

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

30 September 2014

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

Present:

Councillor: Chris Simmons (In the Chair)

Councillors: Gerard Hall, John Lauderdale, Geoff Lilley and Brenda Loynes

Co-opted members:

Michael Lee

Young people's representatives:

Josh Scott and Ryan Jewson

Young inspectors:

Rebecca Blair, Josh Cooper, Rebecca Hanlon, Jason Lowther,
Shay Miah and Robyn Reid

Officers:

Gill Alexander, Director of Child and Adult Services
Louise Wallace, Director of Public Health
Dean Jackson, Assistant Director, Education
Sally Robinson, Assistant Director, Children's Services
Mark Smith, Head of Youth Support Services
Danielle Swainston, Head of Access and Strategic Planning
Jane Young, Service Manager
Deborah Gibbin, Health Improvement Practitioner
Helen White, Participation Manager
Elisa Arnold, Hartlepool Safeguarding Children's Board Manager
Patrick Wilson, Principal Employment Development Officer
Helen Hadfield, Participation Worker
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

44. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mary Fleet and Sheila Griffin.

45. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Gerard Hall and Chris Simmons declared personal interests in minute 48.

46. Minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2014

Received.

47. Youth Engagement Fund (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To inform Members of a funding application to be submitted by Tees Valley Unlimited on behalf of the five local authorities for the Government's Youth Engagement Fund.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report outlined the Government's package of measures to help address youth unemployment and homelessness. The report highlighted that within the Tees Valley area has the highest youth unemployment rate in the country at 7.8% (4,780 young people) as well as one of the highest NEET rates at 8.1% (2,020 young people). If the bid to the Youth Engagement Fund was successful, the proposed project will be led by Tees Valley Unlimited in partnership with the five local authorities to commission specialist providers from the public, private and third sector to work within a multi-disciplinary team framework. The project will work with between 1,500 and 2,000 young people aged between 14 and 17 years old over three years. The project value totals £4,500,000 over a three year period and all bids to this fund must include a financial contribution from at least one other source. This will be explored as part of the consultation process.

The first stage application was submitted in August 2014 and the successful shortlisted bidders will be informed by December if they were invited to the next stage with final contract awards being made in March/April 2015.

In response to a question from a Member, the Principal Employment Officer confirmed that work was ongoing with schools and potential partners with a view to identifying an investor and a further report would be submitted to the Committee once the outcome of the bid was known.

Decision

- (i) The report was noted.
- (ii) A further report would be submitted to the Children's Services Committee once a decision had been taken on the Tees Valley Unlimited's funding application.

48. **Commissioning of Activities Service for Children and Young People Aged 5 to 19 Years Old** (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

Key Decision -

Purpose of report

To request approval to implement a procurement exercise through tender submissions for the provision of activities service for children and young people aged 5-19 years old.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background to the provision of local out of school provision delivered by the Local Authority's Youth Support Services and the 5-19 activities programme commissioned as part of the Early Intervention Strategy. The current commissioned service consisted of five local organisations working in a consortia partnership to deliver the service specification and this provision was outlined in the report. It was highlighted that between June 2012 and July 2014 there were 1552 children supported across all sites including referrals and those accessing open door provision.

It was proposed that the service be commissioned in line with the Council's contract procedure rules. The total value of the two year contract was proposed to be up to £325,000 per annum (£650,000 for the two years contract period).

For clarification, the Chair confirmed that of the original partners for the delivery of this service, Manor Residents' Association was no longer directly involved in the provision of this service with the role now being undertaken by West View Project.

Decision

The procurement of an activities service for children and young people aged 5 to 19 years old was approved.

49. Transformation Challenge Award Bid (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To seek approval to the submission of a formal bid for the Department for Communities and Local Government Transformation Challenge Award 2015-16.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background to the Transformation Challenge Award 2015/16 and the funding behind that. Members were reminded that a joint expression of interest in the funding had already been submitted by a number of partners and a full bid for £750,000 had been developed and would be submitted by the deadline on 1 October 2014. Further detail of the focus for the programme should the bid be successful was included in the report along with the elements of the five case business model which had been used to develop the bid.

The Assistant Director, Children's Services indicated that it was anticipated that the announcement of the successful bids for funding would be late November/early December with the funding being available from April 2015.

The Chair commented that the reorganisation and reshaping of services as outlined in the proposals would go a long way to providing what families had indicated they wanted to see, such as a minimum of workers involved in any one family. The Assistant Director, Children's Services confirmed that ideally single family workers would be involved throughout the childhood of the children within families.

Decision

The submission of the full bid for the DCLG Transformation Challenge Award was approved.

50. Inspection Report for Stockton Road Children's Home *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To present the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection of Stockton Road Children's Home.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background to the duty of Ofsted to inspect children's homes twice a year. The first inspection of Stockton Road Children's Homes had taken place on 12 June 2014 and an overall judgement of adequate was given. A copy of the inspection report was attached at Appendix 1.

The Inspector found that the young people were achieving good outcomes since moving to Stockton Road and that the home was a good place to live where young people felt supported. It was highlighted that the staff were skilled at building and sustaining meaningful relationships with the young people. It was identified that the recording of incidents of young people going missing was not robust enough and could be improved to further safeguard young people. Improvements had since been implemented with the Registered Manager providing robust oversight when young people go missing with return interviews undertaken and risk assessments regularly reviewed and updated with all agencies.

There were three recommendations to improve the standard of services provided by the home and they have all been addressed by the Registered Manager. The Inspector highlighted in her report that the home had made a positive start since opening and had a lot to build upon.

The Chair commented that the outcomes and quality of care for the young people within Stockton Road had been rated good and had a promising future. The thanks of the Committee were forwarded to the Registered Manager and staff of Stockton Road for achieving such a good outcome within such a short time of being established with every confidence that this judgement would be improved upon.

Decision

- (i) That the findings of the inspection of Stockton Road Children's Home were noted.
- (ii) That the Registered Manager and staff at the Children's Home be thanked for all their hard work and commitment to achieving such a good outcome in such a short time of being established.

51. Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing Service Update *(Director of Public Health)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To provide the Committee with an update on the progress of the procurement of a children and young people's health and wellbeing service.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background to Local Authorities assuming the accountability for the commissioning of school nursing services. A review of the school nursing service was undertaken by Public Health including a 12 week consultation period using questionnaires, survey monkey and focus groups which were facilitated by the Young Inspectors. A total of 3,959 responses were received and an outline of the findings was included in the report. In view of these findings, the service specification was amended and the key service outcomes were listed in the report.

Members were informed that notice had been served on the provider of the current school nursing contract and the procurement of new Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing service commenced on 15 September 2014 with the aim of having a new service specification and contract in place for 1 April 2015.

The Director of Public Health indicated that the new service was critical to the development of the Better Childhood Programme led by Children's Services and supported by Public Health and was integral to the local context in which Children's Health and Wellbeing services were delivered.

The Chair commented on the importance of the new service being as accessible as possible to children and young people.

Decision

- (i) That the content of the report was noted.
- (ii) That a further report would be submitted to the Committee on the outcome of the procurement process.

52. Young Inspectors' Inspection Reports and Consultation Reports (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

Key Decision -

Purpose of report

To present the inspection reports and consultation reports produced by the young inspectors as agreed at the Children's Services Committee in April 2013.

The inspection reports and consultation reports attached as appendices 1 to 9 provided an insight into services and organisations that had been scrutinised by young people and had been given feedback and recommendations for improvement.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background to the introduction and subsequent continuation of the Young Inspectors' programme. A number of inspections had been undertaken by the Young Inspectors and the findings of these inspections were attached within Appendices 1 to 9.

The Young Inspectors provided a presentation which outlined what being a Young Inspector involved. They explained to Members individually their views on the benefits of being a Young Inspector and the skills and experience they had gained throughout the process.

In summary, it was noted that the general outcome of the Young Inspectors findings of the services visited were positive with recommendations made on ways in which services could be improved.

The Chair thanked the Young Inspectors for their detailed reports and was pleased to note that their recommendations had been taken on board by the services inspected.

In response to a question from a Member, a number of the Young Inspectors indicated that several of their friends had been inspired to

become Young Inspectors in view of the skills and experience they had seen their friends gain.

The Director of Public Health thanked the Young Inspectors for their input in reviewing the school nursing service as it had been invaluable in informing the service specification. It was also noted that the Young Inspectors had undertaken a lot of work with the Sexual Health Clinics in Hartlepool and Middlesbrough as well as children's services within the University Hospital of Hartlepool and had been a great support in improving health services for children and young people through the You're Welcome Quality Standard.

It was highlighted that one of the suggestions from the investigation into the impact of Hartlepool Parenting Programmes on the parents who attend them, had been to change the name from Children's Centres to Family Centres as some fathers had indicated they felt apprehensive about walking into a Children's Centre as they were perceived as being for mothers and their children.

The Young Inspectors were thanked for all their hard work in undertaking the Inspections and in providing such detailed reports and recommendations. This had proven invaluable in improving and reshaping services for children and young people.

Decision

- (i) The findings and recommendations of the Inspection reports undertaken by the Young Inspectors were noted.
- (ii) That a further report would be submitted to the Committee in around six months time including any details of any future Inspections undertaken.
- (iii) That the option of changing the name of the Children's Centres to Family Centres be explored further by the Assistant Director, Children's Services.

53. Private Fostering Annual Evaluation Report 2013/14 (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To provide the annual evaluation of local private fostering arrangements and awareness raising activity undertaken during 2013/14 year.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background to the arrangements for private fostering under the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005. It was noted that from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 the Local Authority had received eight notifications of new private fostering arrangements. However, one was recorded as private fostering in error as the child was placed by the Local Authority with a grandparent therefore was not privately fostered. It was noted that six of the private fostering arrangements ended during the 2013/14 year. The report included information on the age, gender and ethnicity of the children within the private fostering arrangements.

Hartlepool Safeguarding Children Board was continually seeking to raise awareness of private fostering and the requirements to notify the Local Authority. In addition, private fostering was also incorporated into the new Multi Agency Safeguarding and Child Protection training offered collaboratively with health. During an Ofsted inspection of the Children's Services and the Local Safeguarding Children Board in November 2013, the Inspector commented that they believed the communication strategy to be 'good'.

During the discussions that followed it was noted that there was the potential that there may be private fostering in place that the Local Authority was unaware of, which emphasised the importance of raising awareness of the process. Members were informed that should they become aware of any such arrangements, they should contact the First Contact Support Hub in the first instance.

Decision

The report and the work of the Hartlepool Safeguarding Children's Board to safeguard children living in private fostering arrangements were noted.

54. Hartlepool Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2013/14 *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To highlight the work of the Hartlepool Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) and share the HSCB Annual Report 2013/14.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background to the production of the HSCB Annual Report which was set out in five chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 – focuses on safeguarding children and young people in Hartlepool and considered the child's journey through services.

Chapter 2 – provides information about the governance and accountability of HSCB, identifying the HSCB members; the HSCB sub groups and the income and expenditure of HSCB during the 2013/14 year.

Chapter 3 – highlights the achievements and challenges posed during the 2013/14 year based on the agreed priorities in relation to child neglect, domestic abuse and its impact on children; children and young people being supported to make safer choices; and ensuring staff are adequately trained to meet the needs of children and young people. Other aspects of work completed by HSCB were also included in this chapter along with highlights from the November 2013 Ofsted Inspection of the Board when the Board was judged as 'requiring improvement'.

Chapter 4 – concentrates on the learning and improvement of the children's workforce in Hartlepool.

Chapter 5 – identifies the priorities for HSCB moving into the 2014/15 year.

The Chair congratulated the Officers for producing such a user friendly report which provided a good overview of the service. In addition, the Hartlepool Safeguarding Children Board was congratulated on its absolute determination to meet the Ofsted standard for good/outstanding before the next inspection.

Decision

The annual report was noted and the work that had been completed by HSCB during the 2013/14 financial year was recognised.

55. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

None.

The meeting concluded at 5.13 pm

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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