

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD 20<sup>th</sup> March 2006

**Present:**

Councillor Cath Hill (Children's Services Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Adrienne Simcock, Director of Children's Services  
John Collings, Assistant Director, Children's Services  
Phil Warrilow, Interim Assistant Director  
Ian Merritt, Senior Education Officer  
Danielle Swainston, Early Years Manager  
Andy Hagan, Education Officer  
Angela Hunter, Principal Democratic Services Officer

**41. Asset Management Plan (Education)** (*Director of Children's Services*)

**Type of decision**

Key Decision (tests i and ii apply)

**Purpose of report**

To seek approval of the Statement of Priorities as part of the Children's Services Asset Management Plan.

**Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The Director of Children's Services reported that approval was sought for the revised Statement of Priorities. This Statement was submitted alongside the Authority's formal 'expression of interest' in respect of the Building Schools for the Future programme.

The Statement of Priorities identified and enhanced the direct links between the Authority's corporate strategy with its approach to regeneration and the LAs ambition to raise standards of attainment. The Director of Children's Services emphasised how through effective management of school

buildings and by taking full advantage of the funding available, the Authority would be able to deliver real benefits to the schools and pupils of Hartlepool.

### **Decision**

The Statement of Priorities was approved.

## **42. Hartlepool Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education** (*Director of Children's Services*)

### **Type of decision**

Non Key

### **Purpose of report**

To determine the Hartlepool Agreed Syllabus for community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools in Hartlepool for the school years 2006/11 following consultation with SACRE, schools and religious groups.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The agreed syllabus was a document that detailed the statutory requirements for all community and voluntary controlled schools in a Local Authority (LA). The LA drew up the syllabus with advice from local bodies and various partner organisations. It was required that every LA review its locally agreed syllabus every five years.

The syllabus indicated at what age or Key Stages particular subject matter in particular religions should be taught. The content of the agreed syllabus was decided locally and was not subject to nationally prescribed attainment targets and programmes of study. However, the LA had included attainment targets, programmes of study and assessment arrangements in its proposals for guidance purposes.

### **Decision**

- The Hartlepool Agreed Syllabus for 2006/11 was approved as the Authority's Agreed Syllabus.
- The Syllabus be circulated to, and used by, all community and voluntary controlled schools to inform teaching and learning.

### **43. Outdoor Centre – Charges for School Year** (*Director of Children's Services*)

#### **Type of decision**

Non Key.

#### **Purpose of report**

To request the Portfolio Holder to determine the charges to be set by Hartlepool Borough Council for places at the outdoor centres covered by the joint arrangements with two former Cleveland local authorities (Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland) in school year 2006/07. Stockton was previously part of the joint arrangement but has now withdrawn. These are Carlton Outdoor Education Centre, North Yorkshire and the Lanehead Centre, Coniston.

#### **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The Director of Children's Services reported that each authority set the charges for its own parties attending each centre, including the arrangements for non-school bookings. The increases proposed were broadly in line with inflation and normally come into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> September of each financial year. The proposed increases could be accommodated within the Children's Services department budgets. Details of the proposed increases were included within the report for both the Carlton Outdoor Education Centre and the Lanehead Centre.

#### **Decision**

- The proposed charges were approved with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2006.
- It was agreed that a report would be submitted to the Portfolio Holder each year detailing the proposed charges.

### **44. Draft Children's Centres and Extended Schools Strategy** (*Director of Children's Services*)

#### **Type of decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of report**

To report on the outcomes of the consultation on the first draft Children's Centres and Extended Schools strategy.

To seek approval to undertake a further public consultation exercise on a second draft Children's Centres and Extended Schools strategy.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The Early Year's Manager reported that the first draft of the Children's Centres and Extended Schools Strategy had been approved in October 2005 along with the public consultation process which followed. More than 1200 copies of the draft strategy were sent to a wide range of partners as detailed in the report.

The results of this consultation were detailed in the report. Where appropriate, some of the responses had been incorporated into the latest draft and included:

- The terms 'clusters' being changed to 'localities' to avoid any confusion
- Delivery would be through 5 localities rather than 7
- Rural areas were now incorporated into localities.

The Early Year's Manager indicated that, if approved, the second draft would be out for public consultation for 4 weeks with the final document being submitted to Cabinet in June.

The Portfolio Holder commented on the excellent and thorough work carried out by officers.

### **Decision**

- The outcomes of the consultation on the first draft Children's Centres and Extended Schools Strategy was noted.
- The second draft of the Children's Centre and Extended Schools Strategy was approved for consultation.

## **45. Workforce Development Strategy – Provision for Short Term Projects** (*Interim Assistant Director – Safeguarding & Specialist Services*)

### **Type of decision**

Non key

## **Purpose of report**

To seek approval for three key projects to be undertaken between April and July 2006, which would take forward work in relation to the local Children's Workforce Strategy as required by Every Child Matters.

## **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The creation of the Children's Services Department had resulted in the need to review social care training. Every Child Matters required that all Children's Services Authorities should develop local Workforce Development Strategy, which should be referenced in the Children & Young People's Plan.

There were two inter-related projects which were proposed to:

- Map the extent of current training and performance against national and local targets in relation to children's social care services. Make recommendations for the future structure and staff roles in delivering and supporting this activity, including consideration of the option of integrating the infrastructure for social care and delivery of non-schools aspects of education training functions;
- Produce for 2006/07 a Training Plan for children's social care to reflect national requirements, local service developments and the results of mapping work on current performance.

The key outcomes required from the above projects were detailed within the report. External consultants were approached because of their specialist and proven ability to deliver workforce development plans and their extensive knowledge in social care training.

An additional project was identified to create a more formalised approach to the development of a Children's Services Workforce Development Strategy. An executive management group had been established to take forward the development of an appropriate strategy for Hartlepool and eventually include key partners. This additional project would consist of:

- Designing and completing a comprehensive mapping exercise to provide individual and aggregated baseline information about the profile of the current children's services workforce including (jobs held, location, gender, age ethnicity, qualifications held or being obtained, essential internal training completed or required);
- Establishing information and record systems that can be continually up-dated and interrogated to provide up to date information to facilitate projections of future workforce development and training needs;
- Training appropriate staff to sustain the system after the end of the

projects.

The Council's Procurement Procedures applied and advice had been sought in respect of these proposed consultancy projects and the Officers' Guide to Procurement had been followed. The Assistant Director added that this was part of a forward working programme and it was hoped that all childcare providers would be on board.

The Portfolio Holder thanked the officers for their hard work and contribution in progressing this issue.

### **Decision**

The projects outlined above were approved and would be carried out by the external consultants between April and July 2006.

## **46. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

Under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs referred to below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

Minute 47 – Children's Homes Regulation 33/34 Reports – Director of Children's Services (para 6 – this item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 namely information relating to the adoption, care, fostering or education of a particular child).

## **47. Children's Homes Regulation 33/34 Reports** *(Director of Children's Services)*

### **Type of decision**

For information

### **Purpose of report**

To present the Regulation 33/34 reports of visits to Exmoor Grove Children's Home covering the month of January 2006.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

Appended to the report were the pro-forma in respect of visits to Exmoor Grove Children's Home during January 2006.

**Decision**

That the report be noted.

**J A BROWN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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