

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

13 SEPTEMBER 2016

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

Present:

Councillor: Alan Clark (In the Chair)

Councillors: Paul Beck, Brenda Harrison and John Lauderdale.

Councillor Stephen Thomas, Chair of Adult Services Committee
(Observer)

Also Present: Councillor Jim Lindridge as substitute for Councillor Lesley Hamilton in accordance with Council Procedure rule 5.2.

Evelyn Leck, Hartlepool Healthwatch.

Young people's representatives: Callum Reed and Daniel Measor.

Officers: Sally Robinson, Director of Child and Adult Services
Danielle Swainston, Assistant Director, Children's Services
Mark Patton, Assistant Director, Education, Learning and Skills 0-19
Helen White, Participation Manager
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Officer

19. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Lesley Hamilton and Shane Moore. Michael Lee, RC Diocesan Representative, Mark Tilling, Secondary Head Representative, David Turner, Primary Head Representative

20. Vice-Chair of Committee

The Chair informed the Committee that Councillor Marjorie James had been appointed as vice-chair of the Committee by Council at its meeting on 8 September, 2016. The Chair wished to record his thanks for the support and work of the previous vice-chair, Councillor Gerard Hall.

21. Declarations of Interest

None at this point in the meeting.

Councillors Beck and Lindridge declared personal interests during the discussions at Minute No. 25.

22. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 July, 2016

Confirmed.

23. Minutes of the meeting of Children's Strategic Partnership held on 23 February 2016

Received.

24. Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2015/16 *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

To provide members with the latest findings of The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2015-2016 and for members to approve the publication of the Assessment attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Children's Services reported that The Childcare Act 2006 and subsequent 'Early education and childcare: Statutory guidance for local authorities (September 2014)' provided the framework for local authorities to discharge their duties in relation to free nursery entitlement and childcare.

Much of The Childcare Act 2006 has recently been repealed however the following duties still remain in place for local authorities:

- Secure sufficient childcare for working parents;
- Secure early years provision (this is in relation to 3 and 4 year old childcare provision and 2 year olds for those that are eligible) free of charge;
- Information, advice and assistance to parents and prospective parents;
- Information, advice and training to childcare providers;
- Report annually to Members on how we are meeting our duties.

The childcare market is overseen by The Children's Hub (formerly First

Contact and Support Hub). The Hub receives overnight data downloads from Ofsted on all registered childcare providers in Hartlepool together with any changes to their registration.

The Hub undertakes an annual assessment of childcare. This takes place in October each year and uses census information from early year's providers so that an accurate picture of 2, 3 and 4 year old early education take up can be obtained. In addition, all providers (childminders, private day nurseries, playgroups) are contacted to collect information which is included in the annual assessment and uploaded onto The Directory. The assessment was submitted as an appendix to the report.

In October 2015 there were –

- 53 registered childminders offering 319 places at a cost of between £3.50 and £6.00 per hour. 36 providers reported over 61% vacancy availability.
- 16 day nurseries offering 775 places at a cost of between £30 and £36.50 per day. 11 providers reported over 61% vacancy availability.
- 8 holiday schemes offering 345 places at a cost of between 18.50 and £36.50 per day. 3 providers reported over 61% vacancy availability.
- 26 before school clubs offering 780 places at a cost of between 50p and 18.55 per session. 16 providers reported over 61% vacancy availability.
- 20 after school clubs offering 673 places at a cost of between 50p and 18.55 per session. 12 providers reported over 61% vacancy availability.

83% of providers had been judged 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. Hartlepool also continued to perform well in its take up of 2,3,4 year old early education with participation by eligible 2 year olds at 87% and by 3 and 4 year olds at over 95%.

The Vice-Chair expressed her concern at some of the vacancy levels reported in the nursery sector and was concerned that this may affect the financial viability of those businesses. The Vice-Chair was also concerned that while the majority of providers were rated as good or outstanding, that did mean that 17% were not. The Vice-Chair considered that a greater level of information needed to be provided and the questionnaire needed to seek more detailed information from providers.

The Assistant Director indicated that officers did spend a significant amount of time collating the information which was a significant pressure on already high workloads. Much did depend on what level of work and detail was put into the assessment when it was no longer a statutory duty. The Authority also had very little influence on this market, much of which was private providers. What the assessment did

do was provide enough information to assure that there was sufficient child care places in the town.

Members sought clarification on the position of the Council's OSCARs service, how many were attending, charges and where the children attending were coming from, the level of subsidy the provision received and whether there were target groups for involvement and if there was information breaking down which wards children lived in that attended. . The Assistant Director stated that the purpose of the assessment was to assure there were sufficient child care places in the town, which it did. The Assistant Director commented that OSCARs was a chargeable service and the aim was for it to be self-financing by March 2017. The service was open to all and was targeted at local working parents. The service was well used and statistics on attendances and ward information could be provided to members.

A Member questioned the involvement in Ofsted inspecting child care arrangements and if that required the Authority to have a greater input. The Assistant Director stated that registered early years providers were inspected by Ofsted alone and the local authority had no influence. Advice could be given if required. The situation in Hartlepool was quite different to that in the south of the country as there were quite a number of school nursery places in the town and the local authority did have some influence over those services.

A young people's representative asked what level of subsidy schools were putting into their own services. The Assistant Director commented that there had been some concern among private providers when the new duties in relation to 2, 3 and 4 year old children were introduced as to how much of this would gravitate towards schools away from their businesses. The Vice-Chair commented that many schools did provide breakfast clubs with some charging and others not. It was understood that some schools were using pupil premium to support these services and it would be of interest to the Committee to see which were using pupil premium and to what level.

Decision

1. That the report be noted and the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment be approved for publication.
2. That the further information requested by members in relation to the use of pupil premium for school breakfast clubs and the statistical information in relation to OSCAR's be submitted to a future meeting.

25. Delivering Differently – Activities for Young People *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

For Children's Services Committee to note the findings and recommendations within the Delivering Differently report.

To seek approval for officers to support the development of a Young People's Foundation in partnership with local voluntary sector providers.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Children's Services briefly outlined the background to the Delivering Differently approach including the work commissioned by the Children's Strategic Partnership and the grant from the Government Cabinet Office to assist in rethinking the way local authorities provided services to young people aged 13-19.

Metavalue were commissioned to review all local service and options and make recommendation on a preferred model taking into account current provision and with acknowledgement of associated risks and opportunities for all partners. Metavalue's subsequent report was submitted as an appendix to the report. Metavalue considered that the options for the future of the service were; -

- Keep traditional youth service without commissioned service;
- Public Sector Mutual;
- Back the winner approach;
- Develop current consortium;
- Independent Young People's Foundation.

The recommended option was the development of a Young People's Foundation which would:

- Be a newly registered charity;
- Be a membership organisation for any group that works with Children and Young People in the relevant area;
- Have a Trustee Board and wider steering group that will include representation from relevant organisations in the area.

Metavalue were tasked with developing a business case that organisations can then discuss with their respective boards. The current situation was that there are a number of organisations commissioned by the council to provide young people's services and other organisations that were not commissioned but still provided activities to young people.

A Young People's Foundation would be a membership group and, therefore, any children's services provider could become a member and if providers did not want to join they would not need to.

The Assistant Director, Children's Services, therefore, recommended the move to the next stage of Delivering Differently which was the development of a business case and investment strategy. This would ensure that capacity across the youth sector could be strengthened. The next stage of development of the Young People's Foundation would be reported to committee at the beginning of 2017.

Councillors Beck and Lindridge declared personal interests during the Committee debate.

The Healthwatch representative commented that services to 13 to 19 year olds should be a little more flexible in their opening hours; the One Stop Shop for example was only open 10.00 am to 4.00 pm when most would be in school or college. The Healthwatch representative also commented that she had expected to see reference to Cafe 177. The Vice-Chair commented that Cafe 177 had never been a local authority service, though the Assistant Director indicated it could join the Foundation in the future.

A Member did express some reticence at the move to a Foundation. The Chair and other members did, however, support the move as an opportunity to maintain a significant level of youth services in the town.

Decision

1. That the findings and recommendations within the Delivering Differently report be noted.
2. That officers support the development of a Young People's Foundation in partnership with local voluntary sector providers.

26. School Term and Holiday Dates – 2017-18 (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

To seek agreement of the Children's Services Committee to the pattern of school term and holiday dates for the school year 2017-18 for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.

To seek agreement of the Children's Services Committee in recommending these 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 Council had the responsibility for setting the school term and holiday dates for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in Hartlepool. Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools' governing bodies and Academies were responsible for setting their own school holiday pattern within the agreed national framework of working days. Traditionally the Local Authority and the governing bodies of all of 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.

Five training or professional development (PD) days were provided for in the teachers' conditions of service and could be taken in combinations of part-day "twilight" sessions at the direction of individual schools. The pattern proposed for 2017-18 provided for an "envelope" of 193 days, with two days designated in a combination of part day twilight sessions at the direction of the individual school.

In the spring term 2016 north east representatives consulted on a pattern for 2017-18 based on the guiding principles and agreed to consult on this pattern within their own authorities as shown in Appendix 1 to the report. The proposed pattern enabled schools to begin the academic year on Monday 4th September 2017 and end the year on Friday 20th July 2018.

Following discussions, arrangements were made to consult all head teachers in Hartlepool through the Director's termly meetings and also the relevant associations / unions on the school year pattern for 2017-2018. On the completion of local consultation in the region, the general consensus from the local authorities is to adopt the model reported.

Decision

1. That the scheduled term dates and holiday dates for 2017-18 for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools as reported be approved.
2. That the scheduled of term and holiday dates for 2017-18 be recommended to governing bodies of all Voluntary Aided, Foundation Schools and Academies in Hartlepool.

27. Suitability Projects – Update (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

The report sought retrospective approval for capital suitability schemes for two schools. Further details relating to these schemes were outlined in Appendix 1 to the report. The appendix contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Education, Learning and Skills 0-19 reported that at the meeting on 12 July 2016 the Committee approved a number of schemes that had been selected for progression by School's Capital Sub Group using Suitability Funding. Since that meeting further schemes were requested for Ward Jackson Primary to improve disabled access to a classroom and at West Park Primary to rectify noise issues.

In order to progress these two schemes and in the hope of having them completed during the 2016 summer break, the Director in consultation with the Chair of the Committee approved the two schemes on 15 July 2017. Details of the costs of the two schemes were set out in the confidential appendix to the report. The appendix contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The Vice-Chair questioned the school contributions to the two schemes, one being a Church Aided School and the other an Academy. The Assistant Director commented that schools were generally requested to fund at least 10% of capital schemes though some did contribute more. There was scope within the funding available to support schemes at community, aided and academy schools as there were different funding streams available. The Assistant Director explained that suitability funding was made available to local authorities to ensure that all children and young people attended schools that were fit for purpose, and had were 'suitable' learning environments. The Assistant Director went to explain that there were other capital funding streams available only to academy schools, and others that were not. Members requested details of these funding streams and how schemes were approved. The Assistant Director indicated that this information would be included in a further report scheduled to be submitted to the Committee in the autumn.

In relation to the scheme at West Park Primary Members sought

assurance that the roof finishing would not contribute to any new noise issues. The Assistant Director indicated that the risk assessment of the proposed new scheme did not show noise as being an issue.

Decision

1. That the approval given by the Director of Child and Adult Services in consultation with the Chair of the Children's Services Committee in respect of Ward Jackson Primary's access improvements be noted and supported.
2. That the approval given by the Director of Child and Adult Services in consultation with the Chair of the Children's Services Committee in respect of West Park Primary's noise issues be noted and supported and that the required funding should be reconsidered by the Schools' Capital Sub Group.

28. Adoption Service – 6 Month Interim Report – April - September 2016 *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to provide Children Services Committee with information relating to the work of the Adoption Service from 1 April to 30 September 2016. The adoption service is a regulated service and as such is required to provide the executive side of the council with regular performance information.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Children's Services reported on Adoption Activity, Staffing, Marketing and Publicity Activity, Recruitment and Training, Post Approval Support Groups, Placement Panel Activity and Family Finding Good Practice in updating the Committee on the Adoption Service's performance and activity for the six months April to September 2016.

The Assistant Director also updated the Committee on the development of the Tees Valley Adoption Agency work where Hartlepool was lead authority.

A Member questioned what impact was being felt from private sector agencies poaching adopters. The Assistant Director commented that this was more of an issue for fostering. The information and feedback from approved adopters was that they were very pleased with the level of support they received from the team.

In relation to the potential Tees Valley adoption agency a member questioned the levels of training and uniformity of practices across the five authorities and if this would have an impact if they joined one agency. The Assistant Director commented that the Tees Valley had the benefit of the majority of the agencies being rated as very good. Training would be at the core of any new agency, though there were a high number of skilled and experienced adoption workers across Hartlepool and the Tees Valley.

Decision

That the report be noted.

Councillor Beck left the meeting at this point.

29. Fostering Service – Interim Report – 1 April 2016 – 30 June 2016 *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to provide Children Service's Committee with information relating to the activity of the Fostering Service for the first quarter of 2016/17. The Fostering Service is a regulated service and as such there is a requirement to provide the executive side of the Council with performance information on a quarterly basis.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Children's Services reported on the Fostering Services performance for the quarter 1 April to 30 June 2016 updating the Committee on Recruitment and Retention, the work of the Placement Panel and Staffing. The Assistant Director highlighted that the service had held its first Foster Carers Annual Conference in June where a series of workshops were delivered. The conference was attended by over 80 fostering households and evaluation and feedback of the event had showed it to have been very well received. The Chair welcomed the report and congratulated those involved in the delivery of the successful conference.

Decision

That the report be noted.

30. OFSTED Inspection Outcomes – January 2016 – July 2016 *(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 spring and summer terms of the 2015-16 academic year.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Education, Learning and Skills 0-19 reported on the outcomes of the recent Ofsted inspections for the following schools –

Hartlepool Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) – Good
Catcote Academy – Good
Hart Primary School – Outstanding
High Tunstall College of Science – Good.

The Assistant Director particularly focussed on the overall ratings of schools in the Borough. 90% of primary schools and 83% of secondary schools were now rated as good or better by Ofsted. This overall rate of 89% for the town reflected the ambition shown by Members and officers in improving schools in Hartlepool for all children. It was hoped that by the end of 2017, all schools would be rated as good or better which would be a significant success and would make Hartlepool one of a small list of local authority areas with such an achievement. The only secondary school still to receive an Ofsted rating was Manor Community Academy which, having moved to academy status, had not retained the previous school rating and was due for re-inspection during 2016-17.

The Chair welcomed the report and commented that Hartlepool was on target to be able to say to all parents that wherever they lived in the Borough, their children would receive a good standard of education.

A Member commented of the PRU and whether the building was considered fit for purpose and how success was assessed within the unit. The Assistant Director indicated that Ofsted considered the building fit for purpose. On its capacity, consideration was being given to possibly increasing the size of the unit and diversifying its offer.

Members expressed concern that Ofsted had revised its inspection criteria and could now downgrade a school from Outstanding to Good when nothing at all had changed within the school. A Member also

commented that there were also some risks inherent in 'good' ratings. If a school had been rated as good and remained good it could be considered to be 'coasting' and, therefore, could be forced to become an academy. If a school's rating dropped, even from Outstanding to Good, a school could be forced to become an academy.

The meeting discussed the benefits of all Hartlepool children receiving a good standard of education and what that could mean to the local jobs market. The Assistant Director commented that that kind of statistic did matter to inward investors. It would also make a difference to attracting young families to move into the town. This was all the result of work instigated some time ago and all involved should be very proud of the achievements to date.

Decision

That the report be noted.

31. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

There were no items the Chair considered urgent.

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 4 October, 2016 at 4.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

The meeting concluded at 5.25 pm.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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