

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE DECISION RECORD

30 July 2013

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Chris Simmons (In the Chair)

Councillors: Kelly Atkinson, Mary Fleet, Sheila Griffin, Cath Hill, Marjorie James and John Lauderdale.

Young People's Representatives:

Shay Miah, Kim Henry, Hollie Lowery, Matthew Streeting, Aimee Wilson

Also in attendance:

Councillors Alison Lilley and Geoff Lilley.
Kathryn Reeve, Vice Chair Rossmere Primary School
Anne Hogan, Parent
Jasmine Swan, Rossmere Primary School Pupil
Amanda Baines, Head Teacher, Holy Trinity CE VA Primary School

Officers: Sally Robinson, Assistant Director, Children's Services
Dean Jackson, Assistant Director, Education
John Robinson, Head of Locality and Family Support Service
Mark Patton, Senior School Improvement Advisor
Andrew Facchini, Participation Worker
Katy Larkin, Participation Worker
Rebecca Hunter, Trainee Support Worker
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

32. Apologies for Absence

None.

33. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Kelly Atkinson, Sheila Griffin, Marjorie James and Chris Simmons declared personal interests in minute 39.

34. Minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2013

Received.

35. Matters arising from the Minutes

A Member reiterated an issue that was raised at the last meeting in relation to vulnerable young people being held in custody. The Chair confirmed that this issue was on the agenda for discussion at the meeting of the Children's Strategic Partnership on 31 July 2013.

It was noted that at the last meeting, Members had requested further information on the Rossmere Primary School Forest Proposal and a presentation was provided by the Senior School Improvement Advisor for Members consideration which outlined the proposal. Members were informed that a further report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee which will identify all bids received from schools for capital funding.

A lengthy debate took place in which Members considered the cost to benefit ratio of the proposed Rossmere School scheme based on the information provided. It was noted that the proposal for the scheme had indicated that it would be a phased project over 3-4 years. However, the Vice Chair of Rossmere Primary School Governing Body confirmed that it was not proposed to phase the project over 3-4 years and that an aspirational bid for a project for the school had been developed and submitted as there had been no upper limit placed on the level of bids that could be submitted. The Vice Chair of the Governing Body confirmed that the school had not been approached to submit a presentation to this Committee as referred to in the minutes of the last meeting and continued to highlight the differences between an actual Forest School and the facilities provided at both Summerhill and Wynyard. Several of the young people in attendance addressed the Committee highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal.

It was noted that a bidding process had been followed by all schools who had submitted a proposal for capital funding and Rossmere Primary School had met the majority of the criteria to receive funding. It was questioned whether this was a fair process when schools who had met less criteria had already had approval to receive the funding. A parent of a child who attended Rossmere Primary School addressed the Committee and commented that she felt the decision taken by the Committee to withhold the funding for Rossmere Primary School was unfair as she considered that the proposal would benefit the wider community. It was reiterated that Members were not indicating they did not support the proposal at Rossmere Primary School, but felt unable to make an informed decision until they were in receipt of further information from all the schools who had submitted bids for funding. It was confirmed that the funding already agreed for the

proposals from Rift House Primary School and West View Primary School were to support a statutory provision.

The Chair highlighted that under the new governance arrangements of the Council, the Schools Capital Sub Group was set up as an advisory group to advise, provide a strategic overview of all funding streams resulting in capital investment and make recommendations on capital projects to the Committee. The decision to allocate funding ultimately rested with this Committee and as such, was taken extremely seriously by Members who needed to consider all the information before making an informed decision. Therefore a report including detailed information on all bids received for the Schools Capital Funding would be submitted to a future meeting of Committee for consideration.

Decision

That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee detailing the other proposals and bids received from schools as part of the Development Funding.

36. Scrutiny Review of 'Closure of Youth Centres and Children's Centre' – Final Report (*Young People's Representatives from the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum*)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To seek consideration of the conclusions/recommendations contained within the Final Report of the Young People's Representatives from the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report detailed the proposals to undertake the review of closure of youth centres and children's centres and made a number of recommendations. Attached at Appendix A was the detailed report submitted to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum in April 2013.

Members noted the recommendations and thanked the young people from the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum for undertaking such comprehensive review.

Decision

The following recommendations made by the Young People's representatives from the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum were approved:

- (i) The impact of closure of buildings on the community be taken into consideration before any decisions were made;
- (ii) The use of all other buildings such as schools, leisure centres, museums etc were considered for their ability to offer multi-use community space (as seen in the Seaton Carew example);
- (iii) The total costs of running and staffing centres be compared to the cost of renting space;
- (iv) Income generation for existing buildings be considered;
- (v) Transport links if buildings were reduced be taken in to account;
- (vi) School use capacity be explored if buildings were closed;
- (vii) Existing buildings (children's centres and youth centres) be used and or adapted to meet both service users needs;
- (viii) That a review be undertaken of the way the 'youth offer' was communicated in Hartlepool, to enable young people to easily identify and attend the clubs, activities and services that were available.

37. Scrutiny Investigation into Closure of Youth Centres and Children's Centre – Action Plan *(Assistant Director, Children's Services)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To agree the Action Plan in response to the findings and subsequent recommendations of the young people's representatives from the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum investigation into 'Closure of Youth Centres and Children's Centres'.

Issue(s) for consideration

Attached at Appendix A was the action plan that been developed as a result of the Young People's representatives' review of the Closure of Youth Centres and Children's Centres.

It was suggested by the Chair that recommendation (e) within the action plan should include the Integrated Transport Manager as a lead officer to contribute to taking this action forward. In addition, it was requested that

the recommendations be forwarded to the Finance and Policy Committee to inform future decision making in relation to building closures.

Decision

- (i) That the action plan developed in response to the recommendations of the Young People's representatives from the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum investigation into the 'Closure of Youth Centres and Children's Centres' be approved.
- (ii) That the recommendations be forwarded to the Finance and Policy Committee to inform future decision making in relation to building closures.

38. Young Inspector Reports (*Assistant Director, Children's Services*)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To establish a formal avenue for reviewing Inspection reports produced by children and young people. The Inspection reports, attached as Appendix 1, provide an insight into services and organisations that have been scrutinized by young people and have been given feedback and recommendations for improvement. The children and young people follow up the original inspection with a 6 month review to examine whether their recommendations have been implemented by the organisation / service

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background to the establishment of Young Inspector reports which would inform the design and delivery of services they use or which affect them. Members were informed that the Young Inspectors take part in an intensive two-day training programme in preparation for any inspection. At the conclusion of an inspection, reports were completed and submitted to the organisation to present the young people's findings, including recommendations. Follow up visits were undertaken six months later to monitor whether the recommendations had been implemented. It was noted that some Young Inspectors had received national recognition and been chosen to undertake a City in Guilds qualification in youth work.

The young people were thanked for the inspection reports that contained some very interesting information and showed a depth of understanding

and scoping of the investigations undertaken. Members were keen to continue receiving Young Inspectors' reports. It was noted that discussions were ongoing between the Chair and Vice Chair and Young People's representatives of the Committee to discuss possible investigations and areas of research for the forthcoming year, which would be separate to the Young Inspectors' investigations.

It was suggested that an action plan should be developed for future investigations to enable effective monitoring of the recommendations contained within the inspection report, in a similar way to the action plans utilised for scrutiny investigations. One of the Participation Workers confirmed that six monthly reviews of the implementation of the recommendations was undertaken and that this could be incorporated into an action plan and six monthly report to the Committee.

Decision

- (i) That the Children's Services Committee would take into account the findings of the Young/Junior Inspector when making decisions on service delivery.
- (ii) That the Children's Services Committee utilise the Inspection Reports completed by the children and young people to build upon, and identify further related tasks that the inspectors can undertake on behalf of the Committee.
- (iii) That action plans be developed for all future investigations undertaken by the children and young people and submitted to the Committee on a six monthly basis to monitor the implementation of the recommendations.
- (iv) That the Young Inspectors undertake inspections of services as directed by the Committee to help inform the formal process of decision making.

39. Priority Schools Building Programme *(Assistant Director, Education and Assistant Director, Resources)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To provide an update on the Department for Education's (DfE) proposals for the Priority Schools Building Programme (PSBP) and the current position for Hartlepool's schools.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report included the background to the programme including the schools that had indicated an expression of interest in the PSBP. On 24 May 2012, the Secretary of State announced the names of the schools to be taken forward were:

Manor College of Technology;
Barnard Grove Primary School; and
Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School.

A detailed progress update was included in the report and confirmed that the feasibility study and procurement process was currently being undertaken and it was suggested that the works should commence on site early in 2014.

The Chair commented that he was delighted the programme of building works was progressing well, especially in view of the previous disappointment at the collapse of the Primary Capital and Building Schools for the Future programmes. Clarification was sought on how the future maintenance costs for the schools would be funded. The Assistant Director, Resources confirmed that whilst it was not a requirement of the funding provision, the schools would provide a commitment through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding to put money aside to fund future maintenance requirements.

Decision

- (i) The report was noted.
- (ii) That further reports would be submitted as the Priority Schools Building Programme progresses.

40. Nursery Provision in Seaton Carew *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (i) and (ii) applies. Forward Plan reference CAS12/13.

Purpose of report

- (i) To consider a proposal to consult on the closure of Seaton Carew Nursery School and extend the age-range of Holy Trinity CE Voluntary Aided primary school from 5-11 year olds to 4-11 year olds
- (ii) To seek approval to begin the formal consultation process.

- (iii) To consider how the funding of any future nursery provision at Holy Trinity CE Primary School may be achieved.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided a recent history to Seaton Carew Nursery School and Holy Trinity C of E Aided Primary School. Details of the proposal from the Governing Bodies of both Seaton Carew Nursery and Holy Trinity CE VA Primary School to merge on the Holy Trinity site to be effective from September 2014.

During the discussions that followed, the Chair noted that the decision in relation to funding this proposal would be taken by a future meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee and was pleased to note that the diocese would be approached to make a financial contribution to the proposal.

A Member sought clarification on where the provision for 2-3 year olds would be undertaken. The Head Teacher from Holy Trinity CE VA Primary School was in attendance and addressed the Committee. Members were informed that provision for 3 year olds would be included in the proposals for the merged nursery and school. However, as there had not been a demand for 2 year old provision it had not proven financially viable for the school to continue providing this service. Members were informed that should the way funding was allocated for 2 year old provision be changed, the school and its governing body would be in a position to review the provision of this service. However, it was noted that Golden Flatts Primary School, also located in Seaton did have capacity within its provision for 2 year olds.

Decision

- (i) The proposal to consult on the merger of Seaton Carew Nursery and Holy Trinity CE Primary School with effect from 1 September 2013 was accepted.
- (ii) The Director of Child and Adults Services was authorised to carry out the appropriate consultation, following which the Director will provide a report to Committee on the outcome of the consultation.
- (iii) That a funding request be submitted to a future meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee for consideration and referral onto full Council.

41. Changes to Legislation and Legal Interventions to Address Poor School Attendance (*Assistant Director, Education*)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To highlight the changes to statutory guidance for school attendance which came into place in September 2012 and further changes which were due to be introduced on 1 September 2013.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background and changes in relation to persistent absenteeism, holidays in term time and penalty notices.

The Chair was pleased to note that the proposals would continue the recent good work to improve attendance even further. The Assistant Director, Education indicated that a key point of the proposals was that schools would be expected to intervene as soon as patterns of erratic school attendance was noted, which would leave the LA Attendance Team to focus on more intensive intervention with persistent absent pupils which was defined at 15% (23 school days).

Decision

That the threshold for intervention from the Local Authority Attendance is increased from 85% overall attendance to 90% so that prosecution can be considered at an earlier stage than at present.

42. Statement of Purpose for Stockton Road Children's Home (*Assistant Director, Children's Services*)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To present the Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide for Stockton

Road 2013/14.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report outlined the background and outlined the proposals for the Stockton Road Children's Home. The Statement of Purpose provided details of the arrangements for the management and delivery of the Home, how outcomes for children were promoted and the staffing arrangements with a pen portrait of all the staff.

One of the young people in attendance sought clarification on the number of children that would reside in the Home. The Business Unit Manager confirmed that there would be four young people living in the Home at any one time. However, it was recognised that there may be other young people who need residential care and demand for this would be reviewed regularly.

Decision

That the Statement of Purpose and Children's Guide for Stockton Road Children's Home was approved in line with the Children's Home National Minimum Standards 2011.

43. To approve a Variation to the Instrument of Government of the Federated Governing Body of St Peter's Elwick CE Aided and Hart Community Primary Schools *(Assistant Director, Education)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To seek agreement to vary the instrument of Government for the Federated Governing Body of St Peter's Elwick CE Aided and Hart Community Primary Schools.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background to the request to vary the Instrument of Governing Body which would result in a reduction in the size of the Governing Body from 20 to 15 Governors. The categories of the revised constitution of the proposed Governing Body were detailed in the report.

The Assistant Director, Education confirmed that a recent OfSTED inspection had indicated that the school needed to improve and this change would assist that process.

In response to clarification sought by a Member, the Assistant Director, Children's Services confirmed that there was currently only one local authority representative on the Governing Body due to a recent resignation.

A young people's representative sought clarification on the outcome requested by the report. The Assistant Director, Education confirmed that a number of years ago, both schools had merged and formed a federation with one Head Teacher and one Governing Body across both schools. This proposal would enable the Governing Body to increase its efficiency by reducing in size. It was confirmed that any changes to the constitution of a school's governing body required Committee approval as statutory rules applied.

Decision

The revised Instrument of Government as attached at Appendix 2 was approved with effect from 1 September 2013.

44. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

None.

The meeting concluded at 5.51pm

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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