

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



**Tuesday, 13 January 2009**

**at 4.30 pm**

**in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

MEMBERS: CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:

Councillors Aiken, Fleet, Griffin, Kaiser, London, McKenna, Preece, Shaw and Simmons,

Co-opted Member: David Relton (3 vacancies).

Resident Representatives: Christopher Akers-Belcher, Joan Steel and Sally Vokes

Young Peoples Representatives: Arran Frame, Danielle Howie, Dean Jeffries, Chris Lund, Gillian Pounder and Graham Skinner

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

**3. MINUTES**

3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2008

3.2 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2008 (to follow)

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

No items

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

No items

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

- 6.1 Children's Services Department: Budget and Policy Framework Consultation Proposals 2009/10 – *Scrutiny Support Officer*

**7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

- 7.1 Six monthly Monitoring of Agreed Children's Services Scrutiny Forum's Recommendations – *Scrutiny Support Officer*
- 7.2 Scoping Report – Appropriate Accommodation for Homeless Young People for Whatever Reason – *Scrutiny Support Officer*

**8. ISSUES IDENTIFIED FROM FORWARD PLAN**

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

**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

- i) **Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday, 27 January 2009, commencing at 4.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

## MINUTES

11 November 2008

The meeting commenced at 4.30 p.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

Councillor: Jane Shaw (In the Chair)

Councillors: Martyn Aiken, Mary Fleet, Sheila Griffin, Francis London,  
Chris McKenna and Chris Simmons.

Resident Representatives: Sally Vokes.

Young Peoples Representative: Michael Burford.

Also Present: Councillor Jonathan Brash  
Rebecca Wise, West View Project Participation Team  
Leigh Bradley, Barnardos Participation Team

Officers: Adrienne Simcock, Director of Children's Services  
Sally Robinson, Assistant Director (Safeguarding and Specialist  
Services)  
John Robinson, Children's Fund Manager  
James Walsh, Scrutiny Support Officer  
Laura Starrs, Scrutiny Support Officer  
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

### **62. Apologies for Absence**

Councillors Kaiser and Preece, Co-opted Member Mr Relton, Resident Representative Joan Steel and Young Peoples Representatives Arran Frame, Chris Lund and Gillian Pounder.

### **63. Declarations of interest by Members**

None.

### **64. Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 October 2008**

Confirmed.

**65. Responses from the Council, the Executive or Committees of the Council to Final Reports of this Forum**

None.

**66. Consideration of request for scrutiny reviews referred via Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee**

None.

**67. Children's Services Department Budget and Policy and Framework Initial Consultation Proposals 2009/10**  
*(Scrutiny Support Officer)*

At a meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee (SCC) held on 31 October 2008, consideration was given to the Executive's Initial Budget. It was agreed that the initial consultation proposals be considered on a departmental basis by the appropriate Scrutiny Forum. Any comments and observations would then be fed back to the meeting of the SCC to be held on 28 November 2008 to enable a formal response to be presented to the Cabinet on 15 December 2008.

The Director of Children's Services presented the initial budget proposals for her department to the Forum. Members questioned the Director on the specific budget pressures, priorities and efficiencies proposed for 2009/10. The following points were raised by members with the Director's comments where appropriate: -

Members commented on the efficiencies proposed that had some staffing impact for the department. The Director indicated that there were a number of staffing efficiencies proposed. One related to a group of temporary staff that had been involved in back scanning records. When the project was completed the contracts would not be renewed. However, there was the potential for redundancies elsewhere. Although most of the reductions were being managed through vacancies, the overall staffing efficiencies would reduce the department's administration support by some 13%. This could only be achieved through making posts redundant, however there should not be any effects on frontline services due to the efficiencies created through computerisation over recent years.

Members were concerned that these efficiencies should be achieved through natural wastage rather than redundancies. The Director commented that this was being done wherever possible, but was not likely to achieve all the reductions. All the options had been examined during the process of developing these proposals but 3% year on year efficiencies still had to be achieved. After years of budget efficiencies, the only options now had to

include a reduction in posts. Redeployment may offer a solution to redundancies but this was not known at this time.

Members questioned to what extent the KPMG proposals had had an effect on the proposals put forward for the department's budget? The Director indicated that the efficiency proposals submitted were entirely in line with the budget transformation ethos, particularly a reduction in the number of levels of reporting between the Director and front-line staff.

A question was asked about efficiencies in the budget relating to schools in difficult circumstances. The Director indicated that difficult questions were asked during the process of development of these suggestions, such as how far should the department support a school in difficulties when that school had healthy reserves? Members supported this view but were also concerned that not all schools were cash rich. The Director indicated that support for such schools would always need to be carefully considered, but this could possibly be supported through the Dedicated Schools Grant. The Director was confident that the budget proposals would not significantly disadvantage any school in the town.

Members commented on some of the pressures raised within the appendices to the report and specifically highlighted the changes within the Children's Fund cost centre. While these pressures had to be accommodated by the department due to changes in government policy, Members were assured that they would not impact adversely on the current operation of the Hartlepool Intervention Project but would complement it.

Members were concerned about the deletion of the School Development and Curriculum fund and requested detailed confirmation from the Director of Children's Services how the Department proposes that "one off" initiatives might be financed from other sources. The Director commented that clearly if £40,000 was removed from the budget, the Department couldn't simply continue to provide the same level of service, but it would examine whether support would be given from within the Dedicated School Grant or from Standards Fund grants if serious issues arose.

Members wished it be noted that they had reservations about the removal of the subsidy for pupil support from low income families wishing to attend Lanehead and Carlton Outdoor Centres.

After a detailed discussion on the proposals and Member questioning of the Director, Members considered their response to the specific budget pressures, priorities and efficiencies proposed for 2009/10 and indicated that at this early stage of the development of the budget they had no specific queries to raise at Scrutiny Coordinating Committee and supported the proposals put forward. Members did request that their comments be noted and included in the report to Scrutiny Coordinating Committee.

### **Recommended**

That Scrutiny Coordinating Committee be informed that the Children's

services Scrutiny Forum has no specific comments to raise in relation to the specific budget pressures, priorities and efficiencies proposed for 2009/10 for the Children's Services Department at this time. Members did request that their general comments in relation to some of the detailed proposals, as set out above, be conveyed in the report to the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee

## **68. Investigation into Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service – Draft Final Report** (*Children's Services Scrutiny Forum*)

The Chair presented the draft final report on its investigation into HBC's Foster Care Service. Members thanked the officers involved in the investigation and the preparation of the report.

The Chair sought Members comments on the conclusions and recommendations set out in the draft report. Members made the following comments/points: -

- There was much in the operation of the foster care team that staff should be congratulated on.
- While noting that this was reflected within the report, it was worth restating that Hartlepool's situation was unusual in that it lacked carers for younger children and had no specific shortages of carers for older children. Members noted that steps had been undertaken to address this issue through the partnership with a fostering agency but hoped that in the medium term, the number of agency placements would be reduced. The Chair commented that it was essential for the authority to be able to provide first class care for children in its care and the partnership with the agency was an integral part of that.
- Recommendation (d) "That the Foster Care Service Section on the Council's website be updated to make it a more accessible and comprehensive source of information" should be amended to replace 'updated' with 'redesigned'. It was highlighted that the whole of the Council's website was being reviewed. Members commented that the young peoples representatives should be involved in that redesign.
- The issue of advertising the fostering service needed to be vigorously pursued with advertisements on council buildings. Members were disappointed that there was no clear guidance on this issue from the Planning Division.
- The Chair considered that there needed to be a specific recommendation that financial assistance to kinship carers should be available in the very early days of a placement to assist those carers with the immediate costs of a child coming into their care. The Assistant Director stated that there was legislation in relation to Special Guardianship Placements that indicated that such placements should not fail due to financial issues. This had been taken by the department to mean that fostering allowances could continue to be paid to such carers in those situations. Kinship Carers were different but there was also provision to allow the payment of financial assistance in exceptional circumstances.

- The Chair indicated that she would wish to see the ratio of social workers to foster carers reduce from the currently reported ratio of 1:26 to 1:20 or ideally lower.

In light of the timescales to get the report finalised and submitted to the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee, the Scrutiny Support Officer sought the Forum's approval to the Chair agreeing any final amendments to the report that were required, including the comments indicated by Members at this meeting.

### **Recommended**

1. That the Chair be authorised to make any amendments to the draft report as necessary, prior to its submission to Scrutiny Coordinating.
2. That the recommendations of the Scrutiny Forum below be forwarded as part of the finalised investigation report to the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee.
  - (a) That the current review of Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service be completed as a matter of urgency in order to stabilise recruitment and retention difficulties;
  - (b) That innovative approaches in the future marketing of the foster care service be further explored in the following areas:-
    - (i) Lack of family group provision;
    - (ii) Identification of suitable location(s) in the Town for a permanent advertisement for the recruitment of foster carers; and
    - (iii) Through untapped mediums, such as Radio Hartlepool and leaflets in doctors surgeries, libraries and shopping centres.
  - (c) That the delivery of future training programmes for new Foster Carers:-
    - (i) Be delivered in-house at set times of the year;
    - (ii) Ensures opportunities for extending such training to external foster carers be explored; and
    - (iii) Where in-house delivery capacity issues occur, that support is sought from other Local Authorities or independent foster care agencies.
  - (d) That the Foster Care Service Section on the Council's website be redesigned to make it a more accessible and comprehensive source of information; and
  - (e) That where a child is placed within his / her family, support services be made immediately accessible, including the provision of financial support, prior to the formalisation of a Kinship Care Arrangement.

## **69. Issues Identified from the Forward Plan**

None.

The meeting concluded at 5.30 p.m.

JANE SHAW

CHAIRMAN



## CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

13<sup>th</sup> January, 2009



**Report of:** Scrutiny Support Officer

**Subject:** CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT: BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION PROPOSALS 2009/2010

---

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide the opportunity for the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum to consider the Children's Services departmental pressures, proposed 3% efficiencies, proposed additional 1% efficiencies/savings and Area Based Grant allocations as part of the Budget and Policy framework consultation proposals for 2009/2010.

### 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 At a meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee held on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2008, consideration was given to the Executive's Initial Budget and Policy Framework Consultation Proposals for 2009/2010. At this meeting it was agreed that the initial consultation proposals would be considered on a departmental basis by the appropriate Scrutiny Forum. This occurred throughout November, 2008.

2.2 The comments/observations of each Forum were fed back to the additional meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee held on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2008 and were used to formulate the formal Scrutiny response to Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2008.

2.3 The comments/observations made by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee were taken into consideration by Cabinet during the finalisation of its Budget and Policy Framework Proposals for 2009/2010 on 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2008. The Executive's finalised proposals were considered by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2009 and repeating the process previously implemented have again been referred to the appropriate Scrutiny Forum for consideration on a departmental basis.

- 2.4 As such attached as **Appendices A to E** are the Children's Services departmental pressures, proposed 3% efficiencies, proposed additional 1% efficiencies/savings and Area Based Grant allocations. Proposed changes since initial Appendices were submitted to your forum are shown as grey shaded lines. Any alterations/additions (following the Cabinet's meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2008) will be made verbally during this meeting.
- 2.5 Owing to the difficult financial position for 2009/2010 Cabinet are not proposing to fund priorities previously identified. These items are therefore not included in this report.
- 2.6 In addition to the pressures detailed on the attached pressures appendix Cabinet are also proposing additional funding for the following item: -
- i) Looked After Children – additional pressures £0.67m
- The Council is currently incurring additional expenditure in the current year owing to higher numbers of Looked After Children and more complex cases. These trends are forecast to continue in 2009/2010. In addition, following the outcome of the "baby P" court case there has been an increase in the number of referrals to Children's Social Services. Therefore some provision has been made in the above figure for increased costs of such cases. As this position is extremely complex and affected by referrals from various partner agencies e.g. Police, Medical Staff, etc., this position will need to be monitored closely.
- 2.7 To assist Members of this Scrutiny Forum in the consideration of the Children's Services departmental proposals, arrangements have been made for the Director of Children's Services to be in attendance and an invitation to this meeting has also been extended to the relevant Portfolio Holder (attendance subject to availability).

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum:-
- a) considers the Children's Services departmental pressures, priorities and efficiencies as part of the Budget and Policy Framework consultation proposals for 2009/2010; and
- b) formulates any comments and observations to be presented by the Chair of this Scrutiny Forum to the additional meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee to be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2009, to enable a formal response to be presented to the Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2009.

**Contact Officer:-** James Walsh – Scrutiny Support Officer  
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Tel: 01429 523 647  
Email: james.walsh@hartlepool.gov.uk

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES - PROPOSED EFFICIENCIES**

Portfolio	Dept/ Div	Budget heading/ Cost Centre	Corp Strategy theme	Description	Type of budget proposal	Efficiency Classification	Budget Value			Cost of efficiency saving £000	Risk impact	Risk probability	Risk score	Risk status	Rate the Diversity impact	Diversity strand(s)	Treat as contingency item	Staffing impact	Other Comments
							09/10 £000	10/11 £000	11/12 £000										
CS	CSD R&SS	Admin	2. LLL	In setting the 2008/09 budget the department had to incorporate £100k for the back scanning of social care records to comply with legislation. This exercise involves temporary staffing and equipment costs and the exercise should be completed by 31st March 2009.	Efficiency		100	0	0	0	1. Low	1. Unlikely	1	Green	Neutral	All	No	-4	Temporary contracts will not be extended for 4 staff.
CS	CSD R&SS	Premature Retirement Costs	2. LLL	The department is continuing to experience reduced costs on its PRC (Premature Retirement Costs) budget as former employees and their dependents die. Based on current commitments, savings of £30,000 are projected in 2009/10.	Efficiency		30	0	0	0	1. Low	1. Unlikely	1	Green	Neutral	All	No	0	
CS	CSD P&SI	Youth	8.SIC	A mini restructure as part of integrated working between Connexions and the Youth Service will result in a managerial post being saved. This will release a vacant post yielding a net saving of £40k. There would be no adverse impact on provision for young people.	Efficiency		40	0	0	0	1. Low	1. Unlikely	1	Green	Neutral	All	No	0	This will involve the transfer of a mainstream funded post to PAYP grant funding with longer term risk if grant is discontinued. Currently secure until 2010/2011.
CS	CSD S&SS	Exmoor Grove	3. H&C	Staffing and premises savings have been identified resulting from changes to the shift patterns and opening hours at Exmoor Grove with no adverse impact on service delivery or children accessing service.	Efficiency		90	0	0	0	1. Low	1. Unlikely	1	Green	Neutral	All	No	0	
CS	CSD S&SS	Resource Centres	4. Csa	Efficiencies from maintenance and building costs associated with family resource centres.	Efficiency		20	0	0	0	1. Low	1. Unlikely	1	Green	Neutral	All	No	0	
CS	CSD R&SS	Admin Support	2. LLL	Reduction in admin support posts across the Children's Services Department through rationalisation of service and maximising potential benefits of current vacancies.	Efficiency		54	0	0	0	1. Low	1. Unlikely	1	Green	Neutral	All	No	0	These savings can be made without redundancy
CS		School Improvement Partners	2. LLL	Review arrangements in relation to School Improvement Partners and OfSTED inspections to maximise income and reduce costs.	Efficiency		12	6	0	0	1. Low	2. Possible	2	Green	Neutral	All	No	0	Some minimal impact on services to schools.

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES - PROPOSED EFFICIENCIES**

Portfolio	Dept/ Div	Budget heading/ Cost Centre	Corp Strategy theme	Description	Type of budget proposal	Efficiency Classification	Budget Value			Cost of efficiency saving £000	Risk impact	Risk probability .	Risk score	Risk status	Rate the Diversity impact	Diversity strand(s)	Treat as contingency item	Staffing Impact	Other Comments
							09/10 £000	10/11 £000	11/12 £000										
CS			Co-ordinators	2. LLL	Deletion of Outdoor Education Co-ordinator post.	Efficiency		40	0	0	0	1	Green	Neutral	All	No	0	Currently a vacant post.	
CS		School Development & Curriculum		2. LLL	This budget is used to support "one-off" initiatives and to help those schools in challenging circumstances. Deletion of this funding may increase the risk of schools moving into Ofsted or cause for concern category and/or pupil performance declining.	Efficiency		40	0	0	0	4	Amber	Neutral	All	No	0	Possible adverse impact on schools	
CS	CSD R&SS		Pupil Support	2. LLL	Further reduce the subsidy paid to support attendance at Lanehead and Carlton Outdoor Centres by pupils from low income families. Hartlepool currently provides higher subsidies than Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland Councils although the gap narrowed as a result of the 2008/09 budget.	Efficiency		5	0	0	0	4	Amber	Neutral	All	No	0		
CS	CSD R&SS		Admin Support	2. LLL	Reduction of admin support posts across the Children's Services Department through rationalisation of service.	Efficiency		126	0	0	0	4	Amber	Neutral	All	No	5	These savings can be made whilst maintaining appropriate service levels but could lead to up to 5 redundancies.	
CS	CSD R&SS		Primary Swimming	2. LLL	Savings could be made from the use of swimming pools and rationalisation of staff employed to deliver the primary swimming programme. This could involve redundancy costs and/or one off costs to buy out existing contracts.	Efficiency		10	0	0	0	6	Amber	Neutral	All	No	1		
CS	CSD S&SS		Commissioning	4. Csa	Efficiencies could be realised via improved commissioning and procurement practice with external suppliers of daycare.	Efficiency		26	0	0	0	4	Amber	Neutral	All	No	0		
								593	6	0									

**Children's Services - Pressures**

Portfolio	Dept/ Div	Budget heading/ Cost Centre	Corp Strategy theme	Description	Type of budget proposal	Budget Value			Cost of efficiency saving £000	Risk impact	Risk probability	Risk score	Risk status	Rate the Diversity impact	Diversity strand(s)	Treat as contingency item	Staffing impact	Other Comments
						09/10 £000	10/11 £000	11/12 £000										
CS	CSD S&SS	Looked After Children	4. Csa	The increased costs of care proceedings resulting from the Public Law Outline are expected to continue at an annual cost of at least £100,000 per year. This was highlighted when the 2008/09 budget was set and is being funded from contingencies in the current year.	Pressure	100	0	0	0	3. High	4. Almost certain	12	Red	Neutral	All	No	0	
CS	CSD S&SS	Agency Residential	4. Csa	Anticipated commitments for the provision of residential care to children looked after exceed base budget. Commitments based on current children remaining in placement (which is anticipated) and no new placements being made. Budget volatile and subject to change based on presenting needs of children, costs may increase further.	Pressure	100	0	0	0	3. High	3. Likely	9	Red	Neutral	All	Yes	0	
CS	CSD S&SS	Fostering Agency	4. Csa	Anticipated commitments for independent foster placements for children looked after, based on current numbers in 08/09 financial year. Numbers unlikely to reduce.	Pressure	275	0	0	0	3. High	3. Likely	9	Red	Neutral	All	Yes	0	
CS	CSD P&SI	Integrated Working	4. Csa	Revenue implications of implementing electronic assessment and social care records. Implementation of these systems is required by DCSF and failure to do so would lead to significant adverse inspection outcome. These systems underpin the development of integrated working to secure better outcomes for children	Pressure	20	0	0	0	3. High	4. Almost certain	12	Red	Neutral	All	No	0	Grants from government only covered capital investment not ongoing revenue costs.
CS	CSD P&SI	Parent Partnership	3. H&C	Funding to increase the capacity of the Acorn Therapeutic Team to deliver Parent Partnership Services as required by Special Educational Needs regulation. New national exemplar standards have been issued by DCSF in 2007 and further capacity is needed if the service is to reach these standards.	Pressure	5	0	0	0	3. High	3. Likely	9	Red	Neutral	Disability	No	0	This will allow a 'top up' of funding available in the budget to recruit additional staffing to provide additional hours.







**PROPOSED AREA BASED GRANT ALLOCATIONS (NON WORKING NEIGHBOURHOOD FUND PROJECTS)**

APPENDIX D

Grant stream	Lead Dept	2008/09 Base	2009/10		2010/11		Comments	
			2009/10 Indicative Government Allocation	Revised allocation proposal	2010/11 Indicative Government Allocation	Revised allocation proposal		
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Sustainable Travel General Duty	CS	7	7	7	7	7	7	Note 1
Teenage Pregnancy	CS	144	144	144	144	144	144	Note 1
14-19 Flexible Funding Pot	CS	31	31	31	31	31	31	Note 1
Child Death Review Processes	CS	17	17	17	17	18	18	Note 1
Children's Social Care Workforce (formerly HRDS and NTS)	CS	42	42	42	42	41	41	Note 1
Children's Fund	CS	395	395	395	395	395	395	Note 1
Choice Advisers	CS	25	25	25	25	25	25	Note 1
Education Health Partnerships	CS	52	43	43	43	43	43	Note 1
Secondary National Strategy - Behaviour and Attendance	CS	68	68	68	68	68	68	Note 1
Secondary National Strategy - Central Co-ordination	CS	108	108	108	108	108	108	Note 1
School Development Grant (Local Authority Element)	CS	287	287	287	287	287	287	Note 1
School Improvement Partners	CS	42	42	42	42	42	42	Note 1
School Intervention Grant	CS	26	26	26	26	26	26	Note 1
Primary National Strategy - Central Co-ordination	CS	75	72	72	72	72	72	Note 1
Carers - 20% Children	CS	96	102	99	109	102	102	Note 2
Care Matters White Paper	CS	69	99	90	116	92	92	Note 3
Connexions	CS	1,114	1,169	1,142	1,285	1,171	1,171	Note 2
Extended Rights to Free Transport	CS	18	40	18	62	19	19	Note 2
Extended Schools Start Up Costs	CS	265	477	477	196	196	196	Note 4
Positive Activities for Young People & Neighbourhood Support Fund	CS	332	434	404	507	474	474	Note 3
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	CS	214	224	223	234	229	229	Note 2
Child Trust Fund	CS	1	2	2	2	2	2	Note 3
		<b>3,428</b>	<b>3,854</b>	<b>3,761</b>	<b>3,818</b>	<b>3,591</b>	<b>3,591</b>	

**PROPOSED AREA BASED GRANT ALLOCATIONS (NON WORKING NEIGHBOURHOOD FUND PROJECTS)**

Grant stream	Lead Dept	2008/09 Base	2009/10		2010/11		Comments
			2009/10 Indicative Government Allocation	Revised allocation proposal	2010/11 Indicative Government Allocation	Revised allocation proposal	

Notes

- 1) The indicative Government allocations are sufficient to continue these schemes.
- 2) Budget allocation increased by 2.5% to reflect the Council's policy for increasing base budgets. This produces a slightly lower allocation than suggested by the indicative Government allocation, which reflects the realignment of ABG resources in line with Council's priorities and flexibility for using grant.
- 3) 2009/10 Budget allocations increased by more than 2.5% to reflect the Council's policy decision to largely passport the indicative Government allocations. For 2010/11 a 2.5% inflationary increase has been applied which is consistent with the Council's policy for increasing base budgets.
- 4) Indicative allocations front load this project as funding is needed for one off set-up costs. Therefore, these allocations been passported.

**PROPOSED WORKING NEIGHBOURHOOD FUND ALLOCATIONS (AREA BASED GRANT)**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Lead Dept</b>	<b>2008/09 Base ('000)</b>	<b>2009/10 Proposed Allocation ('000)</b>	<b>2010/11 Proposed Allocation ('000)</b>
Primary/Secondary Schools Direct Funding - HBC	CS	400	410	420
Education Business Links - HBC	CS	50	51	53
New Initiatives - HBC	CS	40	41	42
Project Coordination - HBC	CS	5	5	5
Hartlepool "On Track" Project - HBC	CS	50	51	53
14-19 Reform Support	CS	0	60	65
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>638</b>



## CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

13 January 2009



**Report of:** Scrutiny Support Officer

**Subject:** SIX MONTHLY MONITORING OF AGREED CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM'S RECOMMENDATIONS

---

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide Members with the six monthly progress made on the delivery of the agreed scrutiny recommendations of this Forum since the 2005/06 Municipal Year.

### 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 In accordance with the agreed procedure, this report provides information of the progress made against investigations undertaken by the Forum since the 2005/06 Municipal Year.

2.2 In doing so, attached as **Appendix A** is a Summary Report that breaks down progress made by investigation and **Appendix B**, provides a detailed explanation of each recommendation that is either 'expected to achieve target' or 'not expected to achieve target'.

2.3 In summary, Members may wish to note that since the 2005/06 Municipal Year 84% of this Forum's recommendations have been achieved, 13% are expected to be achieved, 1% are not expected to be achieved and 1% have either been rejected by the Executive or are no longer deliverable to due circumstances beyond the Authority's control.

### 3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 That progress against the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum's agreed recommendations, since the 2005/06 Municipal Year, be noted and explored further where appropriate.

**Contact Officer:-** James Walsh – Scrutiny Support Officer  
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Tel: 01429 523647  
Email: james.walsh@hartlepool.gov.uk

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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

---

**Children's Services Scrutiny Forum****Involving Young People**

<b>N</b>	No longer deliverable	1
<b>G</b>	Target achieved	27

**Raising Boys' Achievements - Bridging the Gender Gap**

<b>G</b>	Target achieved	20
<b>A</b>	Expect to achieve target	1

**The Provision of Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) in Hartlepool Schools**

<b>R</b>	Not expected to achieve target	1
<b>G</b>	Target achieved	15
<b>A</b>	Expect to achieve target	1

**Sustainability of Externally Funded Community Initiatives in Schools**

<b>G</b>	Target achieved	1
<b>A</b>	Expect to achieve target	3

**Access to Recreation Facilities for Children and Young People in Hartlepool**

<b>G</b>	Target achieved	2
<b>A</b>	Expect to achieve target	5

# Scrutiny Recommendations (Not Completed) Monitoring Report

Appendix B

December 2008

*Department:* \*

*Scrutiny:* Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

*Division:* \*

*Scrutiny Enquiry:* \*

---

<b>N</b>	<b>No longer deliverable</b>	<b>1</b>	1.3%
	Children's Services Scrutiny Forum	1	
<b>R</b>	<b>Not expected to achieve target</b>	<b>1</b>	1.3%
	Children's Services Scrutiny Forum	1	
<b>A</b>	<b>Expect to achieve target</b>	<b>10</b>	13.0%
	Children's Services Scrutiny Forum	10	
<b>G</b>	<b>Target achieved</b>	<b>65</b>	84.4%
	Children's Services Scrutiny Forum	65	
<b>Total No. of Actions</b>		<b>77</b>	

---



# Scrutiny Recommendations (Not Completed) Monitoring Report

December 2008

Progress	Rec. No.	Recommendation	By When / Milestone	Update on progress	Lead Officer
----------	----------	----------------	---------------------	--------------------	--------------

<b>SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO: CS/05-6/1 INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE</b>					
--	--	--	--	--	--

*Recommendation:*

<b>CS/05-6/1n</b>	<b>That the Council transfers its advertising in youth papers to HYPE magazine so that it is supportive of the principle of involving young people in decisions that affect their lives.</b>				
-------------------	--	--	--	--	--

<b>N</b>	CS/05-6/1n	To explore relative costings and reach of HYPE magazine in relation to other publications, which young people are likely to read.	December 2006	Hype Magazine is no longer functioning at a level where this action would be appropriate.	John Robinson
----------	------------	---	---------------	---	---------------

# Scrutiny Recommendations (Not Completed) Monitoring Report

December 2008

Progress	Rec. No.	Recommendation	By When / Milestone	Update on progress	Lead Officer
----------	----------	----------------	---------------------	--------------------	--------------

## SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO:

### CS/06-7/2 RAISING BOYS' ACHIEVEMENTS - BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP

#### *Recommendation:*

**CS/06-7/2e That a formal process be developed for the sharing of information and best practice to assist in the raising of boys' achievement levels across all schools in Hartlepool.**

<b>A</b>	CS/06-7/2e(iii)	Train schools in the use of RAISE online for tracking and interpreting data.	March 2009	RAISE online is a national tool that is available for training but will be altered to respond to the 2 levels progress requirement from 2009. Original deadline March 2008.	Ruth Chalkley
----------	-----------------	--	------------	---	---------------

# Scrutiny Recommendations (Not Completed) Monitoring Report

December 2008

Progress	Rec. No.	Recommendation	By When / Milestone	Update on progress	Lead Officer
----------	----------	----------------	---------------------	--------------------	--------------

**SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO:**

**CS/06-7/3 THE PROVISION OF SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION (SRE) IN HARTLEPOOL SCHOOLS**

*Recommendation:*

**CS/06-7/3f That additional ways of assessing the effectiveness of SRE provision, including the introduction of a parental questionnaire and feedback forms for students following individual lessons, be explored.**

<b>A</b>	CS/06-7/3f	(i) Ensure that assessment is built into recommended programmes: Lucinda & Godfrey and APAUSE; (ii) Assessment is included in the Speakeasy programme; and (iii) Training for teachers in assessment in PSHE.	July 2009	Nov 08 - Assessment of PSHE education is a national priority at the moment and local CPD provision will reflect this.	Sandra Saint
----------	------------	---	-----------	---	--------------

*Recommendation:*

**CS/06-7/3h That consideration be given to the renaming of 'Sex and Relationship Education' (SRE) to place primary emphasis upon the relationship aspect of provision within Hartlepool schools.**

<b>R</b>	CS/06-7/3h	Consult with teachers, governors, parents, school nurses and young people in respect of changing the name of SRE.	March 2008	Ongoing. Nov 08 - Now awaiting national directive in relation to this.	Sandra Saint
----------	------------	---	------------	--	--------------

# Scrutiny Recommendations (Not Completed) Monitoring Report

December 2008

Progress	Rec. No.	Recommendation	By When / Milestone	Update on progress	Lead Officer
----------	----------	----------------	---------------------	--------------------	--------------

## SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO:

### CS/07-8/4 SUSTAINABILITY OF EXTERNALLY FUNDED COMMUNITY INITIATIVES IN SCHOOLS

#### *Recommendation:*

**CS/07-8/4a That a joint Steering Group between the Children Services Department and the Adult and Community Services Department be established to further explore the proposed recommendations of the Independent Sports Consultant, commissioned specifically as part of this investigation.**

<b>A</b>	CS/07-8/4a	<p>Rather than establish a new joint Steering Group, in light of the wide reaching nature of community facilities, and the current schools transformation programme, it is suggested that this is referred to the Schools Transformation Extended Project Team.</p> <p>This team meets regularly and has representatives from all departments and a separate "Extended Services Work stream", a sub group of the main project team, has recently been established. This should ensure that a Borough wide view is formed regarding all community facilities</p>	December 2008	The Extended Services Work stream has not met since October. A report will be presented to the 19th January 09 meeting which summarises the sustainability issues relating to all the community facility schemes currently operating from Hartlepool schools.	Stephen Haley
----------	------------	---	---------------	---	---------------

# Scrutiny Recommendations (Not Completed) Monitoring Report

December 2008

Progress	Rec. No.	Recommendation	By When / Milestone	Update on progress	Lead Officer
----------	----------	----------------	---------------------	--------------------	--------------

**SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO:**

**CS/07-8/4 SUSTAINABILITY OF EXTERNALLY FUNDED COMMUNITY INITIATIVES IN SCHOOLS**

*Recommendation:*

**CS/07-8/4c That pending the outcome(s) of the joint Steering Group (recommendation (a) refers) immediate consideration be given to providing assistance to those schemes that are likely to encounter future sustainability issue.**

<b>A</b>	CS/07-8/4c	After business plans and financial forecasts have been prepared and agreed with schools it will be possible to identify sustainability issues and quantify the level of any subsidies that may be required from the LA in future years. Any bids will then be submitted as part of the Council's annual budget cycle.	October 2008	A bid for additional funding of £150,000 has been submitted as part of the departments 2009/10 budget submission. This will need to be refined in light of the outcomes of the financial review as only 2 of the 9 schemes appear to require ongoing funding.	Stephen Haley
----------	------------	---	--------------	---	---------------

*Recommendation:*

**CS/07-8/4d That the findings of this investigation be brought to the attention of school governing bodies to raise awareness of the issue and the proposed way forward.**

<b>A</b>	CS/07-8/4d	Agreed. This will also be reported to the Schools Forum and a training package will be developed by the Children's Services Finance Team covering the financial implications of Community Facilities.	April 2009	Following the School Forum's acceptance of the LA's guidance at the 8th October meeting individual letters have been sent to relevant Headteachers clarifying actions required. The local scheme for financing schools has been updated.	Stephen Haley
----------	------------	---	------------	--	---------------

# Scrutiny Recommendations (Not Completed) Monitoring Report

December 2008

Progress	Rec. No.	Recommendation	By When / Milestone	Update on progress	Lead Officer
----------	----------	----------------	---------------------	--------------------	--------------

**SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO:**

**CS/07-8/5 ACCESS TO RECREATION FACILITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN HARTLEPOOL**

*Recommendation:*

**CS/07-8/5a That a process be implemented to ensure that young people are fully supported to participate in the future development and provision of recreation activities in Hartlepool.**

<b>A</b>	CS/07-8/5a	Children's services department will continue to support council departments to implement the seven vision statements for participation; In particular we will identify key staff involved in developing recreation facilities and provide targeted support to enhance current practice.	March 2009	Expected to achieve target.	John Robinson
----------	------------	---	------------	-----------------------------	---------------

*Recommendation:*

**CS/07-8/5b That as part of any planned future recreation activities consideration be given to the use of 'pods' and youth shelters, with the close involvement of young people, and other stakeholders, throughout the process from location / selection of structure to Planning application.**

<b>A</b>	CS/07-8/5b(i)	We will hold a seminar for stakeholder that includes councillors, young people and other Community members to discuss the issues and implications of youth shelters.	January 2009	Expected to achieve target. We have been unable to set a date for a seminar due to a delay in the availability of a manufacturer to attend. We hope to provide this by February 2009	John Robinson
<b>A</b>	CS/07-8/5b(ii)	We will support the development of a corporate strategy for the use of youth shelters and other community based facilities for young people that link with other community focussed initiatives such as local area forums and neighbourhood action plans.	March 2009	We have been unable to set a date for a seminar due to a delay in the availability of a manufacturer to attend. We hope to provide this by February 2009	John Robinson

# Scrutiny Recommendations (Not Completed) Monitoring Report

December 2008

Progress	Rec. No.	Recommendation	By When / Milestone	Update on progress	Lead Officer
----------	----------	----------------	---------------------	--------------------	--------------

**SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO:**

**CS/07-8/5 ACCESS TO RECREATION FACILITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN HARTLEPOOL**

*Recommendation:*

**CS/07-8/5c That an action plan be produced that explores ways of addressing the barriers to accessing recreation activities for young people, as outlined in the report (Section 9 refers).**

<b>A</b>	CS/07-8/5c	Children's Services currently have a strategic group undertaking work on the Public Service Agreement 14 and will include work on the barriers outlined in Section 9. The Hartlepool Community Activities Group is supporting the development of sports and recreation for children and young people. An action plan will be developed connecting the work of these two groups with the play strategy for Hartlepool.	January 2009	Delay in dev of comm act grp has prevented the completion of action plan. However, work has been ongoing eg Big Lottery Fund, My Place , Youth Cap Fund Plus, Youth Crime Action Plan, Play Strategy etc. All of which reflect the recommendation. Original Deadline November 2008.	Tracy Liveras
----------	------------	---	--------------	---	---------------

*Recommendation:*

**CS/07-8/5f That the Local Authority works in partnership with organised groups to ensure that they are fully aware of the funding / assistance available to them, and how it can be accessed, to improve their long term sustainability.**

<b>A</b>	CS/07-8/5f	We will work with Hartlepool Voluntary Development Agency to ensure that a process is in place to ensure that all voluntary and community sector groups have access to support.	March 2009	Expected to achieve target.	John Robinson
----------	------------	---	------------	-----------------------------	---------------

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

13 January 2009



**Report of:** Scrutiny Support Officer

**Subject:** SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE FOR WHATEVER REASON – SCOPING REPORT

---

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To make proposals to Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum for their forthcoming investigation into Appropriate Accommodation for Homeless Young People.

### 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 At the meeting of this Forum on 16 June 2008, Members agreed that two work programme items would be selected for the 2008/09 Municipal Year. During discussions Members agreed that their first work programme item would be 'Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service' and that the second work programme item would be selected by the Young People's Representatives co-opted onto the Forum
- 2.2 Subsequently at the meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 21 July 2008, Members received a presentation from the Young People's Representatives on the topic of 'Appropriate Accommodation for Homeless Young People' attached as **Appendix B** to this Report.
- 2.3 The Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities defines homelessness as being where someone does not have "accommodation that they have a legal right to occupy, which is accessible and physically available



to them (and their household) and which it would be reasonable for them to continue to live in"<sup>1</sup>.

- 2.4 Under the Housing Act 1997, Local Authority Housing Departments have a statutory duty to tackle homelessness and ensure that information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness is available free of charge. This legislation underpins the Homeless Act 2002, which placed greater responsibility on Local Authorities in ensuring that they accepted "homeless 16 and 17 year olds as priority cases for rehousing"<sup>2</sup>, although the responsibility for finding suitable accommodation for homeless young people under the age of 18 lies with the Local Authority's Children's Services Department.
- 2.5 For those young people who find themselves homeless over the age of 18 the responsibility for finding suitable accommodation falls to the Local Authority's Housing Department, or for those with complex needs Adult and Community Services Department. However, for young people in care the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 made provision that the Local Authority should ensure that all those preparing and leaving care should have a pathway plan, which included an element relating to accommodation and support. The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 reaffirms that it is the "general duty of local authority to secure sufficient accommodation for looked after children"<sup>3</sup>.

### **3. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION**

- 3.1 To review the role and responsibility of Hartlepool Borough Council in tackling youth homelessness, with reference to all young people and the information and provision of appropriate accommodation available to them.

### **4. PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION**

- 4.1 The following Terms of Reference for the investigation are proposed:-
- (a) To examine the different circumstances and outcomes that can lead to youth homelessness;
  - (b) To gain an understanding of the role and responsibility that Hartlepool Borough Council has towards tackling youth homelessness, including the provision of relevant information and appropriate accommodation;
  - (c) To examine the range of accommodation options used and available for young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness for whatever reason;

<sup>1</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government - Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities, 2006

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Rowntree Foundation – Housing Choices and Issues for Young People in the UK, 2008

<sup>3</sup> Children and Young Persons Act 2008

- (d) To gain an understanding of the Benefits and other sources of financial support currently available to young people to help tackle youth homelessness;
- (e) To review Hartlepool Borough Council's policy, procedure and practice in relation to Care Leavers, with reference to supported accommodation and other appropriate accommodation; and
- (f) To examine good practice examples of Youth Homelessness strategies at other Local Authorities.

## **5. POTENTIAL AREAS OF ENQUIRY / SOURCES OF EVIDENCE**

5.1 Members of the Forum can request a range of evidential and comparative information throughout the Scrutiny review.

5.2 The Forum can invite a variety of people to attend to assist in the forming of a balanced and focused range of recommendations as follows:-

- (a) Member of Parliament for Hartlepool;
- (b) Portfolio Holders for Regeneration and Liveability / Children's Services / Neighbourhoods and Communities;
- (c) Children's Services Department Officers;
- (d) Housing Advice Team;
- (e) Housing Hartlepool;
- (f) Shelter / Night Stop / HVDA;
- (g) Homelessness Forum;
- (h) Job Centre Plus;
- (i) Private Landlords;
- (j) Local residents;
- (k) Neighbouring Local Authorities;
- (l) Representatives of minority communities of interest or heritage;
- (m) Ward Councillors; and
- (n) Young people who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing homelessness.

5.3 The Forum may also wish to refer to a variety of documentary / internet sources, key suggestions are as highlighted below:-

(a) Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 'Youth Homelessness in the UK', May 2008.

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/2220-homelessness-young-people.pdf>

(b) Department of Communities and Local Government, 'Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities', July 2006.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/152056.pdf>

## 6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY

6.1 Community engagement plays a crucial role in the Scrutiny process and paragraph 5.2, details who the Forum could involve. However, thought will need to be given to the structure in the way that the Forum wishes to encourage those views.

6.2 In addition, diversity issues have been considered in the background research for this enquiry under the Equality Standards for Local Government. As such the views of local diversity groups will be sought throughout the inquiry where felt appropriate and time allows. Consequently, consideration has been given as to how the views of people from minority communities of interest or heritage (for example, people with disabilities, people with learning disabilities, people with mental health problems, black and minority ethnic people, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people), which may not be gathered through the usual community engagement routes, can be included over the course of the inquiry.

## 7. REQUEST FOR FUNDING FROM THE DEDICATED OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BUDGET

### Option 1

7.1 Consideration has been given, through the background research for this scoping report, to the need to request funding from the dedicated Overview and Scrutiny budget to aid Members in their enquiry. At this stage no additional funding has been identified as being necessary to support Members in their investigation. Members, however, may wish to seek additional funding over the course of the investigation and the pro forma attached at **Appendix A** outlines the criteria on which a request to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee will be judged.

## 8. PROPOSED TIMETABLE OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

8.1 Detailed below is the proposed timetable for the review to be undertaken, which may be changed at any stage:-

**13 January 2009** – Consideration of the Scoping Report by the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

**27 January 2009** – Formal meeting of the Forum to receive:-

- (i) A combined 'Setting the Scene' report from Regeneration and Planning Services and Children's Services Departments;
- (ii) Evidence from the Portfolio Holders for Regeneration and Liveability / Children's Services / Neighbourhoods and Communities (To be confirmed);
- (iii) Evidence on the reasons behind youth homelessness

**February 2009** – Site visit(s) to Gainford House / Anna Court / St Paul's Road / 50 The Front / Local Authority (date(s) and venue(s) to be confirmed)

**3 March 2009** – Formal meeting of the Forum to receive:-

- (i) Feedback from Site Visit(s);
- (ii) Evidence on benefits and financial support available to young people; and
- (iii) Evidence on accommodation and support provision for young people in care.

**21 April 2009** – Consideration of Draft Final Report by the Forum

**24 April 2009** – Consideration of Final Report by the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee / Approval Required for Report to be marked 'to follow'

**To Be Confirmed** – Consideration of Final Report by the Cabinet

## 9. RECOMMENDATION

9.1 Members are recommended to agree the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum's remit of the Scrutiny investigation as outlined in paragraph 4.1.

**Contact Officer:** - James Walsh, Scrutiny Support Officer  
Chief Executives Department – Corporate Strategy  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Tel: - 01429 523647  
Email:- james.walsh@hartlepool.gov.uk

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-

- (a) Department for Communities and Local Government (2006) *Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities*, Available from: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/152056.pdf> (Accessed 4 December 2008)
- (b) Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2008) *Housing Choices and Issues for Young People in the UK*, Available from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/2220-homelessness-young-people.pdf> (Accessed 20 November 2008)
- (c) Children and Young Persons Act 2008 (c. 23), Available from: [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2008/ukpga\\_20080023\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2008/ukpga_20080023_en_1) (Accessed 3 December 2008).
- (d) Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 (c. 35), Available from: [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2000/ukpga\\_20000035\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2000/ukpga_20000035_en_1) (Accessed 3 December 2008).

**APPENDIX A**

**PRO-FORMA TO REQUEST FUNDING TO SUPPORT  
CURRENT SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION**

<b>Title of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</b>
<b>Title of the current scrutiny investigation for which funding is requested:</b>
<b>To clearly identify the purpose for which additional support is required:</b>
<b>To outline indicative costs to be incurred as a result of the additional support:</b>
<b>To outline any associated timescale implications:</b>
<b>To outline the 'added value' that may be achieved by utilising the additional support as part of the undertaking of the Scrutiny Investigation:</b>

**To outline any requirements / processes to be adhered to in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules / Standing Orders:**

**To outline the possible disadvantages of not utilising the additional support during the undertaking of the Scrutiny Investigation:**

**To outline any possible alternative means of additional support outside of this proposal:**

Hartlepool Young Voices

Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

21<sup>st</sup> July 2008

Proposal for Investigation



"Appropriate accommodation for homeless young people for whatever reason"

Background

We believe that at the moment, young people in Hartlepool who find that they do not have a bed for the night face an almost impossible situation. Finding appropriate accommodation for young people who are homeless, for whatever reason, is extremely difficult for a number of reasons. We would like our Scrutiny Forum to investigate this so we can improve the lives of young people.

We have done some research, spoken to young people who have had their own experiences and adults who support them. We wanted to get an idea of how things are to give us the beginning of a plan for the investigation.

Recently one young man who found himself suddenly homeless could not get somewhere to live. He works 2 jobs and earns around £1000 per month, but the landlord wanted £450 bond, 4 weeks rent in advance at between £85 and £100 a week, an administration cost of £135 and £40 reference fee!

We spoke to another young woman who had been able to access supported accommodation. She told us that it was much easier to become independent from this type of housing and had now successfully managed to get a place of her own and was living completely independently.



We found out that there are virtually no options for a young person who suddenly hasn't got a bed for the night. In Hartlepool there is a place called 50 The Front, but this is for any age and both rooms and bathroom facilities are shared, This means a young person who may be very distressed having been kicked out of the family home, or having had to leave because they were not safe, could find themselves sharing with a much older person. We also believe that other people staying there have drug and alcohol issues that also make it unsafe for a vulnerable young person. The only other real emergency option is to be sent to Middlesbrough. We would like to look into this properly.

### Main Issues

After we talked to people about what it is like at the moment we discussed what the main issues seem to be. A couple of significant problems also seem to be the time that the process can take and the type of language being used. The term "making yourself homeless" seemed to be particularly unhelpful to young people in need of support.

In our opinion these are the main points for the investigation:

- Age division - 16-18 and 18 plus. The circumstances for what is available are very different depending on your age.
- Benefits - There are very complicated benefit rules that affect what you can and can't access as a young person.
- Accommodation
- Support
- Young people leaving care

### **Age division**

We would like to be able to untangle what seems to be a very confusing situation that means your age 16 plus can mean you get very different things. We believe the rules about how long you have been in care before and including your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, which affects what you can access, need to be looked at. Benefit entitlement also changes quite dramatically depending on whether you are 16, 17 or 18.

### **Benefits**

There is currently no benefit entitlement for 16 - 18 year olds except for severe hardship and income support in certain circumstances. We have also been told that when attempting to claim for these the benefits people can ring the parents and ask if they can go home. In some cases the parents could say yes even though actually it would mean the young person returning to the unsafe home they were trying to leave. We would like to look into what can be done to stop this happening. Women trying to leave a violent relationship can go to safe refuges, what can young people go to under the same circumstances? 18 plus there is more benefit support available, however, we have also discovered that if a young person finds accommodation with a private landlord there is usually a shortfall between the private rent and the benefit.

### **Accommodation**

Apart from looking into the emergency accommodation that is already available as mentioned before - 50 The Front, we would like to investigate the whole range of options available specifically to young people. We have found out that some Authorities have something called a Night Stop. This is a bank of people who have been approved to offer an overnight stay to a young person who has not got a bed that night. We would like to find out more about this to see if it is something we could suggest for Hartlepool.

### **Support**

There are agencies in the town that support young people who find themselves homeless, Connexions and B76 are represented on the Young Voices team already. We have found out that it can be difficult to get support for all young people because at the moment a lot of what is available is aimed at a very particular group of needs - drug and alcohol problems or young people who have been involved with the police. We think that although this is obviously important too, there should be support for young people who don't have these issues as well. Any young person who finds themselves homeless should be able to get help. We think that most of the young people who find themselves homeless at 16 plus need support for whatever reason.

### **Young People leaving Care**

We have heard some good things about the supported accommodation that is available to young people leaving care, like St Paul's Road. We would like to look into this more. Maybe there could be more places like this available to a wider range of young people. We also thought about the possibility of have places where young people with different needs could live alongside young people who don't, as a stepping stone to living independently. We also know from our own team that it can be really difficult to move from a foster placement to living independently, there's no going back once you have decided to leave. We thought the idea of 'practice flats' would be good to help young people decide if they are ready for the huge step into independent living.

### Conclusion

We would like the investigation to address these issues by talking to young people who have experienced them, asking the organisations who are involved in providing these services to come and tell us what they do and answer some of our questions. We would like to suggest speaking to Housing Hartlepool, Adult Services, the Leaving Care team, Shelter, the Homelessness Forum, a Young Persons Advisor from the Job Centre and a representative from the private Landlords. We would also like to visit some of the places that are currently available here and see what else another Authority has to offer that we could suggest for Hartlepool.

Thank you for listening.

Appropriate accommodation for homeless young people  
for whatever reason.

