

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

23<sup>rd</sup> June 2006

## **Present:**

Councillor Pam Hargreaves (Children's Services Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Adrienne Simcock, Director of Children's Services  
Claire Johnson, School Workforce Development Officer  
Sue Johnson, Assistant Director  
Terry Maley, Planning and Implementation Officer  
Rachel Smith, Education Officer  
Pat Watson, Democratic Services Officer

## **1. Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF) and Youth Capital Fund (YCF) 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 – *Director of Children's Services***

### **Type of decision**

Key Decision

### **Purpose of report**

To consider approval for proposals related to the process for spending Hartlepool's Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF) and Youth Capital Fund (YCF) for 2006/2007 and 2007/2008.

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

The report gave the background to the development of YOF and YCF funds resulting from the Government's "Youth Matters" agenda. It detailed the guidance related to the funds, the main part of which provided for the funding to be spent on priorities determined by the young people themselves. The funds, which were ring fenced, totalled £155,000 for each year, and the report detailed and recommended a process for forming and supporting a representative group of young people, who would determine the spending on activities and facilities of their choice.

### **Decision**

- (a) The Portfolio Holder approved the process outlined, so that a representative group of young people from Hartlepool can be formed to determine the process for spending the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds.
- (b) The Portfolio Holder indicated that she would like:
  - to be involved in the above process;
  - to receive regular updates on where funding has been spent, and
  - to receive evidence about how Officers have engaged or tried to engage with young people.

## **2. Engagement of a Training Provider for the Higher Level Teaching Assistant Programme - *Director of Children's Services***

### **Type of decision**

Non-key

### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval to engage a single training provider to provide the necessary training for applicants for higher level teaching assistant status.

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

The report advised that the Government sponsored Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) awards grant funding to local authorities to promote its three-year higher level teaching assistant programme and fund training and assessment for applicants. Many applicants for higher level teaching assistant status required additional specialist training to enable them to qualify for assessment and this needed to be delivered by TDA approved providers.

Following a process of annual bidding from local authorities the TDA allocate grant funding to support local HLTA programmes and for the financial year 2006/07 Hartlepool had successfully bid for £44,600, which included funding for specialist training of applicants in preparation for assessment of HLTA status. The financial implications were outlined in the report.

The report indicated that those seeking to become providers of the specialist training must be registered with a consortium of TDA approved HLTA assessors. Currently the only such approved training provider in close proximity to the North-East which could deliver all relevant specialist training in locations in Hartlepool was Trinity and All Saints College in Leeds and it was considered that the proposed action complied with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

### **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder approved the engagement of the training provider as specified in the report.

## **3. School Term and Holiday Dates: School Year 2007/2008 – Director of Social 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 2007/08 for community and controlled schools in Hartlepool.

Also 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 report detailed the current state of play nationally, regionally and locally on the pattern of the school year. Information was provided on the consultation that had taken place and the general consensus from local authorities in the region as to adopt the regional model although slight variations may occur. Appendix 1 identified the recommendations for the school year 2007/08.

### **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder agreed:

- (a) to approve the schedule of term and holiday dates for 2007/08 for community and controlled schools in Hartlepool as shown in Appendix 1, and
- (b) to recommend the schedule of term and holiday dates for 2007/08 to the governing bodies of aided schools in Hartlepool as shown in Appendix 1.

## **4. School Improvement Partners – Assistant Director of Children's Services (Performance & Achievement)**

### **Type of decision**

Non-key

### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval for the use of an external partner to implement the School Improvement Partner element of DfES New Relationship with Schools from September 2006.

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

The report explained the requirements placed upon the Local Authority to employ School Improvement Partners (SIPs) as part of schools' annual 'Single Conversation' with DfES. It also explained what arrangements currently exist and how they will be adapted when the SIPs are introduced. Detailed information was provided under the following headings:

- Background;
- School Improvement Partner (SIP);
- The Single Conversation;
- Existing arrangements;
- Implementation;
- Advantages of using a third party to supply SIPs;
- Schools and the Allocation of SIPs;
- Implications for Link Adviser Role;
- Contract costings and procedures;
- Financial implications;

The terms of the proposed contract were contained in the exempt appendix to the report at Appendix 1. (Exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006), namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)(para 3).

The report identified two possible options and indicated the preferred option for roll out of the SIP function in Hartlepool using an external partner, Northern Education.

### **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder approved the use of Northern Education as external partner in implementing the School Improvement Partner element of the DfES New Relationship with Schools in accordance with the terms proposed in the report and Appendix 1 (exempt as detailed above).

## **5. Corporate Parent Forum – *Director of Children's Services***

### **Type of decision**

Non-key

### **Purpose of report**

To propose changes to the membership of the Corporate Parent Forum and to seek endorsement from the Portfolio Holder to implement the proposed changes.

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

The report provided background information on the development remit and achievements of the Corporate Parent Forum. It reviewed the current membership and proposed some changes in line with national guidance. The report and appendix 1 also contained proposals for consideration by the Portfolio Holder as to how future meetings may be planned.

The report identified that the Portfolio Holder has a responsibility to ensure that the department is striving to maximise the outcomes for looked after children. The Corporate Parent Forum is a vitally important vehicle in making this happen and exists to ensure that the local authority is doing all a good parent would do in seeking the best outcomes for children and young people in care.

### **Decision**

- (a) The Portfolio Holder agreed the membership of the Corporate Parent Forum, as follows:
  - Children's Services Portfolio Holder (Chair);
  - Adult and Community Services Portfolio Holder;
  - The Mayor;
  - 4 Elected Members (political balance is not required);
  - 2 children and young people who are, or have been, looked after plus any other looked after children who wish to attend;
  - 2 local authority foster carers;
  - Director of Children's Services;
  - Assistant Director (Safeguarding and Specialist Services);
  - Policy Link Officer(s) within Children's Services;
  - Representative from Hartlepool PCT;
  - Representative from Housing/Homelessness;
  - Representative from Youth Offending Services;
  - Representative from Early Years providers;
  - Representative of the Youth Service.
- (b) The Portfolio Holder agreed that the document attached as Appendix A to the report be used to structure agendas for future meetings of the Corporate Parent Forum.

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

Under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public were excluded from the meeting for the following items of business

on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

Minute 7 – Children's Homes Regulation 33/34 Reports – Director of Children's Services (para 1) – this item contains exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 namely information relating to any individual.

## **7. Children's Homes: Regulation 33/34 Reports –** *Director of Children's Services*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key

### **Purpose of report**

To present the Regulation 33/34 (formerly Regulation 22) report of visit to Children's Home for Exmoor Grove.

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

The report outlined the National and Corporate Objectives and gave background information on reporting on the conduct of Children's Homes. The report of the monthly visit to Exmoor Grove was attached as Appendix A to the report.

### **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder agreed to receive and note the report.

**J A BROWN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

**PUBLICATION DATE: 29<sup>th</sup> June 2006**