

# PLEASE NOTE VENUE

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



**Monday 19 November 2007**

**at 5.00 pm**

**in the Avondale Centre, Dyke House School, Hartlepool**

**MEMBERS: CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:**

Councillors S Cook, Coward, Fleet, Griffin, A E Lilley, London, Plant, Preece, Shaw, Simmons and Worthy

**Co-opted Members:**

Elizabeth Barraclough and David Relton

Leigh Bradley, Jonathan Simpson, Chris Lund, Kelly Goulding, Cassie Jeffries and Gillian Pounder

**Resident Representatives:**

John Cambridge, Evelyn Leck and Michael Ward

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

**3. MINUTES**

No items.

**4. SHORT ICE BREAKER EXERCISE**

**5. RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL TO FINAL REPORTS OF THIS FORUM**

No items.

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6. **CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS REFERRED VIA SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE**

No items.

7. **FORWARD PLAN**

No items.

8. **CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS / BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS**

8.1 Children's Services Department: Budget and Policy Framework Initial Consultation Proposals 2008/09 – *Scrutiny Manager*

9. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

No items.

10. **ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT**

**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

**Date of Next Meeting Monday, 10 December 2007 commencing at 4.30 pm in the Avondale Centre, Dyke House, Raby Road, Hartlepool**

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

19 November, 2007



**Report of:** Scrutiny Manager

**Subject:** CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT: BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK INITIAL CONSULTATION PROPOSALS 2008/09

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### 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To enable Members to consider Cabinet's initial proposals in relation to the Neighbourhood Services initial 2008/2009 budget proposals.

### 2 CONSIDERATION OF ISSUES

2.1 At its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2007, Cabinet determined the initial 2008/2009 budget proposals it wishes to put forward for consultation.

2.2 The overall report submitted to Cabinet was considered by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2007. This Committee has determined to consider these proposals on a departmental basis. Accordingly, these details are attached as follows:

Appendix A – Schedule of Budget Pressures 2008/2009

Appendix B – Schedule of 2008/2009 Budget Pressures Treated as Contingency Items

Appendix C – Schedule of Budget Priorities 2008/2009

2.3 Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee has also determined the following timetable for Scrutiny's initial involvement in the budget process.

12<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2007 Individual Scrutiny Forums consider departmental budget proposals.

23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2007 Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee considers the Chief Executive Department budget proposals, responses from the four Scrutiny Forums and formulates response to Cabinet.

17<sup>th</sup> December, 2007

Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee feedback to Cabinet.

### **3. RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 It is recommended that Members consider the proposals detailed in Appendices A to C and formulate their response to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

**Contact Officer:-** Charlotte Burnham – Scrutiny Manager  
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Tel: 01429 523 087  
Email: [charlotte.burnham@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:charlotte.burnham@hartlepool.gov.uk)

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT – SCHEDULE OF BUDGET PRESSURES 2008/2009**

Budget Heading (including Cost Centre cost if possible)	Description of Budget Pressure	Risk - Red, Amber, Green	Risk Impact of not funding Pressure	Value Budget Pressure	Value of additional Budget Pressure in 2009/10	Service improvement to be achieved by funding pressure (including details of current performance and target for 2008/2009 performance)	Classification (L/D/S/O)
				£'000	£'000		
Children and Families - placements	Costs of increased numbers of Looked After Children. (NB This funding is required for the additional net costs of children currently in care following the increase experienced at the start of the year. Due to the volatility of LAC numbers it may be prudent to provide contingency funding for further possible increases).	R	Since the 2007/08 budget was set the department has experienced an unprecedented increase in the number of children coming into care. Based on current projections of costs, which are expected to continue throughout 2008/09, additional funding will be required to cover the additional costs of these known children. The Departments placement strategy has effectively reduced reliance on external provision but additional costs are envisaged as follows; . a) In house fostering allowances - £100,000 b) External foster placement costs - £307,000 c) External residential placements - £100,000	507	0		D
Children and Families - Preventative Care	Many new cases of children coming into care are linked to drug issues within families. This priority would provide one social work post in an intensive support team to be joint funded to work with high risk families in line with the "Hidden Harm" initiative.	R	Although costly this initiative is aimed at preventing children coming into care and therefore avoiding high costs in future years.	40	0	This initiative is aimed at preventing children coming into care	D

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				£'000	£'000		
Children and Families - placements	Shortfall in Special Guardianship Order Savings (2007/08 budget)	<b>R</b>	Savings envisaged from the reduction in payments to independent agencies arising from long term matched foster carers obtaining SGO's have yet to fully materialise. A significant shortfall of £140,000 is projected in the current year. A number of cases are however being progressed although this involves a lengthy legal process which will delay the savings materialising. In addition the full year savings potential appears to have been overstated and for 2008/09 a £60,000 shortfall is anticipated.	60	0		L

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				£'000	£'000		
Children's and Families - Placement Team staffing	Additional Social Care staffing in the Placement Team to maximise the capacity and effectiveness of in house fostering provision. Additional staffing required (Manager, 2 x Social Workers plus 0.5 admin) at an annual cost of £133,000. There would also be one off costs of £40,000 to relocate the Leaving Care Team at the Connexions office to accommodate extra staff.	<b>R</b>	To avoid continued reliance on the independent sector a further 30 foster carers are required but there is no capacity to recruit, train or support any further carers without additional resources as the Social Care Placement Team has reached capacity. In addition there are limits on the number of children that can be placed with individual carers without detrimentally affecting placement stability. If staffing levels are not increased recruitment will not be possible resulting in heavy reliance on the independent sector as experienced following the recent increase in the number of Looked After Children. The departments placement strategy is currently being reviewed and depending on options emerging from that review, capacity might be forthcoming in a different way e.g. via a partnership agreement but in either case additional funding will be required.	133		The National Fostering Network recommend a maximum Foster Carer to Social Worker ratio of 15:1. The local Independent Sector ratio is 12:1 whilst the Children's Services department ratio is currently 20:1 having historically been approx 18:1. Additional funding would allow 30 extra foster carers to be recruited bringing the total up to 120. This will generate capacity to improve placement stability for existing children in care and provide new short term placements in house which is substantially cheaper than external provision.	<b>D</b>
			<b>TOTAL RED PRESSURES</b>	740			
			<b>TOTAL ALL PRESSURES</b>	740	0		

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT – SCHEDULE OF 2008/09 BUDGET PRESSURES TO BE TREATED AS CONTINGENCY ITEMS**

Budget Heading (including Cost Centre cost if possible)	Description of Budget Pressure	Risk - Red, Amber, Green	Risk Impact of not funding Pressure	Value of Budget Pressure in 2008/19	Value of additional Budget Pressure in 2009/10	Service improvement to be achieved by funding pressure (including details of current performance and target for 2008/2009 performance)	Risk Probability (V/L/L/M/H)
				£'000	£'000		
Performance and Achievement	School Improvement Partners	<b>A</b>	School Improvement Partners (SIP's) were introduced into secondary schools in 2006 and primary schools in 2007 as part of the DCSF "New Relationships with Schools" requirement. Grant funding support (£37k) does not meet actual costs. School Improvement services are being reconfigured to accommodate changes in the longer term but pressure exists for 2008/09. Risk of not funding includes service disruption and reducing front line support to schools.	20	0		H
			<b>TOTAL AMBER PRESSURES</b>	20			



**CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT – SCHEDULE OF GRANT REGIMES TERMINATING DURING 2007/2008 - PROBABILITY 3**

Grant Title	Does Council need to consider mainstreaming the grant? Please state Yes/No and provide brief justification.	Risk - Red, Amber, Green	Probability 1 = Likely to continue, 2 = may continue, 3 = Unlikely grant may	Grants Terminating during 2007/2008						Service improvement to be achieved by funding grant (including details of current performance and target for 2007/2008 performance)
				Risk Impact of not funding Pressure	Value of Grant terminating in 2007/2008 £'000	Value of resulting budget pressure in 2008/2009 £'000	Total number staff employed (permanent contract/permanent owing to roll forward of contract/fixed term)	Provisional estimated cost of making staff redundant based on HBC employment £'000	Funding available to fund redundancy costs £'000	
Human Resources & Developing Services (HRDS) Grant	Yes - to maintain services	R	3	Supports workforce planning for Social Care Workers in Local Authority and Independent Sector	40	40	0	0	NA	To recognise the shortfall in training and support for Social Care Staff and to
Parenting Commissioners Grant	Yes - This is a role that is now expected of the Council. Set up grants have been available in 06/07 and 07/08. No ongoing funding has been identified.	R	3	This role is part of the government's wider strategy. We have been able to integrate the role with other duties but a budget will be required to continue service development.	14	14	0	0.0	NA	This is an expanding area of work and commissioner's role is important to ensure co-ordination of various parenting initiatives to ensure efficient use of resources.
				<b>SUB-TOTAL - CHILDREN'S</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>54</b>				