

Executive Scrutiny Board

9 February 2021

Minute Extract

60/20 Call-in of Council Cabinet Decision 105/20

The Board received an item in relation to the call-in of Council Cabinet decision 105/20 – Financial Support to Families During School Holidays.

The Chair outlined the call-in procedure and reported that the signatories to the call-in notice had cited that the following principles of decision making had been breached:

- Clarity of aims and desired outcomes
- That relevant issues do not appear to have been taken into consideration

The Chair invited the signatories of the call-in notice to address the Board. It was stated that Council Cabinet had been given a clear steer by the resolution agreed at Council in November 2020, that it should provide children and families with support, via vouchers, for all school holidays in 2021. The signatories stated that no answer had been given to the question of how many children had been provided for in the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme and that it was not clear what options families had in the periods not covered by the programme. The signatories felt that it was not clear how desired the aims and outcomes would be achieved operationally.

The Board questioned the signatories in relation to whether they agreed that the report was a response to the resolution agreed at Council, the use of reserves and whether those people claiming Universal Credit had been taken into consideration. The signatories stated that the provision of vouchers during the school holidays for all those who qualify for Free School Meals could be achieved through the MTFP.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People was invited to address the Board. It was stated that the report was a carefully considered response to the resolution agreed at Council and puts forward a financially sustainable proposal to address child poverty in the city, in the short and medium term. In relation to the numbers of those children provided for in the proposals, it was stated that it was only possible to base this on the Autumn 2020 census and that the council did not have access to the numbers of people in receipt of Universal Credit. The Cabinet Member outlined the options available for those who were unable to access the HAF programme.

The Board questioned the Cabinet Member in relation to the numbers expected to attend the HAF programme, what the plan was for the four weeks not covered by the proposals and what work had been undertaken with outside bodies and organisations. The Cabinet Member outlined the support available through Food 4 Thought and the wider alliance structure in place for any family in need.

One of the signatories of the call-in notice and the Cabinet Member were invited to sum-up.

The signatory stated that the paper had no clarity and no delivery of the Council resolution.

The Cabinet Member stated that full consideration had been given to the resolution from Council and that any family that needed support could get it.

Members of the Board were invited to make final statements. Some Members felt that the proposals lacked clarity, and that outcomes were ill defined, especially in relation to the resolution from Council. Some Members felt that relevant issues had not been taken into consideration.

Members of the Board were asked individually to state whether they felt the following principle of decision making had been breached:

- Clarity of aims and desired outcomes

Members found that there had been a breach of this principle of decision making.

Members of the Board were asked individually to state whether they felt the following principle of decision making had been breached:

- That relevant issues do not appear to have been taken into consideration

Members found that there had not been a breach of this principle of decision making.

The Executive Scrutiny Board resolved:

- **To uphold the call-in of Council Cabinet decision 105/20 on the following grounds:**
 - **That clarity of aims and desired outcomes had not been provided.**
- **To refer Council Cabinet decision 105/20 to Council Cabinet for reconsideration at the earliest opportunity.**