

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

1 DECEMBER 2015

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

Present:

Councillor: Chris Simmons (In the Chair)

Councillors: Mary Fleet, Sheila Ged Hall, John Lauderdale, Trisha Lawton and Brenda Loynes.

Co-opted members:

Julie Cordiner (C of E Diocesan Representative)

Michael Lee (RC Diocesan Representative)

Young people's representatives:

Rebekah Kadhim, Josh Scott, Matthew Childs, Steffi Ellison and Callum Reed.

Also Present: David Turner, Head Teacher, Rift House Primary School
Mark Tilling, Head Teacher, High Tunstall College of Science

Officers: Sally Robinson, Director of Child and Adult Services
Danielle Swainston, Assistant Director, Children's Services
David Ward, Head of Finance (Child, Adult Services and Public Health)
Helen White, Participation Manager
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Officer

47. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Griffin and Councillor Richardson, Chair of Adult Services Committee (Observer).

48. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Simmons, Ainslie and Hall and Mr Tilling and Mr Turner declared personal interests as school governors.

49. Minutes of the meeting held on 6 October, 2015

Confirmed.

50. Schools Funding Formula 2016/17 (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

Key Decision (tests (i) and (ii). General Exception rules also apply.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to provide an update on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and to consider and approve the 2016/17 Schools Funding Formula.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Chair referred to the discussions at the meeting of the Committee held on 6 October, 2015 (Minute 45 refers) when the Committee had given consideration to a request from the Schools Forum for guidance on the application of the percentage rate to be included in the Schools Funding Formula for deprivation. Those discussions concluded that a rate of 13.5% would be appropriate for 2016/17 and would also assist schools move towards a reduced deprivation rate over time.

The report now submitted to Committee sought to formalise the previous decision and now that all formula factors had been agreed the individual school budget allocations would be calculated and submitted to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) in January 2016. When this has been approved by the EFA, schools would be notified of their budget allocation.

Decision

1. That the Schools Formula for 2016/17 as reported and including at deprivation index of 13.5% for 2016/17 be approved.
2. That further updates be submitted to Committee when funding has been confirmed for the Early Years and High Needs blocks.

51. Approval of School Term and Holiday Dates for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

To report to the Children's Services Committee changes made to the Deregulations Act 2015 in respect of the approval of school term dates

for community and voluntary controlled school by local authorities.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Child and Adult Services reported that at the meeting on 14th July, 2015 (minute no. 17 refers) Members of the Children's Services Committee were informed that under Section 16 of the Deregulations Act 2015 responsibility for setting school term dates will be removed from the local authority and their responsibility will be transferred to the governing bodies of Community and Controlled schools for setting their own school holiday pattern.

In a further communication received by the local authority on 18th September 2015 the government gave notification of the following amendment to the Act:

“the provision which gives the governing bodies of community, voluntary controlled, community special schools, and maintained nursery schools in England the responsibility for setting their own school term and holiday dates will not be commenced. These schools will not therefore be given the power to set their own term dates.

Currently academies, free schools, foundation schools and voluntary-aided schools have freedom over their term dates. Local authorities already have the power to vary term dates for other schools including for individual schools, and there has been no real clamour from maintained schools which do not have this power to have this freedom. Given this it would not be appropriate to commence with widening this to those maintained schools themselves, but we encourage local authorities to listen sympathetically to arguments for change from these schools. Those schools that are performing well can still choose to become academies in order to set their own term dates.”

Schools had, obviously, been informed of the original decision of government and a small number had chosen to amend their term dates for 2016/17. The schools that have made amendments to the local authority published term dates for 2016-17 are:

- Brougham Primary School
- Clavering Primary School
- High Tunstall College of Science
- Jesmond Gardens Primary School
- Lynnfield Primary School
- Hart Primary School
- Rift House Primary School

The Chair commented that it was appropriate simply to note that the [above] schools had made changes to their term dates. The amendments to the local authority published term dates were made in

good faith and had already been communicated to staff, children and their families.

Decision

1. That the decision of the Department for Education in their communication to local authorities in September 2015 not to remove the responsibility from local authorities to set school term dates for community and voluntary controlled schools as set out in the Deregulation Act 2015 be noted.
2. That the decisions of the Central cluster and other community and foundation schools to changes made to the school term dates for 2016-17 be noted and endorsed.

52. To Nominate Local Authority Representatives to Serve on School Governing Bodies *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

To update members of the Children's Services Committee in respect of vacancies that currently exist for local authority representative governors, and to request that members recommend nominees to the governing bodies where vacancies currently exist.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Child and Adult Services reported that the schedule at Appendix A to the report set out details of vacancies which currently exist, together with applications received set out in Appendix B. Appendix B to the report contained exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government), (Access to Information), (Variations Order 2006) namely, information relating to any individual (Para 1).

The Chair commented that in future when schools had vacancies for local authority nominated governors; it would be useful to know what skill-set the school required to enhance their governing body. The local authority could then nominate representatives that most closely matched the schools requirements.

Decision

That the following nominations be forwarded to the appropriate schools as the local authority nominated school governor representative –

Greatham C. E. (VA) Primary School - Mr. G. Lilley
Federated Governing Body St Peter's Elwick C.E. and Hart Primary
Schools - Mrs. B. Hart.

53. Better Childhood Programme (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

To update Children's Services Committee on the delivery of the Better Childhood Programme.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Children's Services provided the Committee with an update on the delivery of phase one of the Better Childhood Programme. Phase two of the programme would be delivered between now and June 2016. This will entail developing the shared vision through staff and partner engagement. This work had already started with the children's services workforce and partner workshops were planned. Through this work, the new integrated model of working would be developed and consulted upon underpinned by engagement and workforce development to drive integration and ensure smooth transition to new ways of working. This was very much in line with the original vision as outlined in the bid where workforce development was seen as critical to new models of service delivery to improve outcomes for children and their families. It was anticipated that integrated locality teams would go live from June 2016 and the model further developed and built upon as more services for children align to this way of working. This was a slight delay from the original 'live' date of 1 April.

The Assistant Director referred to the work of consultants iMPower who had been assisting in the development and delivery of the programme. Their work, which had recently been reported in detail to the Children's Strategic Partnership, had proved extremely helpful in reviewing current practices and cases and promoting change through the system. For example, the Assistant Director indicated that iMPower had been asked to look at duplication within the system. What they found was that there was little duplication but there were in a number of cases large numbers of workers associated with particular families all doing specific tasks and work but all with very little or no coordination.

A Member commented that there were many instances of young people, particularly young women, falling into a cycle of pregnancy leading to the need for significant family support. When workers dealt with families

were they speaking with all the family members together or individually as on many occasions the story that individuals may tell may be quite different to the family's 'united front'. The Assistant Director stated that families were spoken to individually specifically for this reason. One of the partner organisations in the Better Childhood Programme was Changing Futures North East who would be working with families where relationships had broken down to help them develop those healthy family relationships and build family resilience.

There was also concern that the redevelopment of services didn't lose those existing services that were working well and having a positive impact. It was difficult to envisage how, when dealing with significant financial cuts, how it would be possible to educate families on being better parents and deal with both the physical and mental health needs of the family as well. The Assistant Director stated that the principle behind the multi agency hub was to ensure that the right services were provided to families at the earliest opportunity to avoid issues becoming escalated into the need for significant interventions like bringing children into care. None of these changes would, however, be easy and developing the new service models would be difficult but the golden thread running through them would be to shift the response to families to the earliest opportunity within their own community.

A Member questioned the impact on staffing referred to within the report. The Assistant Director indicated that providing the service hub for Stockton as well as Hartlepool would require some staff to be TUPE'd across from Stockton Borough Council. It was not envisaged that there would be any reduction or increase in core staffing but that family interventions would be earlier and consequently at the lower end of the scale and thereby cheaper to deliver. The aim was to reduce the costly significant family interventions, such as bringing children into care, by tackling problems at a much earlier stage and providing the support families needed to develop their own resilience for the future.

A young people's representative questioned the early interventions to prevent domestic abuse, particularly involving school staff. The Assistant Director indicated that the basis was involving those who knew people or children the best being able to spot the small differences. Domestic abuse often focussed on the victim and the perpetrator without paying enough attention to the children in a family situation. Council staff were receiving information on domestic abuse incidents from Cleveland Police's Operation Encompass so they could intervene more quickly to bring forward earlier and better resolutions.

The Chair asked the schools representatives how the new Operation Encompass was working with the school staff. The two Head teacher representatives indicated that it was working well, the training had been valuable and staff were looking to it having other positive interventions as well.

The Chair commented that the authority already did a lot of good work with families and this programme would provide an opportunity to improve that work further. While the picture wasn't generally rosy, there was an opportunity here through this programme to improve things for the future and move away from those things that weren't working and focus on positive and early interventions. The Chair likened the work now being done on this area to that Cleveland Fire Brigade undertook a number of years ago when they moved their focus from fighting fires to preventing them starting in the first place. In an area with some of the highest risks, the Cleveland Fire Brigade now had one of the lowest rates of domestic fires. The Chair hoped that the work now being undertaken on the Better Childhood programme would lead to similar improvements. The reshaping of services and improved and new partnership working was the only way forward for services as without partnership working some services may simply 'wither on the vine' due to diminishing resources.

Decision

That the Committee notes the progress made in delivering the Better Childhood Programme and endorses the continuance of this work.

54. Engineering Masterclasses 2015 Evaluation (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

The report provided background information to the 2015 series of Royal Institution Engineering Masterclasses, and an evaluation of their impact.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Child and Adult Services reported that the Royal Institution (Ri) has been running masterclasses in engineering, mathematics and computer science for many years. The masterclasses are organised all over the UK and are hands-on and interactive extracurricular sessions led by top experts from academia and industry for keen and talented young people (13-14 year-olds, Year 9).

The Royal Institution has tried to organise an engineering masterclass series in the Tees Valley for many years. Given the profile of the engineering sector in the Tees Valley it proved surprisingly hard to find a way to make this happen. The education team in Hartlepool's Child and Adult Services Department decided to take this on, and began planning in the late spring term of 2015. Support from EDF Power and Hart Biologicals was quickly won. These two organisations contributed the

use of their venues free of charge which helped to keep project costs to a minimum. Additionally, staff from these two organisations contributed a masterclass each to the series.

The Hartlepool engineering masterclass series comprised six Saturday morning sessions in June and July 2015. Five of the sessions were held in Hartlepool and ran from 10.00 am until 12.30 pm. The final and sixth session was a full-day celebration event held at Northumbria University in Newcastle. At this final event, students from other Ri series held throughout the school year in the north-east came together to talk and hear about engineering.

All five secondary schools in Hartlepool engaged enthusiastically in the series and nominated gifted and talented Year 9 students. Students were required to commit to attending all six masterclasses. A total of 27 students enrolled on the Hartlepool masterclass series with students from all five maintained secondary schools participating. Attendance was excellent, with the average attendance being 24 to each session; the majority of absences were due to illness or family events/holidays. The Royal Institution report that these take-up and attendance rates are high compared with other series in England.

The Director indicated that the costs incurred totaled approximately £500 which had been met through existing funds. However, a grant from the Cleveland Scientific Institute (CSI) has been applied for to cover these costs. The outcome of the CSI committee decision regarding this grant application was not yet known.

Members welcomed the report and commended the Assistant Director, Education who had been instrumental in bringing the masterclasses to Hartlepool. Members also thanked the support of other officers and particularly EDF Power and Hart Biologicals for their involvement in the masterclasses. Members also commented that it would be good to have a presentation from young people involved in the masterclasses to hear firsthand how valuable they had been and also to track in the future what influence the masterclasses had on the higher education and employment choices of the young people involved. The Chair requested that the Committee's thanks be extended to all involved.

A Member referred to the research being undertaken by Hart Biologicals and their seeking of volunteers to be involved and encouraged Members and officers to be involved.

Decision

That the report be noted and that consent be granted to the organisation of further series of masterclasses in 2016.

55. Strategic Financial Management Report – as at 30 September 2015 (*Director of Child and Adult Services and Chief Finance Officer*)

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to inform Members of the 2015/16 forecast General Fund Outturn, 2015/16 Capital Programme Monitoring and provide details for the specific budget areas that the Committee was responsible for.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Head of Finance (Child, Adult Services and Public Health) reported on the background to the Council's overall financial position and the specific situation relating to the Children's Services Committee.

It was presently predicted that there would be a favourable outturn in the 2015/16 budget for the Child and Adult Services department though this was to be utilised to establish reserves to deal with budget pressures relating to Adult Social Care, Telecare Equipment and Early Intervention. The Youth Justice Board (YJB) had announced on 5th November 2015 an in-year reduction of 10% (£49,000) in their grant funding to the Youth Offending Service. Owing to the late notification this reduction will be funded from the existing YOS reserve in 2015/16. There may also be additional cuts to this funding in 2016/17 and detailed proposals for managing these cuts would be reported to a future meeting.

In relation to Capital Monitoring, the Head of Finance brought two specific issues to Members attention both of which related to Golden Flatts School. The first related to the electrical rewire scheme originally planned for phase 2 which has had to be brought forward for technical reasons. Therefore the scheme was expected to cost £14,000 more than originally anticipated. This can be funded from the unallocated budget and it is recommended that Members approve this increase in budget. The second related to one of the boilers at Golden Flatts School had failed owing to a cracked heat exchanger and failure of circulation pumps. Owing to the risk that the remaining boiler also fails and to ensure that the works could be completed before the winter, the Director of Child and Adult Services had agreed a boiler replacement scheme at a estimated cost of between £40,000 to £45,000. This could be funded from the unallocated capital contingency budget which was held to manage such risks.

The Chair stated that he was extremely disappointed at the in-year cuts in the YOS funding as this was an area that the authority was being

particularly successful. A Member questioned the boiler replacement scheme at Golden Flatts and the Director of Child and Adult Services assured Members that this was the most cost efficient solution.

Decision

1. That the report be noted;
2. That the re-phasing of the electrical works at Golden Flatts school be approved as reported.

56. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

There were no other items which the Chair considered urgent.

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on 19 January, 2016 commencing at 4.00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 5.00 pm.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 8 DECEMBER 2015