

Time began: 6.00pm
Time ended: 6.50pm

COUNCIL CABINET 27 SEPTEMBER 2011

Present Councillor Hickson (Chair)
Councillors Holmes, Ingall, Jones, Skelton and Williams

In attendance Councillor Bayliss

This record of decisions was published on 29 September 2011. The key decisions set out in this record will come into force and may be implemented on the expiry of five clear days unless a key decision is called in.

77/11 Neighbourhood Nursery Childcare Provision

The Council Cabinet considered a report on Neighbourhood Nursery Childcare Provision. The Council manages three Neighbourhood Nurseries, which provide childcare facilities for children aged 0-5 years. The three nurseries are based in the three Sure Start buildings; Rosehill, Osmaston Allenton and Austin Sunnyhill (Homelands).

The nurseries are heavily subsidised and highly resource-intensive due to the nature of their activity. In addition, whilst the Council had a statutory duty to ensure sufficient childcare places in the City, this did not mean direct provision.

The nurseries were therefore identified for potential outsourcing during the budget setting process in March 2011.

We had therefore undertaken a tender process to identify a suitable provider and this report provided detail of the tender process and criteria against which the bids were assessed and recommended acceptance of the tenderer who scored highest against this criteria.

Options Considered

1. The Local Authority continues to manage childcare provision in these nurseries and incurs substantive costs associated with the ongoing subsidy.
2. The nurseries were not sustainable and the local Authority meets its statutory duties to ensure sufficient quality, affordable childcare by alternative means, allowing closure of the nurseries. Further consideration would also be needed on the requirement of capital grant repayment.

Decision

1. To approve the appointment of the “4 Children” organisation as the preferred provider for nursery services at Austin Sunnyhill, Osmaston Allenton & Rosehill Children’s Centres.
2. To delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Children and Young People to award the contract to “4 Children” for a five year period after the statutory standstill period.

Reasons

1. The 2011/12 budget approved by Council in March 2011 included savings of £200,000 from the elimination of the subsidy to Neighbourhood Nurseries.
2. Efficiency savings had already been made in-house from this service - the historic subsidy was in the region of £350,000.

In accordance with Procedure Rule AI26, all Members of the Council had been advised that this item would be considered although it was included in the Forward Plan but for a later date.

MINUTES END