

CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

9 August 2011

The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Cath Hill (Children's Services Portfolio Holder)

Also present: Councillor Marjorie James, Chair of Scrutiny Coordinating Committee
Councillor Chris Simmons, Chair of Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

Officers: Caroline O'Neill, Assistant Director, Performance and Achievement
Sally Robinson, Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services
Ian Merritt, Strategic Commissioner - Children's Services
Ann Turner, Governor Support Officer
Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

3. School Term and Holiday Dates – School Year 2012/13 *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To seek the agreement of the Portfolio Holder to the pattern of school term and holiday dates for the school year 2012/13 for community and controlled schools in Hartlepool. To seek the agreement of the Portfolio Holder in recommending those dates to the governing bodies of aided schools in Hartlepool.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Governor Support Officer reported that the local authority (LA), the Council had the responsibility for setting the school term and holiday dates for community and controlled schools in Hartlepool. Aided school governing bodies were responsible for setting their own school holiday pattern within the agreed national framework of working days. Traditionally the LA and the governing bodies of all the Aided schools work together to ensure a consistent pattern across the town in respect of school term and holiday dates, though in the case of Roman Catholic schools in particular, some variation does occur in some years.

The pattern proposed for 2012/13 provides for an “envelope” of 195 days, of which, 190 are days on which pupils attend and the remaining five days are designated by the school as Professional Development (PD) days.

Regional consultation had also taken place. The local authorities in the North East region were committed to achieving broad consistency across the region when considering the school year pattern for 2012/13 and subsequent years. The Local Government Association (LGA) was also attempting to achieve an overall national consensus based on a number of principles such as; starting the school year on a September date as near as possible to 1st September; equalised teaching and learning blocks (roughly 2x7 and 4x6 weeks); and establishing a two week spring break in early April irrespective of the incidence of the Easter bank holiday. The North East authorities had agreed to all individual LAs consulting locally on a common preferred model as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

In response to the consultation with head teachers, no comments had been received in relation to the dates, although English Martyrs Roman Catholic School had reviewed their proposed dates to be in line with those recommended for consultation. Once the local consultation had taken place, the general consensus from the LAs in the region was to adopt the model set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

The Portfolio Holder welcomed the agreed school term calendar and approved its introduction.

Decision

1. That the schedule of term and holiday dates for 2012/13 for community and controlled schools in Hartlepool as shown in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.
2. That the schedule of term and holiday dates for 2012/13 be recommended to the governing bodies of aided schools in Hartlepool.

4. Call-in of decision – Appointment of Local Authority Representatives to serve on School Governing Bodies (Specifically the decision taken in relation to Seaton Carew Nursery School) (Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee)

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To report the outcome of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee meetings held on the 7 April 2011 and the 25 July 2011, at which consideration was given to the Call-In of the following decision taken by the Children's Services Portfolio Holder on 22 February 2011:-

Minute No. 27 – Appointment of Local Authority Representatives to Serve on School Governing Bodies

“The Portfolio Holder for Children’s Services approved the recommendations of the General Purposes Committee in respect of the appointment of Local Authority representatives governors to serve on school Governing Bodies with the exception of the recommendation for Seaton Carew Nursery School and approved that Councillor Hilary Thompson be appointed to the Governing Body of that nursery school.”

To refer the decision taken of the Children’s Services Portfolio Holder on 22 February 2011 (minute No. 27 - as outlined in section 2.1 above) back to Children’s Services Portfolio Holder for further consideration.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Chair of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee briefly outlined the investigation of the Committee and commented that this was the first time that recommendation of the General Purposes Committee in respect of school governor appointments had not simply been ratified by the Portfolio Holder. The Scrutiny Coordinating Committee considered that should a ward councillor express an interest in a position, then preference should be given to their appointment.

The General Purposes Committee at its recent meeting had also been made aware that Councillor G Lilley’s term of office on the Seaton Carew Nursery Governing Body had come to an end though he had indicated a desire to be reappointed. The General Purposes Committee had recommended that as there were now two vacancies, Councillors G Lilley, H Thompson and P Thompson should be considered together by the Portfolio Holder for the two positions, a situation which was not reflected within the report submitted to the portfolio holder.

The Portfolio Holder commented that General Purposes Committee did only make recommendations and on that specific occasion the recommendation had been rejected. The Portfolio Holder stated that she was still minded to confirm her original decision to appoint Councillor H Thompson to the Seaton Carew Nursery Governing Body. In relation to the other position, the Portfolio Holder commented that Councillor G Lilley had served the governing body well in the past. The Portfolio Holder, however, did acknowledge the wishes of the General Purposes Committee and indicated that she would consult further with Councillor P Thompson on the Seaton Carew position.

Decision

1. That the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee be thanked for its report.
2. That the decision taken by the Children’s Services Portfolio Holder on the 22 February 2011 (minute no. 27 refers), be reaffirmed and that Councillor H Thompson be appointed to the Seaton Carew Nursery Governing Body.

3. That a decision on the appointment to the remaining vacancy on the Seaton Carew Governing Body be deferred to allow the Portfolio Holder to consult the nominees to the position.

5. Appointment of Local Authority Representatives to Serve on School Governing Bodies *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To request the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services consideration and approval of the recommendations of the General Purposes Committee in respect of the appointment of Local Authority representative Governors to serve on school governing bodies.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Governor Support Officer referred to the appendix to the report which set out details of school governing body vacancies together with applications received in respect of the vacancies which was considered by members of the General Purposes Sub Committee at their meeting held on 4th July 2011. The Governor Support Officer referred to the decision taken under the previous item in relation to Seaton Carew Nursery.

The Portfolio Holder commented that she understood that Councillor P Thompson was considering applying to be appointed to the governing body of Rossmere Primary School where there was still a vacancy. Subject to the comments in relation to Seaton Carew Nursery, the Portfolio Holder approved the recommendations for appointments set out in the appendix to the report.

Decision

That the recommendations of the General Purposes Committee in respect of the appointment of Local Authority representative governors to serve on school Governing Bodies as set out in the appendix to the report, subject to the decisions taken in respect of the Seaton Crew Nursery detailed in the previous item, be approved.

6. Autism Awareness Development *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of a proposal to develop and deliver Autism Awareness training across key workforce sectors in line with the

recommendations outlined in the Department of Health (DH) strategy "Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives: The Strategy for Adults with Autism in England" (March 2010). The strategy sets a clear framework for all mainstream services across the public sector to work together for adults with autism and the proposed workforce model aims to extend the recommendations of the strategy to incorporate the children's workforce.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Strategic Commissioner - Children's Services reported that the proposed workforce model had been developed across Child and Adult Services to support a multi agency approach, the model created parity and equity of training to staff in Child and Adult Services and takes into account other key statutory sector requirements, with the option to include private and voluntary sector providers.

The model would be adapted to meet the specific demands of key service areas and would help those providers to develop services that support and meet the locally identified needs of people with autism, their families and carers.

Workforce needs analysis across Child and Adult Services had identified approximately 500 people who will require Foundation (Level 1) and approximately 200 people for Intermediate (Level 2) training. Level 3 training would be required on completion of level 2 training for key staff undertaking assessment or care management, or where intense interaction was required. A proposed model was attached as Appendix 1 to the report which identified the level of training required linked to the intensity, complexity and role of the workforce.

The report went on to indicate that Initial funding had been identified from the existing Workforce Grant of £45,000. The funding would support the following:-

- Learning Nexus (E-Learning package) Being developed to include recent QCA Standards with Durham County Council;
- Contribution to the Performance & Achievement Division for the of the Educational Psychology Service to provide Level 2 (intermediate) training;
- Procurement of Level 3 advanced training (Helen Gordon Associates).

It was proposed the model would be adopted across the Tees valley, with the option to use HBC resources to deliver level 1 and 2 training.

Condition Management and, Information Advice and Guidance (the other key areas identified within the Autism Strategy) would be developed and considered further with Tees Commissioners and would be progressed through the Tees Integrated Commissioning Group and Autism Service Delivery Group (ASDG).

The Chair of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee suggested that utilising

the skills with the voluntary and charity sector within Hartlepool should be considered. The Portfolio Holder was concerned that there was an increasing demand for training in this sector but that essentially much of this should be for the Health Authorities to fund. The Portfolio Holder questioned if the Council's Educational Psychology Service could be used to provide some of the training required. The Strategic Commissioner - Children's Services commented that there were specialists within the Educational Psychology Service that had the necessary skills but they were in great demand.

The Portfolio Holder also questioned the need to utilise external providers for the delivery of the training. The Strategic Commissioner - Children's Services stated that Helen Gordon Associates did provide excellent value to the authority in brokering training providers. The Assistant Director indicated that there was a need to bring external training providers in from time to time to ensure the widest range of experience was available to staff

Decision

That the proposal for the development of Autism Awareness training across the children and young people's workforce in Hartlepool as reported be approved.

7. Children's Services Departmental Plan Quarter 4 Progress Report *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the progress made towards achieving Departmental Plan actions, performance indicators (PIs) and risks for the period to 31st March 2011.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Assistant Director, Performance and Achievement reported on the progress made towards meeting the milestones associated with the actions and PIs within the current departmental plan. The Assistant Director commented that in relation to the PIs the percentage achieved may at this stage seem low but data was not yet available for twenty two indicators (34.4%) and this was due to the Key Stage 2 tests boycott (10 PIs), the removal of the Tellus Survey (3 PIs) and the decommissioning of the national data hub and withdrawal of government grants (9 PIs).

The Portfolio Holder commented that some statistics and budgets could be quite dramatically affected by the movement to the town of even a single child with significant needs. The Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum commented that even the movement of families within the town could have a dramatic affect on schools.

Decision

1. That the progress made towards completing actions and performance indicator targets during the fourth quarter of 2010/11 and the actions taken in relation to areas of delivery which are seen to be high risk at present be noted.
2. That the change of due date for action CAD LL005 as highlighted in Section 8 of the report be approved.

8. Children's Homes – Regulation 33/34 Reports *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To present the Regulation 33 report of visit to Children's Home for Exmoor Grove.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Strategic Commissioner - Children's Services presented the Regulation 33 reports covering the months of February, March and April 2011 for Exmoor Grove.

The Portfolio Holder noted that the changes to Exmoor Grove had had a significant effect in improving standards, though it was noted that there were some areas that still needed attention.

Decision

That the reports be noted.

The meeting concluded at 11.15 a.m.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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