

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

2 September 2014

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

Present:

Councillor: Chris Simmons (In the Chair)

Councillors: Mary Fleet, Sheila Griffin, Ged Hall, John Lauderdale and Geoff Lilley

Also present:

Councillor Jim Ainslie

Co-opted Members:

Michael Lee

Young people's representatives:

Shay Miah

Officers:

Dean Jackson, Assistant Director, Education
Sally Robinson, Assistant Director, Children's Services
David Ward, Head of Finance, Child and Adult Services and Public Health
Danielle Swainston, Head of Access and Strategic Planning
Helen Hadfield, Participation Worker
Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

32. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Brenda Loynes.

33. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Sheila Griffin, Ged Hall and Chris Simmons declared a personal interest in minute 38 and Councillor Ged Hall declared a personal interest in minute 36.

34. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 August 2014

Received.

35. School Admission Arrangements for 2016/17 *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (i) and (ii) apply.

Purpose of report

To consider and agree the proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in Hartlepool for 2016/17 academic year.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background to the requirement for school admission arrangements. It was highlighted that there were no changes to the current admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools that required public consultation. The admission arrangements including oversubscription criteria in respect of Community and Voluntary Controlled schools was attached at Appendix 1.

A discussion ensued on the future capacity for admissions within schools in light of recent planning applications for additional residential development in the Bishop Cuthbert area. The Assistant Director, Education confirmed that there was capacity at some primary schools in that area, along with the potential to extend certain schools should that be deemed necessary. The Assistant Director confirmed there was no immediate concern in relation to capacity levels for admissions to primary schools in that area and added that a further report would be brought to Committee later in the year to update Members on the projections for school admissions.

Decision

In respect of the admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for 2016/17:

- (i) The admission numbers contained within Appendix 2 were approved.
- (ii) The current admission arrangements contained within Appendix 1 were approved.

36. Commissioning of Mentoring Services for Children and Young People *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non key decision.

Purpose of report

To request approval to implement a procurement exercise through tender submissions for the provision of mentoring services for children and young people.

Issue(s) for consideration

The background to the current contract was outlined in the report and it was noted that early intervention continued to be a priority for the Council and mentoring services contribute to this priority. It was proposed that the service be commissioned in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and advertised as a two year contract with the provision to extend a further two twelve months periods based on demand, satisfactory performance and funding being available. It was highlighted that the total value of the contract (four years) was proposed to be £248,000.

In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Access and Strategic Planning confirmed that there were approximately 50 children currently utilising the mentoring service. Feedback received had been positive in relation to the outcomes for the young people with approximately 40 children exiting the service positively and going on to access universal youth services.

Members were informed that a further report would be submitted to the Committee on the outcome of the procurement exercise.

Decision

- (i) That the procurement of a mentoring service for children and young people was approved.
- (ii) That a further report on the outcome of the procurement exercise be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

37. Review of Provision for Pupils with Behavioural Difficulties *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non key decision.

Purpose of report

To seek the approval to carry out a feasibility study to determine the most appropriate model of educational provision that meets the needs of children and young people with behavioural difficulties in Hartlepool.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background on the support provided to vulnerable young people which underpinned the ambitions of the Hartlepool Education Strategy. Consultation had been undertaken with Headteachers from all sectors and with members of the Hartlepool Behaviour and Attendance Partnership and the results were outlined in the report. The report also included a summary of Ofsted's suggestions on the best alternative education provision for children and young people according to their needs. In addition, it was noted that to be effective, any future approach adopted in Hartlepool must promote effective learning environments that meet the full range of moderate to complex and challenging behaviour, social and emotional needs of young people with a focus on preventative approaches and high quality interventions.

It was therefore proposed to review the current educational provision in Hartlepool for pupils with behavioural difficulties in consultation with Headteachers, the Behaviour and Attendance Partnership and external providers.

The Chair welcomed the report and commented that during recent visits to Catcote and Springwell schools, he was informed that the range of educational and psychological social differences in younger children was on the increase with one of the main reasons being substance abuse during pregnancy. Members were informed that they would be invited to visit the Pupil Referral Unit which was now based on the Brierton site to look at the provision of services for children with special difficulties.

A Member sought clarification on the support worker to young person ratio. The Assistant Director, Education confirmed that the level of support provided to any young person was very much dependent on that young person's individual needs and could range from ratios of one on one to support provided in groups. The aim would be to progress into small

classes for support and achieve normality for that young person.

Decision

- (i) That a feasibility study be undertaken to determine the most appropriate model of educational provision that meets the needs of children and young people with behavioural difficulties in Hartlepool.
- (ii) That a report on the outcomes of the feasibility study be presented to Committee in December 2014.

38. Strategic Financial Management Report as at 30 June 2014 *(Director of Child and Adult Services and Chief Finance Officer)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To inform Members of the 2014/15 Forecast General Fund Outturn, 2014/15 Capital Programme Monitoring and provide details for the specific budget areas that this Committee was responsible for.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Head of Finance, Child and Adult Services and Public Health presented the report which provided the background and financial reporting arrangements for 2014/15 as well as the General Fund budget outturn information in relation to the Child and Adult Services Department.

As previously reported to the Finance and Policy Committee, Members were advised that there would be an overall underspend in the current year. In relation to the management of departmental budgets, the Corporate Management Team was again seeking to achieve underspends to help address the significant financial challenges through a combination of robust management actions, as detailed in the report. It was noted that at 30 June 2014 there was a net forecast uncommitted budget underspend at the year-end of between £0.547m and £0.662m and these forecasts would be reviewed as the year progressed, particularly in relation to demand led and seasonal budgets.

The continued importance of having a multi-year financial strategy had been emphasised within the Medium Term Financial Strategy report in June 2014.

Further details on the 2014/15 Forecast General Fund Outturn and Capital Monitoring for 2014/15 were included by way of Appendix.

The Chair commented that the Early Intervention Strategy and Edge of Care Work had aimed to reduce the number of children coming into care and this would assist the Child and Adult Services Departmental budget. The Assistant Director, Children's Services confirmed that the number of looked after children had reduced through the ongoing support provided to families.

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director, Education confirmed that the capital works being undertaken at Manor College of Technology were much required maintenance due to the pupils remaining on that site until the new College was complete.

A Member sought clarification on the reference to the holding of vacant posts within the report. The Assistant Director, Children's Services confirmed that vacant posts were only held where it was safe to do so and where there was a possibility of redeployment. It was recognised that posts would not be held vacant in situations that would put additional pressure on front line services.

Decision

That the report was noted.

39. Six Monthly Monitoring of Agreed Scrutiny Recommendations (*Scrutiny Manager*)

Type of decision

For Information.

Purpose of report

To provide Members with the six monthly progress made on the delivery of scrutiny recommendations that fall within the remit of this Committee.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided details of progress made against the investigations undertaken by the previous Children's Services Scrutiny Forum. These recommendations now fall within the remit of the Children's Services Committee. A detailed explanation of progress made against each scrutiny recommendation since the last six monthly monitoring report was presented to the Committee in March 2014 and this was included within the report.

It was noted that all actions had now been complete and therefore the monitoring of scrutiny recommendations which fall within the remit of this Committee was also complete.

Decision

The progress made against the agreed recommendations was noted.

40. OFSTED Inspection Outcomes – September 2013 – July 2014 *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To provide a summary of the outcomes of Ofsted inspections of Hartlepool schools in the academic year 2013/14.

To provide a summary of the proportion of good and outstanding schools in Hartlepool at the end of the academic year 2013/14.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided an outcome summary for all schools subject to Ofsted inspection during the academic year 2013-14. The Assistant Director, Education highlighted the overall effectiveness for each school and it was noted that the Local Authority was still on track to achieve the goal of having every school in Hartlepool graded as at least 'good' by December 2015.

The Chair commented on the changing criteria associated with Ofsted inspections and was pleased to note that all schools were receiving first class support from the Council. A Member expressed some concern at the outcome of the Manor College inspection and it was highlighted Manor College was making great progress and was a thriving school with excellent GCSE results this year which showed a 7% improvement on last year.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair congratulated the schools' on their inspection results and outcomes and reiterated the availability from the Local Authority of continued support to those schools and wished them well in their endeavours to achieve good or better results.

Decision

The report and outcomes of the Ofsted Inspections were noted.

41. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

The Chairman ruled that the following items of business should be considered by the Committee as a matter of urgency in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(B) (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 in order that the matter could be dealt with without delay.

42. Any Other Business - Free Breakfasts for Primary School Children

The Chair referred to minute 44 of the minutes of the meeting of Council on 7 August 2014 in relation to free breakfasts for primary age children.

It was noted that a pilot scheme to provide free breakfasts to primary age children was already being undertaken in one primary school. In addition, a survey of the current level of breakfast provision was being undertaken, the results of which would be reported to the Children's Services Committee in November 2014 and then onto Council. The Head of Access and Strategic Planning emphasised the difference to the 'Breakfast Club' provision which was available to working parents and the provision of 'free breakfasts' to primary aged children.

Decision

That the evaluation of the pilot scheme currently being undertaken to provide free breakfasts to primary age children be reported to the Children's Services Committee in November 2014 and then onto Council.

43. Any Other Business – Safeguarding of Children and Young People

A Member referred to the recent news headlines surrounding the safeguarding of children and young people in Rotherham and sought reassurance that this problem would not occur in Hartlepool. The Chair commented that he had met recently with the Director of Child and Adult Services and the Leader of the Council and had discussed this issue. It was noted that there were a number of vulnerable young people within Hartlepool and Members were reassured that the Council was doing everything it could to ensure the safety of these young people. The Assistant Director, Children's Services indicated that this issue would be discussed further through the Hartlepool Safeguarding Children's Board

and the outcome of these discussions could be reported back to Committee if Members wished. In addition, this topic could be included in the programme of Members' Training around Children's Social Care.

The Chair informed Members that all Members would be invited to three training sessions in a similar format to last year, with the issues around Children's Social Care being the main topic. The first session would concentrate on training to enable Members to maximise the opportunity of the forthcoming visits the Children's Homes within Hartlepool that would be made available to all Members.

Decision

- (i) That the outcome of the pilot scheme to provide free breakfasts for primary age children be reported to the Children's Services Committee in November 2014.
- (ii) That the outcome of the discussions around Safeguarding Children and Young People as a result of the issues recently reported in the Rotherham area be reported to the Children's Services Committee.

The meeting concluded at 4.58 pm

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 8 September 2014