

# **CABINET**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

14 April 2008

The meeting commenced at 9.00 a.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

### **Present:**

Councillors: Pamela Hargreaves (Deputy Mayor) - In the Chair  
Gerard Hall (Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder).  
Cath Hill (Children's Services Portfolio Holder),  
Peter Jackson (Neighbourhoods & Communities Portfolio Holder),  
Victor Tumilty (Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder),

Officers: Paul Walker, Chief Executive,  
Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive  
Adrienne Simcock, Director of Children's Services  
Sue Johnson, Assistant Director of Children's Services - Planning  
& Service Integration  
Nicola Bailey, Director of Adult and Community Services  
Dave Stubbs, Director of Neighbourhood Services  
Alison Mawson, Head of Community Safety and Prevention  
Amanda Whitaker, Democratic Services Manager

Also in attendance were the following parents of children who attend Catcote School together with representatives of Catcote School:-

Doreen Hunt - Parent  
Sandra Jones - Parent  
Susan Stratheam - Parent  
Melanie Dunn - Parent  
Alan Chapman – Deputy Head, Catcote School  
Colin Rowntree – Business Manager, Catcote School

### **268. Apologies for Absence**

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond and Councillor Robbie Payne (Finance & Efficiency Portfolio Holder).

### **269. Declarations of interest by members**

None

**270. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2008**

Received.

**271. Building Schools for the Future and Special Educational Needs: Proposed Designation for Catcote School to admit pupils with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) – Representations made to published Statutory Notices** *(Director of Children's Services)*

**Type of decision**

Key Decision.

**Purpose of report**

To request Cabinet to note the outcomes of the statutory notice period regarding the proposal to designate Catcote School to admit up to 30 pupils with statements of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) within the age range 10 years to 17 years and to determine the next stage of action.

**Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The report set out a summary of the representations made during the statutory notice period relating to the proposal to designate Catcote School to admit pupils with BESD. Hartlepool Borough Council had been admitted to the BSF programme as a Wave 5 authority. Catcote School is eligible for funding and must be included in the authority's Strategy for Change. There is also a requirement for the local authority to demonstrate how its plans will improve provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

To date, there had been four stages to the consultation process, the fourth of which was focused on meeting the needs of children and young people with special educational and additional needs. The outcomes were considered by Cabinet in November 2007 when authorisation was given to the publication of a formal statutory notice to designate Catcote School to admit up to 30 pupils with statements of SEN for BESD within the age range 10 years to 17 years. During the 6 week notice period 11 responses were received, 8 objecting to the proposal and 3 supporting it. A detailed summary of the responses and copies of the letters received were appended to the report.

Following presentation of the report, the Deputy Mayor highlighted that on this occasion, the Cabinet had decided to allow parents of children attending Catcote School, and representatives of the school, to speak at the meeting.

Mr Chapman, Deputy Head, addressed the meeting and advised that he considered it important to put the issue in context. He referred back to how Catcote school had operated previously compared to the way in which the school currently operated.

In terms of coping with the diverse needs of students, a wide ranging curriculum had been developed. There had been other developments including training techniques for both teachers and support staff, the introduction of students from main stream education, courses for post 19 students, training students for independent living. The relationship with the Adult Services Department had developed also.

Mr Chapman advised that the Unit for pupils with statements of SEN for BESD would have its own arrangements. It would be a 'school within a school' and he reassured Cabinet and parents that the impact on existing students would be minimal.

Mrs Dunn, speaking on behalf of the parents present at the meeting, highlighted that Catcote School is a small school and is already 'overflowing'. She clarified that although she was in favour of inclusion, there were concerns which had been included in a letter she had submitted, detailing objections to the proposal, a copy of which had been circulated and tabled at the meeting also.

The Portfolio Holder had referred, in presenting the report, to the consultation which had been undertaken; this was an area of major concern to parents. It was claimed that at no point, during the consultation exercise, had the current scenario been discussed with parents from Catcote School. Parents had not been aware of the proposal until the statutory notice had been published.

Mrs Dunn advised that statistically, nationally only 2 out of 73 non-maintained special schools and 1 out of 96 approved independent schools had an arrangement such as that proposed for Hartlepool. It was considered that the proposal was resource driven rather than being based on good education practice. It was claimed also that there was very little provision in this town for pupils with complex needs.

Parents were concerned that a decision was being made too quickly and too little information had been provided. Parents wanted Councillors to be fully aware of the decision they were making and to highlight that there was already a diverse range of students in the school.

Prior to opening the meeting to questions from Members, the Deputy Mayor highlighted that it had been decided, at the Cabinet meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> November, to proceed to the statutory notice stage. She added that Members needed to be mindful also that those students with statements of SEN for BESD were not present at the meeting.

During the questions which followed, Members expressed a number of

areas of concern and sought clarification regarding issues as follows:-

- That the proposed designation of Catcote School was hidden in the consultation process
- Had the consultation in relation to Catcote School been any different to that for other schools
- The size and capacity of Catcote School and how were students going to be accommodated on site
- Staff ratios
- Interaction with students currently attending Catcote School
- Effect on education of students currently attending Catcote School

On a positive note, the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services considered that the proposals for co-location offered the most exciting aspect of the whole Building Schools for Future project. Whilst taking on board the concerns expressed by parents, it was highlighted that it was necessary also to listen to professional advice. The project was about co-location, with separate provision on one site, which would have associated opportunities.

Officers, the Deputy Head and the Business Manager of Catcote school responded to the concerns expressed by Members as set out below:-

- The consultation which had been carried out was no different to that in respect of other schools. The stage 4 consultation document had included a separate section relating to Catcote School. At the meeting of Cabinet held in November, concerns which had been expressed by parents were discussed. Parents were, therefore, aware of the issue at that time.
- Students with statements of SEN for BESD would be located in a separate building with their own staff who are trained to look after pupils with BESD. Access to Catcote School would be controlled. Current arrangements were working well and would continue as long as it was managed.
- Lunch times would be managed. There was a contingency plan for a separate dining hall.
- In terms of the effect on the education of existing students, it had been agreed already, by Secondary School Head teachers, that provision would be made for BESD students to access facilities in other mainstream schools. An assurance was given that the proposed arrangement would not take away any education or facilities from current pupils.
- BESD students have their own funding, therefore having no detrimental effect on the funding received in respect of existing students.

A vote was taken with the majority of Cabinet Members being in favour of the recommendations included in the report. One vote was recorded against.

### **Decision**

- (i) The outcomes of the statutory notice period relating to the proposal to designate Catcote School to admit pupils with statements of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties were noted.
- (ii) The designation of Catcote Special School to admit up to 30 pupils with statements of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) within the age range 10 year to 17 years from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2008 was approved.

## **272. Carers' Emergency Respite Care Scheme** *(Director of Adult and Community Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Key Decision (test (ii) applies).

### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval from Cabinet to tender for a Carers' Emergency Respite Care Scheme to support Carers of vulnerable adults in Hartlepool.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

The proposed Carers Emergency Respite Care Scheme would provide up to 72 hours of support to regular carers of adults who found themselves unable to provide care due to an emergency or unexpected situation arising. This service would be in addition to existing emergency care provision; access would be via an assessment of need and upon completion of an 'Emergency Care Plan (ECP)'. All care would be in the home environment.

During consultation with carers in Hartlepool, officers had been made aware that some might be deterred from accessing the service due to the involvement of statutory agencies such as adult social care services. It was therefore proposed to develop contracts with third sector agencies to undertake assessments and complete Emergency Care Plans on behalf of the department.

The Scheme would be a free to access service and not means tested in any way. The government would provide extra funding as part of a top up to the existing Carers Grant and funding allocation had been identified for the next 3 years as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2008-11.

Following presentation of the report, the Director of Adult and Community Services responded to operational and funding concerns expressed by the Portfolio Holder and other Cabinet Members. Although reassured by the responses of the Director, Cabinet Members considered it important to receive regular updates on the Scheme.

### **Decision**

- (i) The introduction of the scheme, as detailed in the report, was

- approved.
- (ii) Regular updates on the scheme, to the Portfolio Holder, were requested.

**273. Young People Specialist Substance Misuse Plan 2008/09** *(Director of Children's Services and Director of Regeneration & Planning Services)*

**Type of decision**

Non-key.

**Purpose of report**

The report outlined the detail and content of the Young People Specialist Substance Misuse Plan 2008/09 and sought the support of Cabinet to the activity and performance management framework.

**Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet**

Each Children's Trust is required to submit an annual substance misuse needs assessment and annual plan detailing the provision of substance misuse services for young people. This is reviewed by a regional Panel and monitored quarterly by the National Treatment Agency (NTA), the results of which are reported to the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

A copy of the proposed Plan was appended to the report. This had been formulated following consideration and comments from the National Treatment Agency. The plan had been approved by the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2008 and the Safer Hartlepool Partnership on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2008. The responsibility for the Plan and associated services lay with the Children's Trust and Director of Children's Services. The Chair of the Trust, Director of Children's Services and the Chair of Safer Hartlepool Partnership had, therefore, signed the Plan and submitted it to the National Treatment Agency on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008, as required.

**Decision**

- (i) Support for the Young People Specialist Substance Misuse Plan 2008/09 was confirmed.
- (ii) As a result of concerns expressed by Members, that an additional page be appended to the Plan explaining the various acronyms included in the document.
- (iii) That, in future, officers avoid the use of acronyms in documents.

**P DEVLIN**

**ACTING CHIEF SOLICITOR**

**PUBLICATION DATE: 18 April 2008**