

Update on Support Services for Education (SSE)

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1. Summary

- 1.1.** Support Services for Education (SSE) is currently an internal trading unit within the Commercial and Business Services Directorate that provides a wide range of support services to schools and other education providers, with a turnover of approx. £19m and over 400 staff.
- 1.2.** The Children and Families Scrutiny Committee requested an update on SSE.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1.** A presentation has been prepared for the Scrutiny meeting on 16 March that focuses on the following:
 - Highlights to date
 - Priorities - Services, Financials and Customers.
 - Update on commissioning of SSE SEND services.
- 2.2.** Highlights include the following:
 - Achieving full cost recovery earlier than expected and delivering a small surplus each year.
 - Development of a new 'one-stop shop' website.
 - Retaining good buy back levels from schools.
 - Provision of work experience and apprenticeship opportunities for young people.
 - Encouraging supporting staff to take on volunteer roles such as being a Governor or mentoring young people.
 - Positive staff survey results
 - Collaborative work with North Somerset Council around the TUPE transfer of staff to SSE for future provision of commissioned services.
 - Shortlisted finalists in three national awards, more recently the Public Finance Innovation award.
- 2.3.** Future priorities include:
 - Developing new traded packages to replace those previously funded by LA or Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding and ensuring existing packages meet the needs of large academies and Trusts.
 - Finalising Service Level Agreements for services commissioned by the LA.
 - Finalise the contract with North Somerset for commissioned services and explore similar opportunities with other LAs.

- Develop traded arrangements in North Somerset as well as in other counties in order to widen SSE's customer base.
- Develop brokered service arrangements.
- Improve feedback mechanisms from customers to identify areas for continuous improvement.
- Optimise use of new IT equipment and systems and develop time recording and resource management systems.

2.4. SSE have been working closely with the lead LA SEND Commissioner on ways of providing SEND Support Services using less of the High Needs Funding, which is overspent.

3. Background

3.1. The County Council considered a business case in Dec 2014 and made the decision to keep Support Services for Education (SSE) in-house with the following objectives:

- Continue to deliver high quality services to schools that provide value for money.
- Improve the commercialism of SSE and the services within it.
- Ensure a strong customer focus is maintained.
- Ensure the full cost of service delivery is recovered – through price increases, growth and efficiencies.
- Continue to work with commissioners on the Local Authority (LA) commissioned services.
- Provide updates to members

3.2. A paper went to Cabinet on providing an update against each of the main objectives set by the County Council in Dec 2014.

4. Consultations undertaken

4.1. The LA SEND Commissioner is leading on consultations with schools and stakeholders in the impacts of these changes and SSE is leading on consultations with staff.

5. Implications

5.1. SSE will continue to focus on the priorities summarised above, which in turn will ensure that it is able to continue to achieve the objectives set by the County Council.

6. Background papers

6.1. The Paper to Cabinet providing an operational update on SSE was discussed at the meeting on 16 March.

Note: For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author