

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

11 September 2008

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

## Present:

Councillor Cath Hill (Children's Services Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Adrienne Simcock, Director of Children's Services  
Sue Johnson, Assistant Director, Planning and Services  
Integration  
Sally Robinson, Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Specialist  
Services  
Paul Briggs, Schools Transformation Project Director  
Danielle Swainston, Sure Start, Extended Services and Early  
Years Manager  
Rachel Simpson, School Improvement Officer (Curriculum  
Enrichment)  
Sue Beevers, Admissions, School Place Planning and Support  
Services Manager  
Sarah Bird, Democratic Services Officer

## 11. Admissions to Schools 2010/11 and Coordinated Admissions to Primary and Secondary Schools 2010/11 *(Admissions, School Place Planning and Support Services Manager)*

### Type of Decision

Non key.

### Purpose of Report

The report was presented to seek the approval of the Portfolio Holder to the draft Admission arrangements for 2010/11 as the basis for consultation during the Autumn term 2008.

### Issues for consideration by Portfolio Holder

Section 89 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 laid down the way in which an Admissions Authority must determine admission arrangements and requires them to consult with governing bodies and other admission authorities. A new statutory code of practice, the School

Admissions Code came into force on 28 February 2007 applicable to all maintained schools, foundation schools and Academies. Admission Authorities must ensure that their admission arrangements comply with the mandatory provisions of the code. The code was made under Section 84 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 as amended by Section 40 the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The aims and mandatory requirements of the admission arrangements were detailed in the report.

Local Authorities are required to consult on the admission arrangements for their school each year. The consultation must give full details of admission arrangements that will operate in the area in the year in question and consultation must take place with other admission authorities and the governing bodies of community and voluntary controlled schools in the relevant area.

The report also covered the establishment of an Admission Forum and a Co-ordinated Admission Scheme as well as details of the guidance for children and young people in care and those with statements of special educational needs. It outlined that the Hard to Place Pupils protocol had been reviewed and was now known as the Fair Access protocol. The Building Schools for the Future (BSF) partner primary model for admission to secondary school rather than the system of geographical admission zones. The partner primary model had been adopted for September 2009 and it was proposed to continue this model for September 2010. The closure of Brierton Secondary School was noted thereby leaving five secondary schools for parents/carers to express a preference for.

The admissions policy for 2009/10 was outlined in the report as well as the criteria for the awarding of places and the timetable for Primary and Secondary Admissions detailed.

The timetable for the consultation on the admissions policy for 2010/11 was outlined in the report as was a copy of the proposed admission limits. There were slight changes to admission limits to comply with class infant size legislation. The proposed co-ordinated admission schemes for primary and secondary schools were also attached to the report.

The Schools Transformation Project Director confirmed that although Dyke House, Manor and High Tunstall now had foundation status, the Local Authority had offered support and guidance to assist with the implementation of their admissions policy.

## **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder confirmed the recommendation that consultation on 2010/11 admission arrangements (with an end date of December 2008) should take place on the basis of seeking views on:-

- ❖ The proposed oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled primary schools
- ❖ Continuing with single state entry at reception
- ❖ Continuing with the partner primary model as stated
- ❖ The proposed admission limits
- ❖ The primary and secondary co-ordinated admissions scheme

## **12. Children's Services Departmental Plan Quarter 1 Progress Report** *(Assistant Director – Planning and Service Integration)*

### **Type of Decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of Report**

The report was presented in order to inform the Portfolio Holder of the progress made towards achieving Departmental Plan actions and Performance Indicators (PIs) for the period to 30 June 2008.

### **Issues for consideration**

The departmental plan 2008/09 identified actions and PIs for 2008/9 and 96% of these actions were on target for completion by the milestone date. One action, relating to the work with partner agencies to ensure an appropriate substance misuse treatment plan was in place, had already been completed and none were expected not to achieve target by their milestone date. It was noted however that the majority of performance indications within Children's Services are reported annually. The key areas of importance continued to be:-

- ❖ The number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- ❖ Under 18 conception rate
- ❖ Improvement of achievement levels in schools

Of the PIs which were reported quarterly, one indicator relating to looked after children, i.e. the stability of placements of looked after children: number of moves was reported as red. The majority of children who have had 3 or more moves were children and young people who became looked after in an emergency when it was difficult to achieve the right placement match immediately, but monitoring has been put in place around this indicator. If the target for 2008/09 was reached it would put the authority in the top ten in the country but this was acknowledged to be an extremely challenging target. The PI which was recorded as green related to the under 18 conception rate although the latest figures available are for 2006. It would still be very challenging to achieve the longer term target of a 55% reduction by 2010.

A thorough review of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) had been initiated in preparation for the completion of a new plan which will be ready for publication on 1 April 2009. A detailed self assessment of Children's Services was undertaken as part of the Annual Performance Assessment and was submitted to Ofsted in June 2008. There has not as yet been any confirmation of the self assessment grades but this was expected by November.

### **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder noted the progress made towards completing actions and performance indicator targets during the first quarter of 2008/09 and noted that further reports on annual progress would be given quarterly in line with corporate requirements. She expressed her thanks to Children's Services staff in relation to achievements thus far.

## **13. Out of School Children's Activity Resource (OSCAR) Out of School Childcare Service – Changes to Charges** *(Sure Start, Extended Services and Early Years Manager)*

### **Type of Decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of Report**

The report was presented to seek approval for a change in charges for OSCARs out of school service.

### **Issues for Consideration**

OSCARs is an all year round childcare service operated by Hartlepool Borough Council which offers both after school club and holiday club provision. The service is town-wide and open to children between the ages of 4 and 16 operating from 3 locations within the town. Currently the service is not sustainable because of the present fee structure. The fees have risen on average 3% annually but expenditure has risen more than this. The current fee structure is two tiered, one for children with waged parents and one for unwaged parents. This had been initially implemented as part of a scheme to support parents back into training or employment but there was no monitoring of whether this was effective. Two proposed fee structures were put forward to ensure that the current budget allocation for OSCARs out of school childcare service was sustainable and these were outlined in the report.

There was a risk of an overspend on the OSCAR's budget if more income was not generated which could be obtained by the proposed increase in fees. There was however a risk that if fees were increased, parents would

choose to remove their children from the facility which would initially reduce income. The Portfolio Holder clarified that a proportion of the cost of childcare could be re-imbursed via tax credits but that there was a low national uptake on this.

### **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder approved Option 1 change in charges to include the unwaged subsidy for OSCARs out of school childcare service as set out in paragraph 7 of the report.

## **14. Revision to Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) (School Improvement Officer – Curriculum Enrichment)**

### **Type of Decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of Report**

The report was presented in order to consider proposed revisions to the SACRE Constitution.

### **Issues for Consideration**

SACRE is the statutory body convened by the LA to advise them on matters relating to the quality, standards and progress of Religious Education and Collective Worship in schools. It sought to include representation from members of faith organisations, denominations, teachers, elected councillors and LA representatives. The current Constitution was approved by Hartlepool Education Committee in 1996 but needed updating in the terms of layout and wording. This was considered by SACRE in June 2008 and the revised constitution was submitted for approval by the Portfolio Holder.

The proposed new Constitution contained two significant additions to the earlier Constitution:-

- ❖ The quorum for the meeting should be 'at least 3 groups are represented and at least one third of the total membership of the Council is in attendance'.
- ❖ Any member who fails to attend a SACRE meeting for a period of 12 months beginning with the date of a meeting, shall, on expiry of that period be disqualified from continuing to hold office as a member of SACRE.

It was clarified that 'member' did not related to an elected councillor.

## **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder approved the proposed revisions to the SACRE Constitution.

## **15. Local Government Access to Information**

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public were 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 paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

Minute 16 – Procurement of a Parenting Expert Role from Barnardos North East (para 3) (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))

Minute 17 – Placement Strategy for Looked After Children (para 3) (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))

Minute 18 – Children's Homes: Regulation 33/34 Reports (para 1) (Information relating to any individual)

## **16. Procurement of a Parenting Expert Role from Barnardos North East** (*Director of Children's Services*)

### **Type of Decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of Report**

The report was presented to seek approval for the procurement of a parenting expert through the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) parenting expert grant and to request a direction for an exception to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules in respect of this purchase.

### **Issues for Consideration**

The report contained a business case justifying the procurement of a Parenting Expert through the DCSF parenting expert grant and requested an exception to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

### **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder approved the proposed purchase of a Parenting

Expert role from Barnardos North East and directed an exception to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules in respect of the proposed procurement.

**17. Placement Strategy for Looked After Children**  
(Assistant Director – Safeguarding and Specialist Services)

**Type of Decision**

Non key.

**Purpose of Report**

The report was presented to update the Portfolio Holder on the ongoing work in relation to the review of the Placement Strategy for Looked After Children.

**Issues for Consideration**

The report concerned the future delivery of foster care placements and was presented for the consideration of the Children's Services Portfolio Holder.

**Decision**

The Portfolio Holder noted the outcome of the competitive market testing and tender process and authorised the formation of a preferred provider partnership with the National Fostering Agency.

**18. CHILDREN'S HOLMES: REGULATION 33/34 REPORTS** (Director of Children's Services)

**Type of Decision**

Non key

**Purpose of Report**

The report was presented to inform the Portfolio Holder of the Regulation 33/34 visit to Exmoor Grove Children's home.

**Issues for Consideration**

The report covered the months of May and June 2008 for Exmoor Grove.

**Decision**

The Portfolio Holder received and noted the report.

The meeting concluded at 9.45 am.

**PETER DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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