

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

5 February 2013

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 Councillors Chris Simmons and Carl Richardson

Officers: John Mennear, Assistant Director (Community Services)  
Mark Smith, Head of Integrated Youth Support Services  
Sally Robinson, Assistant Director (Prevention, Safeguarding  
and Specialist Services)  
Rachael White, Democratic Services Officer

## **49. Annual Complaints Report 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012** *(Assistant Directors of Child and Adult Services)*

**Type of decision**

None Key decision.

**Purpose of report**

To present the Annual Complaints, Compliments & Representations Reports of the Child and Adult Services Department on complaints and representations for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012.

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

The Assistant Directors of Community Services and Safeguarding, Prevention and Specialist Services gave an overview of the report.

The content of the report included the following areas:

- Types of complaints, compliments and representations received 2011/12
- Profile data on service users who were the focus of the complaints
- Outcomes of the complaints
- Compliance with timescales
- Learning lessons and service improvement

The report provided analysis of recorded complaints, compliments and

representations providing comparisons with the previous year. The Officers reported that while complaints had been made, compliments were also received and recorded in relation to Adults Services, Children's Services and Community Services.

The Portfolio Holder stressed the need to record the compliments that the department receives for the services provided.

### **Decision**

That the Annual Report is noted and the online publication be approved.

## **50. Commissioning of Restorative Justice** *(Assistant Director – Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non Key decision.

### **Purpose of report**

To request approval from the Portfolio Holder to seek quotations for a new one year contract for the delivery of Restorative Justice services.

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

The Head of Integrated Youth and Support Services reported that Restorative Justice provided opportunities for those directly affected by an offence, whether they are a victim, offender or a member of the community, to communicate and agree how to deal with the offence and its consequences.

The current contract enabled the service to determine how best to deliver a Restorative Justice approach to achieve maximum impact and was to end in March 2013. Within the service, work was underway to embed restorative practice within the Youth Offending Service. However it was felt that the service was not yet in a position to assume full responsibility to deliver restorative services to victims of youth crime in Hartlepool. Work to date demonstrated that a restorative approach continued to be successful with levels of youth crime continuing to decrease in Hartlepool. This had been achieved through a combination of successful preventative work and an emphasis on diverting young people from the Youth Justice System through the development of pre-court interventions.

In order to secure the continued delivery of high quality restorative justice services in Hartlepool it was proposed that Child and Adult Services Department seek competitive quotations for one year with a contract value of up to £40,000.

Discussion took place regarding the impact of having an external provider providing and developing restorative services for the department in comparison to restorative justice being an in house service. The Head of the Integrated Youth Support Service advised that the department were learning from the provider in preparation for the responsibility to be passed over. However the Officer did emphasis that it was felt that the department was not yet in a position to take on the responsibility of the service. The Portfolio Holder queried how the restorative justice service was monitored by the department. The Head of Integrated Youth Support Services reported that a system of 3 monitoring stages were in operation;

- i. A representative from The Children's Society worked within the Integrated Youth Support Services team based in the Windsor Offices so work could be monitored on a day to day basis;
- ii. Bi monthly contract monitoring meetings were held to review the service delivery;
- iii. The external provider prepares a regular report detailing the service delivery and this is presented to the Strategic Management Board.

The Portfolio Holder considered this to be a satisfactory arrangement.

### **Decision**

That the Child and Adult Services Department's intention to seek competitive quotations for a one year contract for the delivery of restorative justice services in Hartlepool be approved.

## **51. Two Year Old Childcare Capital Funding** *(Assistant Director of Child and Adult Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non Key decision.

### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval for Two Year Old Childcare Capital Funding to be ringfenced to be spent on supporting settings to deliver two year old childcare.

To allocate the two year old capital funding based on the childcare sufficiency assessment.

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

The Assistant Director of Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services reported on behalf of the Sure Start, Extended Services and Early Years Manager. Hartlepool had been a pathfinder for two year old childcare, delivering places for the past three financial years to the most disadvantaged children. New legislation placed a duty on local authorities to ensure that there were places available for all disadvantaged two year

olds starting with the most 20% disadvantaged from September 2013 moving to the 40 % most deprived from September 2014.

Funding had previously been passed to local authorities through the Early Intervention Grant but from April 2013 all funding for 2 year old childcare would be included in the Dedicated Schools Grant.

The Local Authority had been planning for this duty for the last 18 months and had been supporting a number of providers to deliver 2 year old childcare that have not previously delivered to the group of children. However the number of places available in settings already providing childcare for two year olds was not enough to place all disadvantaged two year olds. Work was ongoing to increase the number of two year olds places in areas of disadvantage.

A capital grant of £237,071 had been allocated to Hartlepool for the 2012/13 period would need to be spent by August 2014. The grant was expected to be used to support and prepare two year old providers with their environments. Funding would also be allocated to approved two year old providers that met the local authority's RAG requirements and provide places in line with those identified as part of the childcare sufficiency assessment.

The Portfolio Holder queried whether the Two Year Old Childcare Scheme would be affected by the new guidance on the number of children in nursery. The Assistant Director of Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services advised that it could potentially have an impact however in supporting the policy as the number of places in Hartlepool would increase.

### **Decision**

That the ringfencing of the two year old childcare capital and that the allocation of the capital funding based on the childcare sufficiency assessment be approved.

## **52. Carlton Outdoor Education Centre – Proposed Fees and Charges and General Update on Progress** (Assistant Director – Community Services)

### **Type of decision**

Non Key decision.

### **Purpose of report**

To provide the Portfolio Holder with and update on the operation of Carlton Outdoor Education Centre and to highlight proposed new fees and charges for the forthcoming financial and academic year 2013 – 2014.

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

The Assistant Director of Community Services reported that since 1996, Hartlepool had acted as the lead authority in the service delivery of Carlton Outdoor Education Centre, which involved employing all staff and having the responsibility of managing the site. Since 2006 various improvements had been made to site including the addition of a new accommodation block, redevelopment of toilet and bathroom facilities and improved night time security arrangements. The Officer advised that additional work was still to be undertaken and the outcome of some existing major funding applications made by the Trustees was awaited.

Due to the withdrawal of local authority partners and other factors, a significant amount of work had been undertaken to reduce operating costs and generate income. Much had been achieved and progress had been made despite these factors and the continuing support of Members had been critical to the gradual improvement. The need to drive down costs and increase income was essential particularly with the continuing requirement to produce efficiency savings.

Pricing for forthcoming financial and academic years had recently been reviewed and considered by the Carlton Steering Group. The proposals would bring some change as the pricing model had been further developed to not only accommodate a continuation of subsidised provision to Hartlepool Schools but also for the needs of what had increasingly become a commercial operation offering activities to a much wider client base. The model would also introduce 'seasonal' charges to ensure the centre remained competitive with other similar Outdoor centres. The Officer presented the other changes that would be made to the fees and charges to the Portfolio Holder.

In response to concerns raised regarding the risks associated with changing the pricing, the Assistant Director of Community Services advised that the pricing/occupancy model was based on one school occupancy at a time and that the model had been created with the intent to double occupancies and that it was felt that seasonal charges would help with this aim.

Members queried the efforts to increase the number of schools using the facilities and what would be done differently to encourage the use of the centre. The Assistant Director advised that all primary schools in Hartlepool had been contacted and asked what priority they gave 'outdoor education' and which facilities did they desired to use and why. The response was limited however each thought highly of Carlton OEC but not all necessarily use the Carlton Outdoor Education Centre. It was suggested that when marketing the facilities at the Carlton Outdoor Education Centre that a video/ presentation could be created or visits to be arranged so that school staff could see the new facilities and what the Centre had to offer. This was welcomed by the Assistant Director of Community Services who advised that regular presentations were already given at both primary and

secondary school meetings by the Centre Manager and other members of staff.

In relation to the changes to the fees and charges it was queried why the charge to book the use of a bed only had decreased. The Officer advised that bed only bookings were very low and now that alterations had been made to the accommodation in the centre the use of vacant bed space in the centre was more marketable. In order to stimulate this market the prices would be reduced.

Concern was expressed in relation to parents not being able to afford the increase in price in the summer season and as a result some children being deprived of the opportunity. The Assistant Director of Community Services advised that it was not always clear as to how much of the expense was passed onto parents by the school, however those disadvantaged children in receipt of free school meals were eligible for access to the pupil premium should the individual schools have such a policy, whereby the school may pay the majority of the expense.

The Portfolio Holder requested that members be informed of the Trustees meetings as it was felt it would be beneficial to attend. The Assistant Director of Community Services offered to arrange a site visit for members as well as inform the Portfolio Holder of the dates of the Trustee meetings.

### **Decision**

That revised pricing schedule for the financial and academic years 2013 – 2014 be approved.

## **50. Hartlepool Community Activities Network (CAN) Update and Progress** *(Assistant Director – Community Services)*

### **Type of decision**

For information only.

### **Purpose of report**

To update the Portfolio Holder on the work of the Hartlepool Community Activities Network (CAN).

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

The Assistant Director of Community Services reported that Hartlepool's Community Activities Network (CAN) was originally developed in early 2008 as a result of Sport England's Strategy for Sport at that time. To ensure that the networks were established and operated on a local level, all local authorities were offered tapered funding support over a three year period to enable to creation of an Officer post. Similar to others, Hartlepool took up

the offer and with the establishment of an Officer post, the Hartlepool CAN was established.

Since its inception, the network had worked very well with a main steering group and smaller themed sub action groups in operation. The Primary Care Trust saw the network as a conduit for channelling public health grant funding to groups and organisations in the Borough for new physical activity interventions and since December 2008 had been giving grants annually to Hartlepool CAN for this purpose. From December 2008 twenty-two projects had been funded as a result of successful applications to the CAN for public health funding, examples of these projects are:

- Waverly Terrace Allotments
- Men's Health
- On Yur-Bike
- BMX Development
- Badminton for Better Health
- The Diamond Rink Project

In relation to queries regarding Summerhill, the Assistant Director advised that Summerhill was expanding with new activities being offered to the public including a new café, art gallery and cycle clinic being opened.

### **Decision**

That the update and progress of the Hartlepool Activities Network be noted.

## **50. Quarterly Fostering Progress Report 1 Oct 12 – 31 Dec 12** *(Assistant Director of Child and Adult Services)*

### **Type of decision**

For information only.

### **Purpose of report**

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the activity and progress of the Fostering Service from 1<sup>st</sup> October – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012.

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

The Assistant Director of Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services reported that the Fostering Service was a regulated service and it was a requirement of the regulations, and good practice, to provide regular updates regarding the progress of the service in order that the executive side of the authority could be satisfied that the agency was effective and was achieving good outcomes for the children and young people in its care. The Officer gave a report of the statistical information in relation to:

- Looked After Children

- Foster Carer statistics
- Foster Carer recruitment
- Placement Activity
- Panel Activity

The Assistant Director of Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services reported that an overspend of £88,292 was projected. This was partly to do with the year's budget only being increased from the previous year's budget by 2.5% to meet the agreed increase in fostering allowances and was not increased to meet any increase in placements. However due to under spending in other areas of the department the cost will be covered.

The fostering service continued to provide a high percentage of in house placements for the looked after children of Hartlepool. As well as the pressures from new placements, the service was also embedding Staying Put practice and supporting carers to continue placements post eighteen. The service had also continued to strive to maintain a high level of support to its carers. This had been through such initiatives as the Sons and Daughters (of Foster Carers) activities and supporting the Foster Carers Association financially.

In response to queries, the Assistant Director of Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services advised that the department match the allowances provided for foster carers in Hartlepool to the Fostering Networks recommended pricing which tended to be the highest allowance rate across the country.

The Portfolio Holder queried the progress on the Stockton Road Children's Home. The Assistant Director of Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services advised that building work was under way and that a manager for the home had been appointed.

The Portfolio Holder congratulated the Officers on the success of the department and thanked the Assistant Director of Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services for her efforts since working in the role of Assistant Director and the impact that she had made on the department.

### **Decision**

That the Quarterly report and the outcomes achieved by the Fostering Service over the last quarter be noted.

The meeting concluded at 11.25am

**P J DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

**PUBLICATION DATE: 11th February 2013**