

MINUTES OF THE MEETING Cabinet Member Signing HELD ON Wednesday, 15th October, 2025, 2.00 - 2.30 pm

PRESENT:

Cabinet Member: Councillor Zena Brabazon

ALSO ATTENDING:

Pauline Simpson - Strategic Commissioner, Chris Liasi – Principle Committee Co-ordinator.

7. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred to the notice of filming at meetings and this information was noted.

8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

10. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

11. DEPUTATIONS / PETITIONS / QUESTIONS

There were none.

12. AWARD OF FRAMEWORK TO SHORT BREAKS PROVIDERS FOR AFTERSCHOOL AND HOLIDAY

Local Authorities had a legal duty to provide short break services for disabled children, young people, and their parents or carers, in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

Short Breaks Overview:

- These services offered disabled children time away from their primary carers through various activities, including daytime, evening, overnight, and weekend sessions.

- They took place in the child's home, with approved carers, or in residential/community settings.
- Support was delivered via specialist services, temporary carers, or outreach workers, helping children access mainstream leisure activities while giving carers temporary relief.

Procurement and Framework:

- The council conducted a competitive procurement process to establish a new open framework with multiple providers, divided into five categories (Lots):
 1. After-school activities
 2. Weekend activities
 3. Holiday activities
 4. Outreach services
 5. Other short breaks

Framework Details:

- The framework was scheduled to begin on 1 November 2025 for an initial four-year term, with an option to extend by up to four additional years (2+2), reaching an estimated total value of £2.7 million if fully extended.
- The council planned to reopen the framework every 12–18 months to allow new providers to join. Existing providers would not be required to re-tender during these reopenings.

RESOLVED:

The Cabinet Member RESOLVED:

3.1 That the Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families approved in accordance with Contract Standing Orders 16.01 (bid acceptance), 2.01 (c) and as permitted under 0.08 (which provides that where the decision is required by the Cabinet, this may also be taken by the Leader or by a Cabinet Member with the Leader's agreement) the award of framework agreements for the provision of short breaks services for disabled children and young people to successful providers identified in Appendix 1 - Part B (exempt information) of this report. The framework agreement shall run for initial period of 4 years with anticipated commencement date of 1st November 2025 at estimated cost of £337,500 per annum with an option to extend further period 2 years, plus 2 years. The total aggregated value of the framework is estimated at £2.7 million (excluding VAT) over the full duration of 8 years, if fully extended.

3.2 Delegated authority to the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Lead member for Children's, Schools and families to award, framework agreements to successful bidders following the re-opening of the framework as outlined under 1.6 above

Reasons for decision

4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide short break services for disabled children and young people and their parents/carers, in line with the Children Act 1989 and Children and Families Act 2014 and their associated regulations and guidance.

4.2 The existing contracts for short break services are due to expire on 31st August 2025 and there is no further provision to extend the contract.

4.3 The Council has carried out a competitive procurement process to establish the open framework and identified the successful providers who will deliver short breaks services from 1st November 2025.

Alternative options considered

5.1 Do nothing: This option was considered and not considered to be viable because the Council has a statutory duty under the Children Act 1989 which places a duty to provide breaks from caring for carers of disabled children. Doing nothing would lead to reliance on spot purchasing arrangements to ensure the Council's statutory duties are met. This may result in providers charging exorbitant prices which do not deliver value for money. Also, may viewed as non-compliance procurements.

5.2 Deliver in house: The Council does not currently have the significant level of resources that would be required to deliver the service in house. This option would require substantial investment in several key areas: such as staff salaries, recruitment and training, buildings, equipment, transportation, maintenance costs, management systems and regulatory compliance.

13. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

14. EXEMPT - AWARD OF FRAMEWORK AGREEMENTS FOR PROVISION OF SHORT BREAKS

RESOLVED:

The Cabinet Member considered the exempt information.

CABINET MEMBER:

Signed by Cabinet Member.....

Date