

CHILDREN'S AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

4 December 2012

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

Present:

Councillor Cath Hill (Children's and Community Services Portfolio Holder)

Also Present: Councillor Chris Simmons

Officers: Sally Robinson, Assistant Director, Prevention Safeguarding and Specialist Services
Ann Turner, Governor Support Officer
John Mennear, Assistant Director, Community Services
Wendy Rudd, Head of Safeguarding, Assessment and Support
Rachal Smith, Strategy Manager, Schools Transformation Team
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

38. Schools Capital Works Programme 2012/13 (Phase 3) *(Assistant Director, Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Key tests (i) and (ii) apply Forward Plan Reference CAS 131/12

Purpose of report

To seek approval to the formation of a Schools' Capital Works Programme for 2012/13 – Phase 3.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report provided background information relating to the Council's expressions of interest for Priority Schools Building Programme (PSBP) funding and the subsequent announcement by the Secretary of State that the following three out of the four expressions of interest made had been successful:-

- Manor College of Technology
- Barnard Grove Primary School
- Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School – Diocese

Reference was made to a correspondence received from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) which stated that the PSBP would be delivered by grouping schools together into “batches”, details of which were outlined in the report. Where possible, the needs of the schools in the worst condition would be addressed first.

At a meeting held with the EFA on 21 November 2012 to share information on how the programme would be delivered, it was highlighted that it was unlikely that any construction works would commence before 2016/17. Given the projected lengthy timescales of 2015, before the EFA intended to make any formal arrangements about the programme, and the urgent condition related works required at Manor College of Technology and Barnard Grove Primary School the Portfolio Holder's approval was sought for a range of urgent works, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report. The proposed works required for both schools were recommended for early completion in order to ensure school buildings remained safe and in an operational state over the next 4 to 5 years.

Funding for the works was set aside within the 2012/13 Capital Programme.

In response to the Portfolio Holder's concerns regarding the implications of delaying works at Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School, given the present condition of the school, it was reported that the responsibility of such works lay with the Diocese and Members' concerns would be highlighted at a meeting with the Diocese later that day.

Decision

- (i) The programme of essential capital works, Phase 3, was approved, as summarised in Appendix 1, subject to the Local Authority agreeing contributions from schools towards individual schemes in line with the shared funding principles established by the Schools Forum.
- (ii) The Child and Adult Services Department be granted dispensation and discretion to authorise works where a significant health and safety risk was exposed in advance of formal approval by the Portfolio Holder for Children's and Community Services.

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

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To request the Portfolio Holder for Children's and Community 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 where interest has been expressed in the vacancies.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Governor Support Officer submitted a schedule setting out details of current Governing Body vacancies together with applications received in respect of those vacancies which was considered by the General Purposes Committee at the meeting on 12 November 2012.

The Portfolio Holder expressed disappointment regarding the number of local authority vacancies on governing bodies. In response, the Portfolio Holder was advised that details of current vacancies had recently been circulated to all Elected Members to encourage take-up of positions.

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 below be approved: -

Manor College of Technology – Councillor A Lilley
Rift House Primary School – Councillor Paul Beck
St Cuthbert's RC Primary School – Councillor Christopher Akers-Belcher

40. Festival of the North East 2013 *(Assistant Director, Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder about the Festival of the North East in 2013 and the Hartlepool contribution to this event.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Assistant Director, Community Services provided background information relating to the Festival of the North East which was a month long celebration of culture and heritage to run throughout the whole of the North East of England in June 2013. The report set out details of the Festival Team and it was noted that representatives of the region's 12 local authorities met monthly, as a liaison group, and would be working to co-ordinate activities in their respective areas.

The report outlined proposals of Hartlepool's Culture and Information Service contribution to the Festival. It was considered appropriate to give

focus to the legacy of Sir William Gray in regard to the industrial achievements and the social legacy which was coinciding with major anniversaries, details of which were included in the report.

It was reported that Hartlepool's contribution to the Festival of the North East were as follows:-

- Exhibition of Sir William Gray's donations to the town in Hartlepool Art Gallery 26th March – 31st May, including Natural History installation by artist Kath Connor.
- Events on PS Wingfield Castle in June.
- Heritage Open Day in September on PS Wingfield Castle.
- June launch of Fabulous Books Fabulous Places with Book Artist Theresa Easton and will engage young people accessing the service with a book art project that could explore and address the subject of identity that young people growing up in Hartlepool face and draw in sister cities of Hartlepool in a 'Mail Art' project.

A 'Mail' Art Project was also being developed working with young people in Hartlepool, details of which were set out in the report.

It was highlighted that there were no financial implications in relation to the project as the proposed events would be covered by existing budgets.

Following presentation of the report, discussion ensued in relation to the potential benefits of the festival, the links with Durham in terms of the town's heritage and the importance of ensuring such links and connections with the north of the town, as well as the south, were maintained was emphasised.

Reference was made to the benefits of involving engineering students from St Hild's Church of England School in the project and it was suggested that this option be explored.

Decision

That the Festival of the North East Project be endorsed.

41. Making a Mark *(Assistant Director, Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder about our participation in the Making a Mark National Museums collaborative learning project.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report provided background information relating to the £3.5m of funding available for developing museum learning partnerships between ten national museums and ten regional partners. Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council had been selected in July 2012 as one of the ten regional partners on criteria including low uptake of Artsmark, the Arts Council England's new flagship arts qualification for 13-19 year olds, incidence of free school meals and low take up of museum visits by local schools. A total of £504,000 had been allocated to this partnership for the period April 2012 to March 2015. Developments and discussions in September this year subsequently widened the partnership to include all the local authorities in the Tees Valley and a number of regional arts organisations involved in delivering Artsmark.

The programme, Making a Mark, would use the stories of local heroes and individuals, under a number of themes that were designed to connect with the national curriculum and museum collections across the Tees Valley. Practical activity would be centred on developing sessions, workshops and resources around these themes, details of which were set out in the report. To develop a strong programme, all partners would be looking to understand the needs of schools and teachers in depth to adapt and develop existing programmes and develop a new offer each museum was confident would be relevant in the longer term.

It was proposed to involve at least 24 individual Hartlepool primary and secondary schools as part of Hartlepool's contribution to the project. Engagement with a total of 3040 individual pupils from these schools would take place with an aim to generate at least 9120 visits to Hartlepool Art Gallery and The Museum of Hartlepool between January 2013 and March 2015. Such visits and workshops would be free to schools as part of the project criteria.

The Portfolio Holder was referred to the financial implications of the proposal, as detailed in the report. It was highlighted that £30,400 was available to Hartlepool to support the staffing of the delivery of this project to support an additional 0.5 FTE Learning Officer post solely for the delivery of sessions. An additional £12,000 was available directly for Hartlepool schools to help cover transport, classroom cover and enable involvement. This was £500 per school as 24 schools were involved in the target.

In response to a request for clarification, the Assistant Director outlined the background to the selection of the lead authority.

In relation to usage of the museum, the Portfolio Holder queried the level of visitors from outside the town. The Assistant Director advised that whilst take up levels were not as high as Beamish Museum, the Maritime Experience received visitors from a number of areas in the region and was one of the high performing local museums in the north east with a current

estimate of 12,000 school visits per annum.

Whilst the benefits of the programme and the £500 allocation of funding to schools were welcomed, the Portfolio Holder expressed disappointment that the level of funding offered may not achieve optimum benefits for pupils.

Decision

That the project be endorsed.

42. Ofsted Inspection of Exmoor Grove

(Assistant Director, Child and Adult Services)

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To present to the Portfolio Holder feedback regarding the recent inspection of Exmoor Grove Short Break Care Unit undertaken by OFSTED.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Assistant Director, Prevention Safeguarding and Specialist Services reported on the recent Ofsted inspection of Exmoor Grove Short Break Care Unit. The Portfolio Holder was advised that the service had received a positive inspection report with the service being graded as 'Good' in terms of the overall effectiveness of the home, outcomes for children and young people, quality of care and leadership and management of the home. In relation to safeguarding children and young people, this was judged to be adequate. The Portfolio Holder was provided with background information in relation to the adequate grading. The full inspection report was attached at Appendix 1.

Two statutory requirements were made during the inspection, details of which were provided. The report included a number of good practice recommendations arising from the inspection together with details of actions taken arising from the report which included amendment of the Statement of Purpose to reflect that Exmoor Grove was currently offering a long term placement to one young person, a copy of which was attached at Appendix 2 for consideration and approval by the Portfolio Holder.

In conclusion, it was reported that the judgment of 'Good' represented a significant progression of the service in the past twelve months as the threshold for judgments had been significantly raised since April 2012.

In response to a query raised by the Portfolio Holder, the Assistant Director provided clarification on the background to the statutory requirements in relation to Regulation 33 and the Statement of Purpose, Regulation 4 (1) arising as a result of the inspection process.

With regard to Regulation 33 inspections, the Portfolio Holder suggested that arrangements be made for the Portfolio Holder to accompany the responsible officer during the next inspection of the unit.

The Portfolio Holder welcomed the positive outcome of the inspection and expressed her thanks to the staff involved for their hard work and contribution to the success of the service.

Decision

- (i) That the outcome of the inspection of Exmoor Grove Short Break Unit, undertaken in September 2012, be noted.
- (ii) That the revised Statement of Purpose, attached at Appendix 2, be approved.

43. Safeguarding Children in Hartlepool *(Assistant Director, Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To present information on the workload of children's social work teams in providing service to children in need in Hartlepool including those in need of protection and children looked after.

Issue(s) for consideration by Cabinet

The Head of Safeguarding, Assessment and Support reported on the workload of children's social work teams and the current demands on the service. The report provided details of activity in children's social care for the period July to September 2012 including the number of referrals, assessments and re-referrals undertaken within the unit, the number of children who became subject to child protection plans, workload and workforce information as well as details of complaints, comments and compliments received by the service during the quarter.

Reference was made to the increase in the number of children receiving services, the impact of the pending welfare reform and changes to the family justice system resulting in further increasing demands on the service. A recent review of the Initial Response Team and its functions had identified risk factors that needed to be addressed, as detailed in the report. Given the risks identified, the Corporate Management Team had agreed a proposal to create an additional team manager post within the Initial Response Team and an additional social worker post which would provide the team with the appropriate capacity to meet the demands of the increasing work load pressures.

The Portfolio Holder sought clarification in relation to the social worker post that was currently being undertaken on an agency basis to which it was reported that this vacant post and additional post was currently being advertised.

In response to the Portfolio Holder's request for assurances that re-referrals were being adequately monitored, the Assistant Director provided details of the monitoring process together with feedback from a recent audit of decisions taken by the team which had provided reassurance on the quality of decision making.

During the further discussion that followed, the Portfolio Holder was pleased to note that capacity issues were being addressed, emphasising the importance of delivering an effective service to vulnerable children. It was highlighted that the report identified a number of positive outcomes referred to in the Early Intervention Strategy. The Assistant Director went on to respond to further issues raised arising from the report. Clarification was provided in relation to training provision and monitoring arrangements for social workers, feedback from the recent peer review regarding welfare reform and actions that had been taken in this regard.

Decision

That the contents of the report of activity within children's social care be noted.

The meeting concluded at 11.05 am.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 10 DECEMBER 2012