

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

14 JULY 2015

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

Present:

Councillor: Chris Simmons (In the Chair)

Councillors: Ged Hall and John Lauderdale.

Co-opted members: Julie Cordiner and Michael Lee

Young people's representatives:

Emma Jenner, Ben Marshall, Josh Scott, Rebekah Kadhim and Adam Shillaw.

Officers: Mark Patton, Assistant Director, Education, Learning and Skills (0-19)
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Officer

12. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Mary Fleet, Sheila Griffin, Brenda Loynes and Trisha Lawton.

13. Declarations of Interest

None.

14. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 June, 2015

Confirmed.

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

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to:

- summarise the outcome of the review of provision for pupils with behavioural difficulties and the identified model for Hartlepool;
- identify the actions needed to implement the model;
- seek the approval of the committee to begin to implement the model from September 2015.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Education, Learning and Skills (0-19) reported that ensuring that all children and young people had access to high quality provision includes providing for pupils who were engaged in alternative timetabled educational activities away from their host school, for example, through attending the Pupil Referral Unit or participating in commissioned courses or activities.

Young people who access education through alternative provision include children and young people with a range of additional needs, such as behavioural, emotional and mental health issues. To meet each young person's individual needs, a high quality and responsive range of provision that offers the full spectrum of support needs to be in place in Hartlepool.

Consultation with head teachers from all sectors and with members of the Hartlepool Behaviour and Attendance Partnership had established that:

- there is an increasing number of Key Stage 2 pupils in Hartlepool exhibiting more complex behavioural needs and that there are gaps in the current provision for these children;
- the current overall provision for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 pupils and, in particular, the Pupil Referral Unit, is seen to be in need of strengthening in order to meet the growing number and needs of the young people with behavioural difficulties;
- all secondary schools are further developing their own in-house and offsite provision.

The OFSTED report 'Alternative Provision' (July 2014) suggested that in the best alternative educational provision, children and young people, according to their needs, should be able to:

- attend schools and settings with skilled staff able to provide high quality teaching and a personalised curriculum, differentiated according to their needs, which enables them to progress with their learning;
- have access to specialist help, support and guidance from a skilled member of staff in their school or setting or from an external specialist where appropriate;
- benefit from integrated family support services and interventions where there are underlying difficulties related to home circumstances impacting on their learning.

To be effective, the future model in Hartlepool must promote effective learning environments that meet the full range of moderate to complex and challenging behavioural, social and emotional needs of young people, with a focus on preventative approaches and high quality interventions.

Following extensive research, consultation and visits to various provisions across the North East a model had been developed known as the Hartlepool Inclusive Continuum of Provision for Pupils with Behavioural Difficulties.

Places in the provisions outside mainstream schools would need to be funded partly by schools and partly from the High Needs block funding. This would require a change in the submission to the Education Funding Agency to reflect the 16 additional places which would be required. If the bid to the EFA was successful, the additional funding would be available from the financial year 2016/17.

The separately located KS2, KS3 and KS4 PRU provisions would require the identification of appropriate facilities and, therefore, may have capital funding requirements. If required, these funding requirements would be brought to Committee in a future report.

Implementing the strategy would require a temporary (one-year) appointment to advise on and co-ordinate the various aspects throughout the academic year 2015-16. This would be funded from existing resources.

The involvement of CAHMS and the funding implications and their effects of teaching ratios were raised. The Assistant Director stated that CAHMS would be involved in some of the additional work. The main source of funding for the fixed term appointment would be from the School Improvement budget and the ratio of teachers / pupils would be an element of the consultation still required. There would need to be flexibility in staffing as some pupils would require dedicated one to one support while others may be able to be taught in small groups.

The process for the appointment of the specialist advisor was questioned and the Assistant Director indicated that it would be hoped that a suitable candidate could be found from advertising within the northern region; wider advertisement would incur significantly higher costs.

The impact of any additional support provided through CAHMS for this specific group of pupils was questioned; would this reduce CAHMS ability to continue to support the wider school population. The Assistant Director stated that the facility for pupils to self-refer to CAHMS would continue as would their wider support to young people. It was anticipated that CAHMS would be a partner in the new arrangements so therefore would have sufficient capacity to provide support as part of their existing role. It was suggested that the existing provisions within schools could

also assist in ensuring that there was sufficient support for all young people that needed it.

Decision

1. That the Hartlepool Inclusive Continuum of Provision for Pupils with Behavioural Difficulties be approved with implementation beginning from September 2015;
2. That the funding implications be noted and that the additional temporary staffing capacity required for the academic year 2015-16 be approved.

16. Arrangements for the Nomination of Local Authority Governors to Serve on Maintained Schools and Federated Governing Bodies – September 2015 *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To request Members' consideration on the process in which to nominate local authority governors for consideration by governing bodies of maintained schools and federations.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Education, Learning and Skills (0-19) reported that the Constitution referred to the 'appointment' of governors being the responsibility of the Children's Services Committee stating that the Committee could make appointments of local authority school governors. This will need to be amended to reflect the Regulations and the wording changed to reflect the Council's changed role in nominating people to be appointed as LA governors. This was reported to a meeting of the full Council on 26 May 2015.

Following consultation with colleagues in other authorities regarding examples of criteria being applied in the relation to the nomination of governors, it is understood that governing bodies are concentrating on the skills needed, as opposed to setting out the criteria for appointments. Colleagues had also been looking at ways of possibly streamlining the appointment process for Members, saving their valuable time in meetings and securing appointments as soon as possible. Possible options for the Committee to consider were:

- (i) That the responsibility of nominating governors remains with the

Children's Services Committee.

- (ii) That the responsibility of nominating governors is delegated to the Director of Child and Adult Services in consultation with the Chair of the Children's Services Committee.

Council agreed that applications for school governors continue to be reported to this Committee in order to consider the suitability of applications. Council also requested that the Committee be informed of any future government policy on schools under local education control.

The application for potential local authority governors would still require applicants to complete an application form and it was proposed that this be modified to require the provision of information (possibly in the form of a skills audit) to demonstrate that the applicant has the specific skills needed by individual schools.

The Chair commented that while these new arrangements were simply responding to the change in government legislation there would need to be clarity from governing bodies as to the types of skills they required to ensure that an appropriate matching system could be implemented. Finding the right governors for schools was extremely important and this process should assist in ensuring that local authority nominated governors were of the right calibre for appointment by governing bodies. The process for those wishing to become local authority nominated governors did, however, need to be accessible and un-daunting so that good applicants were not put off applying. The Assistant Director indicated that he would take the Chair's comments on board for the finalised process.

The Chair stated that Council has requested the Committee consider how it wished to make the nominations to governing bodies. The Chair wished to retain the committee's involvement in that process while ensuring that in certain extreme situations, a governor could be appointed by the Director of Child and Adult Services after consultation with the Chair, and a subsequent report to Committee, to ensure a school had local authority representation.

It was suggested that one of the key skills that any governor needed to have was the confidence and ability to provide effective challenge to school leaders and it was questioned how this process could ensure that governors had those skills. The Assistant Director accepted that it was difficult to assume they all would have such skills but the revised induction and training processes in place for new governors were now more robust and provided training packages based on real life examples to bring out such skills.

There was concern that the draft application form submitted with the report could lead to people assuming only 'professionally qualified' people should apply. The Chair commented that this process only

related to one local authority nominated governor on any governing body. It did not preclude any individual from applying, though it had to be accepted that officers may need to guide many applicants through the application form and process. The Assistant Director stated that the form would be revised over the summer months to be more 'user friendly'.

Decision

1. That in order to fulfil its statutory duty to nominate local authority governors, suitable nominations be reported to this Committee for approval prior to the nomination being forwarded to a School Governing Body.
2. That should a case arise whereby the Director of Child and Adult Services considered that the approval of an appropriate nomination of a local authority representative governor is required by a school as a matter of urgency, then the Director, following consultation with the Chair of the Committee, be authorised to make such nomination subject to the submission of a subsequent information report to Committee.
4. A report be presented to the Committee should any future government policy on schools under local education authority control is published

17. School Term and Holiday Dates 2016/2017 *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To seek the Committee's approval to the pattern of school term and holiday dates for the school year 2016/17; and to seek the Committee's approval in recommending those dates to governing bodies of Aided and Foundation schools and Academies in Hartlepool.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Education, Learning and Skills (0-19) reported that the local authority and the governing bodies of all the Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools work together to ensure a consistent pattern across the town in respect of school term and holiday dates, though in the case of Roman Catholic schools in particular, some variation does occur in some years.

The pattern proposed for 2016/2017 provided for an "envelope" of 195

days of which five days are designated by the school as Professional Development (PD) days. Five PD days were provided for in the Conditions of Service and could be taken in combinations of part-day "twilight" sessions at the direction of individual schools. A 'calendar' showing the proposed school days was submitted as an appendix to the report.

Local Authorities for a number of years have tried to agree a unified calendar of term dates across the northern region from Yorkshire to Northumberland with some success. Following consultation between North East representatives, arrangements were made to consult all head teachers in Hartlepool and also the relevant professional associations on the school year pattern for 2016/2017.

In respect of the local consultation, responses were received from the majority of Hartlepool central cluster of schools who have expressed a desire to work until 21st December 2016 and return to school on 4th January 2017. It was therefore proposed that Hartlepool Borough Council continues to follow the current practice of publishing an annual calendar of recommended term dates for schools that is harmonious with neighbouring local authorities.

The continuation of the process of agreeing a unified calendar of term dates across the northern region was welcomed by the Committee. It was suggested that it may be prudent to reflect that joint agreement on the published 'calendar' so parents were aware.

There was some discussion on the use of Professional Development (PD) days by schools. The Assistant Director commented that the management of PD days fell to individual schools based on their own circumstances. The use of PD days could not, however, reduce the statutory requirement for a minimum of 190 teaching days .

Decision

1. That the schedule of term dates and holiday dates for 2016/2017 for Community and Controlled Schools as submitted be approved.
2. That the schedule of term and holiday dates for 2016/2017 be recommended to governing bodies of all Voluntary Aided, Foundation Schools and Academies in Hartlepool.
3. That consultations with regional representatives continue following the removal from the LA of the responsibility of setting school holiday dates.

18. 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.

Future Meeting Dates

The Chair indicated that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Tuesday 4 August 2015 at 4.00 pm. The following scheduled meeting date of 18 August was not now needed and therefore the meeting would be cancelled.

Co-opted Members

The Chair referred to the membership of the Committee as detailed in the Constitution which included representation from governors from primary, secondary and special schools in the town. There had been no such appointments for some time and the Chair considered that as well as having governor representatives on the Committee it would be valuable to have head teacher representation from the three groups of schools as well to add to the Committee's consideration of education matters. The Chair requested that the Assistant Director seek appropriate nominations to fulfil those roles.

The meeting concluded at 4.50 pm.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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