

# **CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

21 MARCH 2017

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 Marjorie James (Vice-Chair).

Co-opted members:

Jo Heaton, C of E Diocesan Representative  
Mark Tilling, Secondary Head Representative

Young people's representative: Callum Reed

Officers: Mark Patton, Assistant Director, Education, Learning and Skills 0-19  
Danielle Swainston, Assistant Director, Children's Services  
Zoe McKenna, One Stop Shop Coordinator, Integrated Youth  
Support Service Craig Taylor, Principal Officer – Operations,  
Hartlepool Adult Education  
Juliette Ward, Young Inspectors Co-ordinator  
Amanda Whitaker, Democratic Services Team

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Chair welcomed Jo Heaton to her first meeting as a Co-opted Member of the Committee.

### **76. Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Lauderdale.  
Stephen Hammond, RC Diocesan Representative  
David Turner, Primary Head Representative  
Sally Robinson, Director of Child and Adult Services  
Ruby Marshall, Healthwatch  
Observer: Councillor Thomas, Chair of Adult Services Committee

### **77. Declarations of Interest**

Mr Tilling and Councillor Harrison.  
Additional interests were declared later in the meeting.

## **78. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2017**

Confirmed.

It was highlighted that an item had been raised at the meeting, under 'Any Other Business' which had not been noted in the minutes as follows:-

A Healthwatch representative had asked if the Council could work again with young carers. The suggestion was agreed.

## **79. Update of Young Inspectors** (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

### **Type of decision**

Non key

### **Purpose of report**

The report set out details of the inspection and consultation reports produced by the young inspectors requested by Children's Services Committee in April 2013.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The following inspection reports and consultation reports had been circulated as appendices to the report:-

- Exmoor Grove Review
- Waverly Terrace Allotments Review
- Pathways to Independence
- Youth Offending Service Consultation 2016
- Safeguarding Board Section 11 Consultation 2016

Summaries of the inspection reports were set out in the Committee report. Young Inspectors were in attendance at the meeting and provided an insight into services and organisations that had been scrutinised by young people and had been given feedback and recommendations for improvement.

Following the presentation of the report, the Chair expressed his appreciation to the Young Inspectors, paid tribute to the role of young people on Committees and sought clarification regarding whether the recommendations were universally accepted. In response, it was highlighted that 6 monthly reviews were undertaken to determine if recommendations were in place. It was suggested that a reporting mechanism be introduced to monitor those recommendations that had not been implemented.

During the discussion, Committee Members sought clarification regarding recruitment of Young Inspectors and the selection of projects to be undertaken. It was noted that it was anticipated that it would be necessary to recruit more young people if additional work was commissioned. It was suggested that, in terms of recruitment, consideration be given to generating interest in schools with consideration being given to the geographical spread across the town schools.

The recommendations were agreed unanimously.

### **Decision**

The Committee noted the findings and recommendations of the Inspection reports undertaken by the Young Inspectors.

## **80. Hartlepool Adult Education Strategy 2016 – 2026** (Assistant Director, Economic Growth and Regeneration)

### **Type of decision**

Non-Key decision.

### **Purpose of report**

The report informed the Committee of the Hartlepool Adult Education Strategy 2016-2026.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

On 10<sup>th</sup> February 2017, the Regeneration Services Committee had endorsed the Hartlepool Adult Education Strategy 2016-2026. At that meeting, the Chair had requested that the Strategy be referred to the Children's Services Committee for information.

The Mission Statement, Aim and Objectives of the Hartlepool Adult Education Strategy 2016-2026 were included in the report. The Strategy had been designed to ensure optimum benefits for the community, employers and the wider economy and had been split according to a number of key priority themes which were listed in the report. The complete Strategy had been subject to the full involvement of the staff from Adult Education along with consultation with key stakeholders and was appended to the report.

The Committee discussed issues arising from the report. Whilst supporting the aims of adult education, Committee Members highlighted also the benefits of community learning. In response, the Committee received an explanation of associated funding aims and noted the potential benefits of current Officer representation on the Combined Authority Adult Steering Group. It was noted also that there was

recognition of the 'soft outcomes' and the position of the service in complementing services provided by schools and colleges. The Principal Officer (Operations), who was representing Hartlepool Adult Education at the meeting, agreed to a suggestion made by the Secondary Head representative that arrangements be made for a meeting involving the Principal Officer, Mr Tilling and Mr Hammond to consider issues associated with community support.

The following decisions were agreed unanimously.

### **Decision**

The Committee noted the report and refer the report to the Schools Forum.

## **81. Young People Not In Education, Employment or Training (NEET) Update** *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

### **Type of decision**

The report was for information.

### **Purpose of report**

To provide an update on how the areas for improvement highlighted in the annual NEET report 2016 were being moved forward and how the risks identified in the 2016 report were being mitigated.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

In July 2016 the annual NEET report had been submitted to the Committee providing an update in relation young people Not in Education, Employment or Training across Hartlepool. Whilst the report showed some areas of good performance it also highlighted some areas for improvement. The report set out an update on each of those areas.

The Committee debated issues arising from the updates including communication with primary schools, the need to be 'smarter' in terms of sibling link issues and the opening of a number of schools during the 'summer holiday' period. The Committee recognised that the six week holiday period across the summer could be a pivotal point in engaging young people in education, employment or training. It was highlighted that opening schools during the holiday period would assist also in addressing other issues including 'holiday hunger'.

### **Decision**

The Committee noted the report.

**82. 2017/18 Schools' Capital Works Programme** (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

**Type of decision**

Key Decision – test (i) and (ii) applies – Forward Plan Reference No. CAS 064/17

**Purpose of report**

The report sought approval to the 2017/18 Schools' Capital Works Programme, as detailed in confidential Appendix 1 to the report in order to progress the design and detailed costing exercise in time for the majority of projects to be carried out during the summer holiday period. The confidential appendix to the report 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 (paragraph 3).

**Issue(s) for consideration**

The report advised the Committee that each year, during January or early February, the Department for Education announced capital funding allocations, these being School Condition Allocations, for the school estate in Hartlepool both for the Local Authority and the Voluntary Aided sector. At the time of writing the report, capital funding allocations had not been communicated to the Local Authority. However, last year the Department for Education had stated that allocations for 2016/17 would be indicative of the funding that responsible bodies would receive in 2017/18. The Department for Education had further stated that School Condition Allocations would be revised annually to reflect any schools moving to a different responsible body e.g. converting to academy status, opening or closing. During 2016/17 (financial year), two schools had converted to academy status. Therefore the School Conditioning Allocations schemes detailed in the confidential appendix were considered affordable using a forecasted reduced allocation to that made in 2016/17.

In addition to the School Condition Allocation schemes, approval was sought for works and the purchase of equipment to cater for the extra demand in implementing the Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) initiative. The details of which were also contained within the confidential Appendix.

In 2014, the Children's Services Committee had approved works to address condition issues at High Tunstall College of Science. However, the majority of these works were subsequently put on hold following an expression of interest to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) to request

inclusion in Priority School Building Programme – Phase 2 (PSBP2). The Committee was advised that there was £328,497 still on hold for High Tunstall College to address previous condition issues. It is was therefore proposed to use the remaining funding, plus some of the 2017/18 School Conditioning Allocation to address the condition issues required for 'D' block (previously known as Thornhill) and also fund the demolition of two mobile class units which had come the end of their useful life and were no longer required. The details of which are also contained within the confidential Appendix.

The Committee was advised that schools would be expected to contribute 10% towards the condition schemes. Detailed in the report was the total funding available and details the total costs of schemes proposed and the funding required. All schemes had a contingency figure built into the costs, therefore officers were confident that the programme was affordable. Liaison with representatives from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle and the Church of England Diocese of Durham and Newcastle had taken place. A consistent approach to the development of capital schemes had been agreed. Further liaison would take place to determine which schemes should feature in the final schedule of works for the voluntary-aided sector and would be submitted to the Education Funding Agency.

The following decisions were agreed unanimously.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the schedule of 2017/18 capital works programme as summarised in the confidential appendix to the report (which 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).be approved, subject to the LA agreeing contributions from schools towards individual schemes in line with the shared funding principles established by the Schools Forum.
- (ii) That the allocation of funding to meet the requirements of the Universal Free School Meals initiative, as summarised in the Confidential Appendix, be approved.
- (iii) That retrospective approval be given to the scheme which has been funded from contingency, detailed in Appendix 1.
- (iv) That the Director of Child and Adult Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services be delegated appropriate dispensation and discretion to authorise works where an emergency (eg risk of school closure) or a significant health and safety risk is exposed.

Interests were declared by Councillor Beck and Jo Heaton in the following item.

**83. Development Projects Funding** (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

**Type of decision**

Key Decision (test (i)/(ii) Forward Plan Reference No. CAS 058/16.

**Purpose of report**

The report sought retrospective approval for two school capital suitability schemes and for one Development Project, and to agree how remaining development funding would be allocated. Further details relating to the schemes were outlined in Appendix 1 of the report which **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 (paragraph 3)**

**Issue(s) for consideration**

At the meeting on 12 July 2016, the Committee had agreed a number of schemes that had been selected for progression by School's Capital Sub Group using Suitability Funding. Further schemes had been agreed at the meeting of Children's Services Committee on 13 September 2016. An update on the financial position of these schemes was included in the appendix.

Due to the previous difficulties in the equitable allocation of the available funding, the Schools' Capital Sub Group had agreed to devise a new process to allocate funding. The new criteria and application process had been developed by a task and finish group in November 2016.

The Committee was advised that eight bids had been received from a combination of nine schools. Some bids were collaborative, others were for single schools. Projects put forward were detailed in the report. Of the bids that were received, one bid had been approved which was the Language Lab project at Rift House and St Helen's which received 69/100 points. The bid from Ward Jackson Primary School in relation to early year's development was rejected on the ground that included provision for 2-year-olds which was not in scope for this funding. The joint bid from Grange Primary School, Stranton Academy and Springwell Primary School in relation to social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) provision had been rejected as it didn't pass the pass/fail requirement in relation to sustainability. The panel felt that all other projects lacked detail in some areas which led them to not being approved.

It was noted that approximately £740,000 of funding was available of which £70,000 had been allocated. Therefore there was approximately £670,000 yet to be allocated. Members of Schools' Capital Sub Group had proposed that the remaining Development Funding should be allocated to the KS2-4 Behaviour Review Group who had been tasked with designing solutions to improve the SEMH provision in Hartlepool schools. This would mean that funding would be readily available when a solution has been agreed. This proposal had been considered for approval by the Schools' Forum on 8 March 2017.

The following decisions were agreed unanimously.

### **Decision**

- (i) The Committee supported the approval given in January 2017 by Schools' Capital Sub Group and Schools' Forum for the joint bid between Rift House Primary School and St Helen's Primary School to create 'language labs' in each school.
- (ii) The Committee supported the Schools' Forum decision regarding future allocation of Development Funding to improving the provision for children and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs and requested that regular progress reports be submitted to the Committee.
- (iii) The Committee noted the variation in costs for suitability schemes shown in the confidential appendix.

## **84. Primary School Place Planning / Basic Need Capital Funding** *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Key Decision test (i) applies. Forward Plan Reference Number: CAS 063/17

### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval to create additional primary school places by expanding Clavering Primary School, supported by a capital funding allocation from the Basic Need Capital Grant to be received in 2017/18.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The Committee was advised that Basic Need funding allocations were made to Local Authorities to support the capital requirement for providing new pupil places by expanding existing maintained schools, free schools or academies, and by establishing new schools. In order to alleviate



some of the demand for primary places in the north of the town, in October 2015, Children's Services Committee had approved works for Hart Primary and Clavering Primary Schools utilising Basic Need allocations. The works approved for Clavering were for the Key Stage 1 area of the school only. Children's Services Committee also noted that further works would be required at Clavering in 2017. This is to accommodate the increased number of pupils currently in KS1.

An initial feasibility study and costing exercise had been carried out for works proposed at Clavering. The works would enable the school to provide accommodation for an additional 5 pupils per year group. This would allow the school to permanently increase their published admission number (PAN) to 60. The school currently has a PAN of 55. Therefore, a total of 35 primary school places would be created across all year groups. The estimated cost for the scheme was detailed in confidential Appendix 1 which 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 (paragraph 3)

Following presentation of the report, Committee Members discussed issues associated with Barnard Grove Primary School. Councillor James declared a non prejudicial interest as her partner is Chair of Governors at the School.

Committee Members highlighted capacity issues at Barnard Grove school and highlighted that the school hall appeared to be smaller than that of the sister school which was understood to have been built to the same specification. The implications of the capacity issues on Barnard Grove school and other schools were discussed. The Assistant Director (Education, Learning and Skills 0-19) advised that annual assessments were undertaken and update reports were submitted to the Committee. The Assistant Director was unsure of the detail relating to the schemes under discussion but advised that schools were allocated a total square footage and the decisions in relation to design were the responsibility of the school. The Assistant Director undertook to investigate the issues which had been raised.

The following decisions were agreed unanimously.

### **Decision**

- (i) The Committee approved the spend of Basic Need funding to increase capacity at Clavering Primary School as detailed in confidential Appendix 1 and agreed that regular update reports be submitted to the Committee.
- (ii) That an update report be submitted on the issues raised in relation to Barnard Grove School.

**85. Supported Accommodation and Outreach Support for Vulnerable Young People – Procurement** *(Director of Child and Adult Services and Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

**Type of decision**

Key Decision test (i and ii) applies. Forward Plan Reference Number: CAS 61/16.

**Purpose of report**

The report sought approval of a procurement process to identify the delivery model of supported accommodation services and support for vulnerable young people.

**Issue(s) for consideration**

In October 2016, the Council had received notification from one of its supported accommodation providers announcing that the organisation had taken the decision to focus on specialising in providing support to a smaller number of client groups. This has resulted in the provider not continuing to provide generic Young Peoples support services in Hartlepool. This current service provision would end in October 2017. Current contracts for Floating Support and supported accommodation for teenage parents were due for renewal. The contracts had been extended to fall in line with the procurement time frame so that future provision in this area would be part of this procurement of services. Increased and improved multi agency working in assisting vulnerable young people in finding appropriate support and accommodation would complement the procurement of support services. The Terms of Reference for the Hartlepool Supported Housing Panel had been reviewed and amended to reflect the shared responsibility for these groups of young people and identified clear pathways of support.

The Committee was advised that a review of historical and current provision had been undertaken by Children's Services and Housing. Historical data and service knowledge had been used to forecast potential future needs and any gaps in service provision. The data set out in the report covered the period January 2016 – December 2016 in relation to accommodation services only. A total of 51 young people had been placed with the main commissioned supported accommodation providers detailed in the report. The status of the 51 young people was set out in the report.

It was highlighted that as part of the process, the Council was eager to further develop 'moving on' strategies in partnership with providers to support young people in gaining the skills and confidence to live independently. It was anticipated that through this procurement exercise

demand would be managed down in the future by improved working with key partners to minimise the need for supported accommodation; more robust floating support and mediation to prevent young people entering the supported accommodation system and the proactive management to ensure timely move on of young people aged 18 and over from services. The outcomes that were sought through the procurement of these services were set out in the report.

A provider event had been held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2017. Initial feedback had been very positive, with a focus on collaboration and partnership working to develop solutions that met the needs of young people and support market development in this area. Future provider events were planned for 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017 and 25<sup>th</sup> April 2017. It was anticipated that the proposed partnership approach would encourage new providers to engage in the process with the possibility of promoting market growth in the town. Three events with young people currently in supported accommodation or receiving supported housing support were scheduled in February and March 2017, with a further event to be organised for those young people who had previously accessed support in this area. Feedback from all the consultation and information events would be addressed and considered as part of the preferred solution.

It was acknowledged that supported housing requirements needed to reflect the requirements of both the Client base and the Council. Listed in the report was a summary of the Council's requirements together with a summary of the provider's requirements. There were several approaches which could be taken to put arrangements in place, some of which satisfy the above requirements better than others. The attributes of the approaches were described in the report. The benefits and disadvantages of each arrangement listed above can be found in Appendix 1. It was envisaged that the preferred solution would be a mixture of the procurement approaches outlined above. Further discussion with providers would form the basis of future events to identify which was the most appropriate and viable option for each of the commissioning service areas.

The following decisions were agreed unanimously.

### **Decision**

- (i) The Committee approved a procurement process to identify the delivery model of supported accommodation services and support for vulnerable young people.
- (ii) The Committee noted that a further report will be brought to Committee to note the award of contracts once the procurement process has been undertaken.

## **86. Hartlepool Education Commission – Update Report** (Director of Child and Adult Services)

### **Type of decision**

Non key decision.

### **Purpose of report**

To update Committee on the progress of implementation of the Education Commission's recommendations, and impact achieved since the previous report to Committee in January 2016.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The Committee was advised that the background leading to the Hartlepool Education Commission and the Commission's recommendations were contained in the final Commission report published in September 2015. This is the second update report for consideration by this Committee.

It was highlighted that the governance arrangements supporting the implementation of the Commission's recommendations were appended to the report. A strategic Education Commission Leadership Group meets on a termly basis to oversee the workplan and finances, and received updates from each workstream at these meetings. The terms of reference for the Education Commission Leadership Group were appended to the report.

In September 2016 a stakeholder engagement conference was held. The purpose of the event was to inform all stakeholders of the work undertaken and impact achieved during the first year of implementing the Commission's recommendations. A publication summarising this work was produced for and circulated at this event which was available upon request. A collation of the stakeholder feedback to the event was appended to the report for information together with a collation of the latest workstream update reports. Included in the report was a summary of work done during Year 1. It was highlighted that Year 2 was already beginning to see more impact of the Education Commission's work on young people and practitioners, as illustrated in the update reports appended to the report.

Following presentation of the report, the Chair commended all those involved in Hartlepool Education Commission.

The following decisions were agreed unanimously.

### **Decision**

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of this report.

- (ii) The Committee agreed to receive further update reports following each Education Commission Leadership Group meeting on a termly basis.

## **87. Children's Social Care Innovation Programme – Targeted Funding Opportunity** *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non key

### **Purpose of report**

For members to approve the submission of a full bid to the DfE Children's Social Care Innovation Programme.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The Council had been working closely with Changing Futures North East within A Better Childhood in Hartlepool to enable the workforce to focus on developing effective relationships within families. Children's Services, Changing Futures North East and the Tavistock Centre for couple relationships had agreed that it would be beneficial to build on this work and develop an expression of interest to the innovation programme. It was expected that all bids had been focused on a specific cohort in order to understand learning and impact and to understand if it could be replicated across a larger cohort. It was felt that the cohort of children that could benefit from this approach were children who were being supported as a Child In Need. It was proposed to create a small Child In Need team consisting of social workers and psychotherapists that would focus on children who had been identified as in need for longer than a year. Details of the expression of interest were provided in the report.

The partnership (Hartlepool Council, Changing Futures North East and the Tavistock Centre for Couples relationships) had been asked to submit a full proposal following a successful expression of interest. The DfE had not informed the Partnership of the deadline for submission however it was thought that the deadline would be approximately end of April. It was expected that the DfE would make decisions on the submissions by the Summer with successful areas being able to draw down funding by September 2017.

The following decisions were agreed unanimously.

### **Decision**

The Committee approved the submission of a full bid to the DfE Children's Social Care Innovation Programme in partnership with

Changing Futures North East.

**88. Dedicated School Grant - High Needs Block 2017/18** *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

**Type of decision**

For information.

**Purpose of report**

To provide an update on the High Needs Block funding for 2017/18.

**Issue(s) for consideration**

The report advised the Committee that the Local Authority (LA) received funding to support children and young people with special educational needs via the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This funding was allocated directly to the High Needs Block. The High Needs funding would be subject to national formulae from 2018/19. The second stage of the Department for Education's (DfE) consultation was launched in December 2016.

The Education Funding Agency (EFA) had issued the funding allocation for 2017/18; funding has remained at 2016/17 levels. The table included in the report detailed how the funding of £10.504m was allocated. It was highlighted that over the last few years the pressure on the High Needs Block had increased significantly owing to a number of reasons which were set out in the report. The ongoing pressures had been funded using a combination of earmarked reserves and savings owing to the reduction in the hourly rates paid to providers for individual pupil support (top up payments). However these reserves would be fully committed in 2017/18. A permanent solution needed to be developed before the start of 2018/19 to address this issue. In consultation with Schools and the Schools Forum the local authority were undertaking a review of SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) funding across Hartlepool to help address the increasing overspend of the High Needs Block of funding. The LA is working closely with schools as part of this review and all schools were involved in a process of reviewing current levels of need and support.

It was noted that the review was anticipated to be complete by Autumn 2017. The outcome and recommendations from this review along with an update on the projected 2017/18 outturn would be brought back to the Children's Services Committee for consideration.

Following presentation of the report, the Committee discussed the financial implications of in year pupil transfers with particular reference to those transfers arising from parental preference, as opposed to being part of a managed process. Concerns were expressed that, on those

occasions when moves occurred due to parental preference, there was no requirement for a transfer of pupil funding. It was noted that both secondary and primary head teacher groups were reviewing protocols relating to children moving between schools in the town.

The following decisions were agreed unanimously.

### **Decision**

The Committee:-

- i) Noted this update of the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant;
- ii) Agreed to receive an update on the national funding formula when the EFA publish the results from the second stage consultation for 2018/19;
- iii) Noted that further updates will be provided following the conclusion of the SEND review which will include funding and implementation proposals.

## **89. Kick The Dust – Heritage Lottery Fund** *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

### **Type of decision**

For information.

### **Purpose of report**

To inform members of an application to Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Kick The Dust' Youth Programme of £644,970.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The report advised the Board that in 2016 The Heritage Lottery Fund had announced the 'Kick The Dust' programme; a £10 million grants programme for ambitious youth-focused projects that aimed to transform how heritage organisations engaged young people. In December 2016 Youth Services had submitted an expression of interest in partnership with Cultural Services, The Museum of The Royal Navy Hartlepool, The Heugh Gun Battery and voluntary sector partners to develop the heritage sector in Hartlepool alongside young people. The bid was for £644,970 in total with £59,070 secured from in kind support from partners and the Local Authority over a four year programme. This was accepted to be developed by the Heritage Lottery Fund (one of four regionally) into a first round submission that was submitted in February 2017. Decisions would be made in June as to the successful applicants. If successful, the project

would be developed into a second round submission with further detail and project delivery would start in January 2018. The project would be funded for four years and details of what the project would provide young people and the heritage sector with were set out in the report.

### **Decision**

The Committee noted the application to Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Kick The Dust' Youth Programme.

## **90. Quarter 3 – Council Overview of Performance and Risk 2016/17** *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

### **Type of decision**

For information.

### **Purpose of report**

To inform the Committee of the progress made against the relevant areas of the 2016/17 Council Plan at the end of quarter 3.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The Council Plan included a number of key actions, performance indicators and risks which set out how the Council intended to deliver on its priority outcomes. The Council Plan 2016/17 had been agreed by Council on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016. At the end of each quarter officers provided an assessment of progress against the actions, performance indicators and risks in the Plan. At the beginning of the municipal year each Policy Committee had identified 4 key areas of activity that they would like to receive updates on through these quarterly performance reports (i.e. one for each quarter). Children's Services Committee agreed that their 4 topics for 2016/17 would be as follows:-

- Fostering and Adoption
- Safeguarding
- Education Commission Review
- Education Improvement Strategy

The appendix to the report set out overall progress against actions, performance indicators and risks that are relevant to this committee are identified in the performance report.

The Assistant Director (Education, Learning and Skills 0-19) highlighted that two out of 19 risks had had their risk ratings within the Children's Services element of the Council Plan changed. The Assistant Director explained the rationale for the changes and referred to the inconsistent nature of primary and secondary school performance data and how this could influence future OFSTED inspections.



The Committee discussed changes to the GCSE exam system which included a new 'grading system' which would replace the A\* to G grading system to instead use numbers 1 to 9 to identify levels of performance. Grave concerns were expressed at the implications of the changes and the uncertainty for students at the move from a fair and transparent criterion-referenced assessment system to a 'norm' reference system, particularly for progress measures. It was recognised that support would be required for students and parents/carers. It was highlighted also that the changes would make it very difficult for employers and universities to compare candidates in the next few years.

The Assistant Director advised that arrangements were to be made for a Members' Seminar to be held to brief Members on the changes to the exam system and Committee Members were urged to encourage their colleagues to attend. The Chair of the Committee suggested that a 'glossary of terms' be provided to Members' also.

### **Decision**

The Committee noted the progress made on the specific areas, as set out in the appendix.

## **91. Fostering Service Interim Report - 1 October 2016 – 31 December 2016** (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

### **Type of decision**

For information.

### **Purpose of report**

The report provided the Committee with information relating to the activity of the Fostering Service for the third quarter of 2016/17. The Fostering Service is a regulated service and as such there is a requirement to provide the Council with performance information on a quarterly basis.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

In accordance with the Fostering Services Minimum Standard 25.7, the report provided the background to the inspection regime for the provision of foster care for children looked after. The report provided details of the staffing arrangements in the service, training received by both staff and Foster Carers, the constitution of the Fostering and Adoption Panel, activity in relation to the recruitment, preparation and assessment of prospective Foster Carers and progress in relation to the priorities set out in the Fostering Annual Report.

Following presentation of the report, the Chair requested that it be placed on record the appreciation of the Committee to all those involved in the

Fostering Service.

### **Decision**

The Committee noted the report in relation to the work of the Fostering Service in the third quarter of 2016/17.

## **92. 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.

## **93. Standards, Engagement and Development Team**

Further to minute 56 of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016, the young people's representative raised further concerns, expressed by the Youth Council, in relation to the service cuts that would affect the Standards, Engagement and Development Team.

The Committee was advised that in January, the Leader of the Council had met with the Youth Council and had since spoken to the Chair of this Committee. Concerns were expressed that despite being assured that the Youth Council would be involved in budget discussions, proposals only became known to the Youth Council by reading the Finance and Policy Committee's agenda.

Whilst recognising the issues which had been raised, it was highlighted that some very difficult decisions had to be made across all Council services. There were reducing resources and increased demand on frontline services.

The Committee was advised that the Youth Council appreciated cuts had to be made but had expressed concerns in relation to how the changes had been communicated.

The Chair responded to the issues which had been raised and expressed his commitment, together with the commitment of Officers, to continue to support the Youth Council. Assurances were provided regarding the future of the Youth Service and Young Inspectors and an undertaking was given to explore how proposals had been communicated.

The Secondary School Heads representative suggested that proposals be shared with secondary head teachers to determine if any support could be provided from that sector.

In conclusion, the Chair advised that the message from the Committee

was that the Youth Council was safe and there would continue to be a role for young people in democracy.

## **94. Co-Opted Member**

The Chair sought the approval of the Committee to Alan Chapman, headteacher of Catcote Academy, to be appointed as an additional co-opted member on the Committee.

### **Decision**

That Alan Chapman be appointed as a co-opted member on the Committee to represent the SEND sector.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chair highlighted that this was the last scheduled meeting of the Committee in the municipal year and extended his thanks to Members, officers and all those that had been involved in the Committee during his time as Chair for their support and contribution to some excellent meetings.

The meeting concluded at 6.35 p.m.

**P J DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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