

CABINET

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

24 AUGUST 2009

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

Present:

The Mayor (Stuart Drummond) - In the Chair

Councillors: Pam Hargreaves (Regeneration and Economic Development Portfolio Holder),
Gerard Hall (Adult Services Portfolio Holder).
Cath Hill (Children's Services Portfolio Holder),
Robbie Payne (Finance & Performance Portfolio Holder),
Victor Tumilty (Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder),

Officers: Paul Walker, Chief Executive,
Mike Ward, Chief Financial Officer,
Dave Stubbs, Director of Neighbourhood Services,
Adrienne Simcock, Director of Children's Services,
Nicola Bailey, Director of Adult and Community Services,
Ian Merritt, Head of Commissioning and Children's Trust,
Danielle Swainston, Sure Start, Extended Services and Early Years Manager,
Peter Davies, Principal Youth Officer
Peter Turner, Principal Strategy Development Officer
Julian Heward, Assistant Public Relations Officer,
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

51. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Peter Jackson (Transport and Neighbourhoods Portfolio Holder).

52. Declarations of interest by members

None.

53. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 17 August 2009

Confirmed.

54. Director of Children’s Services, Adrienne Simcock

The Mayor commented that this was the last meeting to be attended by the Director of Children’s Services, Adrienne Simcock, before her retirement at the end of the week. On behalf of the Cabinet, the Mayor wished Mrs Simcock a long and happy retirement and thanked her for her excellent work for the authority and support to Cabinet.

55. Restructure of Hartlepool’s Children’s Trust (*Director of Children’s Services*)

Type of decision

Key decision – test (ii) applies.

Purpose of report

To set out proposed changes to Hartlepool Children’s Trust including membership, structure and terms of reference, in response to Government guidance. It is proposed that the changes should come into effect on the 1st October 2009.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Children’s Services Portfolio Holder reported that following Lord Laming’s inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié the Government in 2003, launched the Every Child Matters programme of systemic change to improve outcomes for every child and young person. The Children Act 2004 provided the legislative underpinning for Every Child Matters. Section 10 required that local authorities and their “relevant partners“, amongst other provisions, had to cooperate to improve children’s wellbeing.

Guidance on this “duty to cooperate” under section 10 was issued in 2005 and explained that acting in accordance with this duty implied putting in place “children’s trust arrangements”. The term Children’s Trust refers not only to strategic partnership boards but the totality of change needed to deliver better and more responsive integrated services. Local authorities were required to put Children’s Trust arrangements in place by April 2008. The present Children’s Trust arrangements for Hartlepool were established on the 1st April 2007, following a report to Cabinet on the 5th February 2007.

Further change was now being brought about largely through three key documents published over the past nine months:

- Are we there yet? Improving governance and resource management in children’s trusts (Audit Commission, 2008)
- Children’s Trusts: Statutory guidance on inter-agency cooperation to improve well-being of children, young people and their families (DCSF, 2008)
- The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report (House of Commons, 2009)

The Audit Commission had recognised the variety of approaches taken across England in the development of children's trusts and that in the majority of areas there was good inter-agency working. However, the Audit Commission considers that there is little evidence that children's trusts have improved outcomes for children. There is little evidence that mainstream funding has been redirected or that performance has been managed across services. The Audit Commission has recommend changes to the governance and structure of Children's Trusts. The report set out the essential features of a children's trust as set out in Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) guidance.

In response to draft guidance issued in April 2008, it was agreed by the Children's Trust meeting held in June 2008 that a review of the existing arrangements should take place to ensure that the necessary organisation and structures are in place to take this agenda forward within the timescales required. Subsequently, new draft Terms of Reference were presented to and approved by, the Trust's Performance Management Group in April 2008. A copy of the report, additional papers and the proposed structure and the draft Terms of Reference were attached as appendices to the report.

Members commented that the new Trust was very 'statutory body' heavy in terms of representation and it had been indicated to a Cabinet Member that comments made during the consideration of the new proposals by the Trust in relation to the number of elected members on the new board had not been taken onboard. Officers indicated that the previous board with over forty members had been unwieldy and intimidating for some representatives. The new body with a membership of around twenty was based much more on front line service providers and had included and additional Councillor following the debate at the recent meetings.

It was suggested that a review be undertaken in twelve months to assess the new Trust but Cabinet was informed that a further guidance document from the DCSF was expected shortly, which it was anticipated would make further changes to the way the Children's Trusts were established and operated.

Decision

That the proposed changes to the membership and structure of the Children's Trust together with the new Terms of Reference be approved for implementation from the 1st October 2009.

56. Young Inspectors' Programme *(Director of Children's Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To provide information regarding the Look, Listen, Change Young Inspectors' National Programme, and to agree that Hartlepool submits a bid to it.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Children's Services Portfolio Holder reported that the Look, Listen Change Consortium (a partnership between The National Children's Board, British Youth Council, KIDS Charity, National Centre for Excellence in Residential Child Care and the Council for Disabled Children) is managing a Young Inspectors' Programme, which is proposed for Children's Trust regions of England, to engage disadvantaged and marginalised young people. Young people will be supported to act as inspectors of services and in so doing influence and improve service delivery and policy making. It was proposed that a bid on behalf of Hartlepool be submitted by the 28th August 2009, which is when the current round of bidding closes. Details of the background of the programme, the proposed bid and the financial and risk implications were set out in the report. If successful, funding would not cover all of the costs but work would be matched within existing plans and staff time, along with expectations of giving young people a voice in the design, review and delivery of services locally. There would be no extra demands on existing budgets.

Cabinet Members sought clarification on how this new role would be incorporated within the work of the team. Officer stated that this would be an additional role to the very wide range of work undertaken by Youth Workers and social workers involved with the se young people. It would be incorporated by changes to the current work undertaken b the team to more closely align with the requirements of this fund. Cabinet Members were keen to ensure the involvement of young people who would have real opinions about how services should be geared towards them and this meant involving the 'uninvolved'. Officers agreed with the comment and as an indication of how this could be done, the work involving skateboarders in the south of the town with the proposed skate-park at Rossmere was highlighted as a particularly successful example of the involvement of young people in developing a service aimed at themselves.

There was a concern at the potential to overload staff dealing with young people and it was highlighted that there was potential staff support through the scheme as well as financial support for the young inspectors in their role.

Cabinet was informed that should the bid be successful, the Council would be informed in the autumn with the scheme commencing in the new year.

Decision

That the submission of a bid to the Young Inspectors' programme, based upon the information set out in the report, be approved.

57. Revised Children's Centres and Extended Services Strategy (*Director of Children's Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To seek approval for the revised Children's Centres and Extended Services Strategy including a restructure of Children's Centre teams.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Children's Services Portfolio Holder reported that the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) issued guidance in 2004 setting out the requirement for local authorities to develop Children's Centres. Children's Centres offer integrated services for children aged 0-5 years old and their families. In addition the DCSF issued an "Extended Schools" prospectus which set out a requirement for schools to provide an extended schools offer by 2010.

A Children's Centre and Extended Services strategy was approved by Cabinet in June 2006. The Strategy set out the delivery of services across five localities. The revised strategy set out the delivery of services across four localities. This is proposed following a request from schools to align all clusters across the town. A programme to develop Sure Start Children's Centres across Hartlepool began in 2004. There are currently seven designated Sure Start Children's Centres in Hartlepool with the final centre based at Throston Primary School planned to open in September 2009. Hartlepool will then have achieved its target of eight centres by March 2010.

Following detailed consideration and consultation with School Heads, it was proposed to create four school clusters, North, South and two for the Central area (Central 1 and Central 2). The changes in the clusters required a restructure of the Children's Centres teams. The teams would be restructured into four sub teams to cover each cluster. These would reflect the needs of each area and the number of children's centres in each cluster. There would be no requirement for redundancies as one Integration Support Manager had already left the authority. The draft structures for each cluster were set out in the revised strategy submitted as an appendix to the report.

An extensive public consultation took place on the original children's centres and extended services strategy and as the revised strategy did not directly affect services being delivered to children and their families it was not felt appropriate to consult more broadly. Partners in serviced delivery had been consulted, however, on the arrangements.

Cabinet Members questioned the establishment of the four clusters and how these had been reached. Officers indicated that the school Heads had wished to arrange schools within cluster groups that related to the feeder

school arrangements between primaries and secondary schools. There were still town-wide providers such as English Martyrs School and Catcote School. English Martyrs School already had close links with the catholic primary schools which would continue. The primaries would also be involved in the cluster arrangement as that linked them with their neighbouring schools. Catcote School already worked on a town-wide basis and it was proposed that this would continue. It was highlighted that discussion was on-going in relation to the integration of extended services through the Schools Transformation process.

Decision

That the Revised Children's Centre and Extended Services Strategy including a restructure of Children's Centre teams be approved.

58. Quarter 1 – Revenue Financial Management Report 2009/2010 *(Corporate Management Team)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To provide details of progress against the Council's overall revenue budget for 2009/2010.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Finance and Performance Portfolio Holder reported on the following areas:

- Progress against Departmental and Corporate Budgets, and High Risk Budget Areas;
- Detailed Revenue Monitoring by Portfolio;
- Progress against Efficiency Savings Targets Identified in the 2009/2010 Budget Strategy;
- Performance against Budget Pressures to be treated as Contingency Items;
- Progress against Departmental Salary Turnover Targets;
- Key Balance Sheet information.

The report would also be submitted to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 18th September, 2009. This would ensure that Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee is able to review the report at the earliest opportunity.

The Portfolio Holder stated that owing to the impact of the recession income from the Shopping Centre, Car Parking and Land Charges will be less than budgeted. These shortfalls would be partly covered from the monies set aside at the end of last year for these risks. The remaining shortfall would either need to be funded from the Centralised Estimates under-spend, or General Fund Balances.

One positive in the report was that there would be an under-spend on the Centralised Estimates budget as a result of the repayment of long term debt earlier in the year and from an expectation that investment income in the second half of the current year would be higher than previously expected. In April it had been suggested that part of this saving may need to be allocated to support strategic land acquisitions, via prudential borrowing. It was now becoming unlikely that the strategic land acquisitions would be completed this year, so these monies would not be needed the current financial year.

The report also indicated that additional funding may need to be allocated for Equal Pay costs arising from Equal Pay tribunal cases. These costs could not yet be estimated, but could be significant owing to the back-dating of claims. It was therefore suggested that Cabinet note the position and defer developing a strategy until the half year budget report was considered. However, if there were uncommitted monies available after addressing the risks around equal pay and income shortfalls then it was proposed that these be carried forward to help manage the budget from 2011/12 – as it was expected this would be the start of a period of austerity and reducing grants for councils.

Decision

That the report be noted.

59. Quarterly Review of Strategic Risk Register (*Assistant Chief Executive*)

Type of decision

Purpose of report

To inform the Cabinet of the current position with regard to the Council's Strategic Risk Register.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Finance and Performance Portfolio Holder updated Cabinet on the current position with regard to the Council's Strategic Risk Register following a review by the Corporate Risk management Group (CRMG) and Corporate Management Team (CMT). The review involved examining risk ratings of existing risks in terms of impact and likelihood and effectiveness of control measures in place to mitigate the risk in conjunction and the identification of any new risks. The report set out the current position of the Strategic Risk register as well as giving a more detailed position on the six red risks that currently lie on the register with comments as well as the identification of any other significant risk issues that have been identified since the last report.

A Cabinet Member highlighted the excellent work undertaken by Council staff to ensure the continued operation of the Civic Centre following the

flooding of Level 1 after a water main burst earlier in the year.

Decision

That the report and the amendments to the Council's Strategic Risk Register and actions taken be noted.

The meeting concluded at 9.40 a.m.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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