

## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD**

13 November 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 Service  
Integration  
Danielle Swainston, Sure Start, Extended Services and Early  
Years Manager  
Ann Turner, Governor Support Officer  
Sarah Bird, Democratic Services Officer

### **24. Provision for Pupils with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) at Springwell School** *(Assistant Director – Planning and Service Integration)*

#### **Type of Decision**

Non key.

#### **Purpose of Report**

The report was presented in order to outline the provision for primary age pupils with BESD and to seek approval to consult on the designation of Springwell School to admit pupils with BESD.

#### **Issues for Consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The report outlined how there had been extensive consultation about future education provision for Hartlepool, during the Schools Transformation Programme consultation process which had been taking place over the last 18 months. The needs of pupils with special educational needs had been given a high priority within these programmes with the aspiration of having co-location of Catcote and Springwell Schools.

As part of the consultation process for Building Schools for Future, consideration was given to the redesignation of Catcote School to admit pupils of secondary age with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. This was subsequently agreed and the formal process for this redesignation was completed in April 2008.

There are four broad categories used to classify Special Educational Needs:-

- ❖ Cognition and Learning
- ❖ Communication and Interaction
- ❖ Behavioural, emotional and social
- ❖ Physical medical and sensory

The vast majority of pupils in Hartlepool with special educational needs are placed within mainstream schools with appropriate support in place. Children with BESD are vulnerable and challenging to support, with their needs being complex and long term. Historically with the formation of the Local Authority, Hartlepool had no approved specialist provision for BESD and a number of pupils attended schools in neighbouring local authorities or had provision made for them in local mainstream schools with additional support.

A small number of pupils had needs which made it very difficult to make appropriate provision for them in a mainstream setting and in the past these pupils had been placed in the former Access to Learning Services (A2L). It was especially difficult to meet the needs of the very small number of primary aged pupils who accessed this placement in the absence of anything more appropriate.

Springwell School has changed significantly in recent years. The number of full time pupils has fallen but the school plays a very important role in supporting children in mainstream schools by means of inreach and outreach provision and has supported some pupils with BESD.

A Service Level Agreement had been put in place between the Local Authority and Springwell. Additional accommodation had been provided to allow Springwell to admit 6 pupils with BESD under the line management of the headteacher of Springwell. This arrangement has been working well and it was recommended that consultation was undertaken on the formal designation of the school to admit pupils with BESD.

One off funding had already been provided to ensure that the school has the necessary accommodation on its current site to accommodate pupils with BESD and funding for these pupils would be provided means of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

It had been identified that there was a need for appropriate provision to be made for pupils with BESD and the redesignation of Springwell for primary age pupils would address this.

The proposal to redesignate the school would be a statutory proposal and required a period of consultation with relevant stakeholders. This would be done over four weeks and then a report on the proposal and its outcomes would be brought to the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services for a decision on whether to advance the proposal and go through the statutory requirement to publish public notices.

## **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder accepted the proposal to consult on the designation of Springwell School to admit up to 8 pupils with statements of special educational need for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and authorised the Director of Children's Services to carry out the appropriate consultation, following which a further report would be brought to the Portfolio Holder on the outcome of the consultation.

## **25. Proposed Federation of Hart Primary School and Elwick Hall Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School** *(Director of Children's Services)*

### **Type of Decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of Report**

The report was presented to agree a response to be submitted to the Governing Bodies of Elwick Hall Church of England (CE) Voluntary Aided Primary School and Hart Primary School in relation to their wish to establish a Federated Governing Body.

### **Issues for Consideration**

The Director of Children's Services had received a letter from the Headteacher of Elwick Hall CE Voluntary Aided Primary School and Hart Primary School indicating that the Governing Bodies of both schools wished to federate with effect from 1 September 2009 and therefore a 6 week consultation was to take place with a variety of stakeholders, the details of which were outlined in the appendix circulated with the report.

The Director of Children's Services and the Durham Diocesan Director of Education had been involved in all consultations from the onset.

In December 2006 the Governing Body of Elwick Hall CE Voluntary Aided Primary School had approached the Governing Body of Hart Primary School to ask permission for the Headteacher of Hart Primary School to become acting Headteacher of Elwick Hall CE Voluntary Aided Primary School with effect from 1 January 2007. Around the same time a joint Governing Body Steering Group was established to investigate the move to collaboration/Federation and an independent review by the local Authority in November 2007 indicated that all involved felt that the collaborative arrangements had enriched the life of both schools. In May 2008 the Governors of both schools agreed to explore the possibility of a formal Federation and in September 2008 the Governing Bodies of both schools agreed to enter a formal Federation and the proposed Constitution of a Federated Governing Body was agreed at a joint meeting of the two Governing Bodies in October 2008.

Consultation meetings had already been held and the two Governing Bodies would meet to consider all responses with the proposed Federation if agreed, taking place on 1 September 2009.

The collaboration thus far appeared to be working well as both schools had been able to offer a wider range of education experiences and enriched curriculum for the pupils.

The proposal would mean one Headteacher and one Governing Body but schools would retain their separate identities including separate:-

- ❖ Sites and school buildings
- ❖ Budgets
- ❖ Department for Children, School and Families registration and school profiles
- ❖ Published performance data
- ❖ Office for Standards in Education inspections
- ❖ School uniform
- ❖ Admission policies

The Portfolio Holder stated that she was pleased with the additional benefits that the Federation would bring to pupils.

### **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder supported the proposal and the Director of Children's Services was asked to prepare a letter for the Portfolio Holder to consider and submit.

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

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 below 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 27 - Service Specifications for Children's Centres – Outreach Package (Para 3 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

## **27. Service Specifications for Children's Centres – Outreach Package** *(Director of Children's Services)*

### **Type of Decision**

Key decision, tests 1 and 2 apply

### **Purpose of Report**

The report was presented to seek approval to undertake a tender exercise for an outreach package for Children's Centres.

### **Issues for Consideration**

The report summarised the work undertaken in developing a children's centres' outreach support specification.

### **Decision**

The decision of the Portfolio Holder was noted in the exempt section of the minutes.

The meeting concluded at 9.40 am

**P J DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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