were other funding opportunities available to the groups around providing training and employment that could also be accessed.

The meeting debated the revised proposals and it was concluded that the proposals be supported on the basis of this being a new one-off grant and not the continuation of existing funding with a ceiling of £50,000 being available as matched funding (not in-kind) payable only –

- on the receipt of monthly performance reports;
- details being submitted of the numbers of children involved, their home postcode, their school and if more than one child from a family was involved;
- an exit strategy for the scheme being submitted by 30 June.

The Chief Executive stated that she and the Director of Finance and Policy would work with the department to ensure robust arrangements were in place in accordance with Members views. This may also include some 'dip sampling' by Internal Audit throughout the process to provide assurance to Members.

The following decision was agreed unanimously.

### **Decision**

That a new 5-19 Activities Grant initiative for a period of 6 months be approved and the amount to be provided from the Child and Family Poverty Reserve be limited to a maximum of £50,000, subject to:

- individual organisations providing match funding on a £ for £ cash basis;
- the agreement of service specification by the Children's Services Committee;
- Council funding being conditional on the provision of monthly performance monitoring information, as stipulated;
- Council funding being conditional on individual organisations providing an exit strategy by 30 June 2019 to manage the non-recurrent nature of

this funding.

The meeting concluded at 10.20 am.

**H MARTIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

**PUBLICATION DATE: 27 MARCH 2019**