

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

31 October 2011

The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

Councillor Chris Simmons (Children's Services Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Sally Robinson, Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services  
Danielle Swainston, Sure Start, Extended Services and Early Years Manager  
Lynne Pawley, Senior School Improvement Advisor  
Tom Argument, 11-19 Partnership Officer  
Leigh Keeble, Development Officer  
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

## **12. OSCARS Out Of School Service – Changes in Delivery Venue** *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

**Type of decision**

Non-key.

**Purpose of report**

To seek approval for a change in the venue of the delivery of OSCARs out of school service.

**Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The Sure Start, Extended Services and Early Years Manager reported that OSCARs was an all year round childcare service operated by Hartlepool Borough Council. It offered both after school club provision and holiday club provision. The service was town-wide and open to children from 4 – 16 years of age. It currently operated from two venues – OSCARs 1 from Miers Avenue Sure Start and OSCARs 2 from Owton Manor Community Centre. Across the two sites the service could take a maximum of 133 children in both the after school and holiday clubs.

Explorations had taken place to locate a suitable venue for the delivery of OSCARs 1 and OSCARs 2 as one service. There were a number of requirements for the new venue and all potential venues had been visited and reviewed using the criteria set out in the report.

Appendix A to the report detailed the potential sites and explained the

benefits and concerns that each venue presented. The information in showed that the most appropriate venue, taking into account all the criteria required, was West Rugby Club on Catcote Road. This venue offered a secure environment that would be exclusively used by OSCARs service with appropriate kitchen and toilet facilities. It also offered a large outdoor space and adequate car parking for parents to drop off and pick up.

The move to one site reduced the need for the current number of staff as adult to child ratios could be managed more effectively at one site. Therefore, a restructure would need to take place to ensure that the new merged service was fit for purpose. This restructure would include the deletion of a number of posts (there were likely to be seven posts deleted although five of these were currently vacant).

The Portfolio Holder was concerned at how the move may affect those who may not have their own transport. The Sure Start, Extended Services and Early Years Manager commented that only a few parents relied on public transport or taxis to collect children at the end of the day, the vast majority were picked up in cars. The Portfolio Holder was concerned that the additional costs incurred through the proposed location may force some to withdraw from using the service. The Sure Start, Extended Services and Early Years Manager did indicate that there was no financial assistance available to parents in relation to transport. However parents are supported to claim for Family tax credits which contribute to childcare costs. It was, however, almost inevitable that the move may stop some families attending but may bring new children to OSCARs.

The Portfolio Holder questioned if there were any issues with the premises being licensed. Officers indicated that there were no concerns and the licensed area was well separated. The club had been very helpful in accommodating the arrangements that would be needed within the building. The Portfolio Holder requested an update report in the summer to assess how the merging of the two current sites had gone and how OSCARs was operating at the West Rugby Club site.

#### **Decision**

1. That the merging of OSCARs 1 and OSCARs 2 be approved and the merged service be delivered from West Rugby Club, Catcote Road.
2. That an update report be submitted to the Portfolio Holder in the summer.

### **13. Annual Complaints Report - 1st April 2010 – 31st March 2011** *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

#### **Type of decision**

None – the report was for the Portfolio Holder's information.

#### **Purpose of report**

To present the Annual Complaints Report of the Child and Adult Services

Department on complaints and representations for the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011.

**Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The Annual Report provided information on the complaints and representation frameworks appropriate in the department. It draws together information in relation to complaints that had been received and dealt with during the reporting period. The report included details of complaints relating to Adult's Social Care Services and Community Services. These come within either a statutory framework or the Authority's Corporate Complaints Framework and were also reported to the Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder and the Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder.

The content of the Report included the following areas:

- Types of complaints and representations received 2010/11
- Profile data on service users who were the focus of the complaints
- Outcomes of complaints
- Compliance with timescales
- Learning lessons and service improvement

The Report provided an analysis of recorded complaints, compliments and representations and draws comparisons with the previous year. Performance was highlighted in a range of areas so that practice issues may be considered.

The Portfolio Holder welcomed the report, particularly the number of compliments that had been received. He was, however, concerned at the time taken to respond to some complaints. Officers indicated that this was often due to the complexity of some complaints or the time taken for complainants to respond to requests for information or meetings to discuss their complaint.

**Decision**

That the report be noted.

**14. Fostering and Adoption Annual Report** (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

**Type of decision**

None – the report was for the Portfolio Holder's information.

**Purpose of report**

The purpose of this report is to present to Portfolio Holder the Annual Report of the Fostering and Adoption Service 2010/11.

**Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services

reported that Hartlepool Family Placement Service fulfilled both a fostering and adoption statutory function and operated as a local authority Fostering and Adoption Agency. Although not a statutory requirement, the production of an annual report of the service was good practice and provided an opportunity to record achievement of the year and set priorities for the forthcoming year. The Annual Report of the Fostering and Adoption Service 2010/11 was submitted as an appendix to the report. It was a requirement of the National Minimum Standards that the service produced a Statement of Purpose and a Children's Guide for both fostering and adoption services and reviewed these at least annually.

The Portfolio Holder welcomed the news that had been announced on the day of the meeting indicating that Hartlepool was one of the top adoption agencies in the country for dealing with adoption placements in line with guideline timescales. All the staff within the team should be thanked for their excellent work in this achievement. The Assistant Director commented that it was an excellent result based on the hard work of the staff involved that hadn't necessarily been reflected in the recent inspection of the adoption service by Ofsted which was 'satisfactory'. The Assistant Director did feel that it was difficult being a small authority to provide the numbers of cases the inspectors wanted to review during an inspection. Cases tended to go back over years which then didn't give a true reflection of the improvements that had been made in that time.

#### **Decision**

That the Annual Report of the Fostering and Adoption Service 2010/11 be noted.

### **15. Statement of Purpose for Fostering and Statement of Purpose for Adoption** (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

#### **Type of decision**

Non-key.

#### **Purpose of report**

To inform the Children's Services Portfolio of the updated Statements of Purpose relating to the Fostering and Adoption Services.

#### **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services reported that the local authority was required under the Fostering Services National Minimum Standards 2011 (Standard 16) and the Adoption National Minimum Standards 2011 (Standard 18) to produce a clear Statement of Purpose which was available to, and understood by, foster carers, adopters, staff, volunteers and children. The Statement of Purpose should be child focused and show how the service would meet outcomes for children. In addition, a Children's Guide should be prepared which was provided to the child at an appropriate time in the adoption planning process. The Hartlepool Borough Council Adoption Service: Statement of

Purpose, Fostering Statement of Purpose and Children's Guides were attached as appendices to the report.

The Portfolio Holder commented on the Children's Guides and asked if multi-media guides were available. The Assistant Director indicated that most of this work was done through traditional books and it was quite challenging to provide the right kind of information to the different age groups.

#### **Decision**

That the Statement of Purpose and Children's Guides for 2011/12 be approved and the forward actions noted within the report approved.

### **16. Framework Agreement: Specialist Care and Support for Children and Adults with Complex Needs and/or Learning Disabilities** (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

#### **Type of decision**

None – the report was for the Portfolio Holder's information.

#### **Purpose of report**

To inform the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services of the approvals given at the Departmental Management Team to undertake the procurement of a Framework Agreement for the Provision of Specialist Care and Support for Children and Adults with Complex Needs and/or Learning Disabilities.

#### **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The Head of Service reported that a large proportion of packages of care for children with learning disabilities were adequately delivered under the contracts for domiciliary care, however there were people who had more profound and complex needs which required the workforce to have a wider and more developed skill set. There were currently thirty-six adults who were in receipt of care and support from the five specialist providers. The hourly rate paid for the provision of service ranges from £11.93 to £13.87.

There were currently no identified provision for domiciliary care and support for children aged under 14 years as traditionally this type of provision had been met by 'Family Worker' services. Parent and carer reference groups had identified consistency for young people when moving between children and adult services as a priority for planning an individual's care.

It was proposed that a tender exercise was completed to establish a framework of qualified and skilled providers, ensure that high quality care and support was available for adults and children who had complex needs and / or profound learning disabilities. Contracts would be awarded to provider(s) who could demonstrate the required competencies. There would also be a requirement that provider(s) supporting children must also provide services to adults in order that individuals had consistency in provision through the transition between child and adult services.

The Assistant Director reported at the meeting that subsequent to the tender exercise, The Wilf Ward Trust and UBU had been awarded the Framework Agreement arrangements.

**Decision**

That the approvals and proposals regarding the Framework Agreement for Children and Adults with complex needs and/or learning disabilities be noted.

**17. Hartlepool School Standards During the Academic Year 2010-2011** (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

**Type of decision**

None – the report was for the Portfolio Holder's information.

**Purpose of report**

For the Portfolio Holder to note the school performance statistics for all schools during the academic year 2010-2011.

**Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

At the end of the academic year 2010-2011 schools in Hartlepool reported their attainment levels and performance compared to regional and statistical neighbours. While the information had been published by schools it was highlighted that the data was subject to validation by the Office of National Statistics (ONS), though there was expected to be little change in performance.

The report gave the headlines statistics for the Foundation stage and Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 and a gender comparison. Appended to the report were two presentations that gave greater statistical detail for Primary and Secondary Schools.

The Portfolio Holder commented that the results this year were a credit to all the teachers and young people involved supported by parents and governors and showed the continual year on year improvement that was now bringing Hartlepool's attainment levels closer to the national averages.

**Decision**

That the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 2.40 p.m.

**P J DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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