

# **CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

20 February 2018

The meeting commenced at 4.30pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

Councillor: Alan Clark (In the Chair)

Councillors: Brenda Harrison, John Lauderdale and Shane Moore

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.2 (ii), Councillor Jim Lindridge was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Kaylee Sirs.

Co-opted members:

Mark Tilling, Secondary Schools Head Representative  
Alan Chapman, Special Schools Head Representative

Healthwatch representatives: Ruby Marshall

Young people's representatives:

Callum Reed, Hartlepool Youth Parliament Representative

Officers: Sally Robinson, Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services  
Danielle Swainston, Assistant Director, Children's and Families' Services  
Mark Patton, Assistant Director, Education  
David Ward, Head of Finance, Child and Adult Services  
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

### **84. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors George Morris, Kaylee Sirs and Stephen Thomas along with Jo Heaton (C of E Diocesan representative), David Turner (Primary School Representative) and Evelyn Leck (Healthwatch Representative).

### **85. Declarations of Interest**

None.

**86. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2018**

Received.

**87. To Nominate Local Authority Representatives to Serve on School Governing Bodies** *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

**Type of decision**

Non key.

**Purpose of report**

To update the 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**

A schedule was submitted with the report setting out details of vacancies which existed, together with applications received. The individual applications were set out in a confidential appendix to the report which 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).

**Decision**

That the applicants as set out in confidential Appendix B in respect of local authority nomination be considered by the governing body where the vacancy exists.

**88. Proposal to Extend the Children's 5-19 Activities Grant by a further 6 Months and 'Poverty Proofing the School Day'** *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

**Type of decision**

Non key.

**Purpose of report**

To provide the Committee with an update on the usage of the Child and Family Poverty Initiatives Reserve since it was created in December 2015.

To seek Members' agreement regarding the proposed extension of the Children's 5-19 activities grant by a further six months and to undertake work with a cohort of Hartlepool schools to 'poverty proof' their school day, both funded from the Child and Family Poverty Initiatives Reserve and to refer this to the Finance and Policy Committee for approval.

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

The background to the current provision of the Children's 5-19 activities which was agreed at Finance and Policy Committee on 18 September 2017. This resulted in the provision of the funding being extended to 30 September 2018. Extending this provision was on the basis that the Young People's Foundation would be established and have secured ways to draw down grant funding for the provision of sustainable services into the future. However, the future funding was unlikely to be in place by September 2018 and it was therefore proposed to extend the funding for a further six months, again from the Child and Family Poverty Initiatives Reserve.

It was noted that an important aspect of the Council's efforts to tackle child and family poverty was to 'poverty proof' the school day. Research indicated that children living in poverty can find school a difficult place to be, their families may be struggling with the cost of living and this can be compounded by the day to day school issues such as school uniform, purchasing examination study guides, field trips and much more.

The proposal to extend the current funding arrangements would ensure funding was in place for the whole of the 2018/19 financial year and the additional cost of this proposal would be £64,000. In addition, it was proposed that up to £15,000 was committed from the Child and Family Poverty Initiatives reserve to support schools with the cost of the research, with schools paying an equal share themselves. As Finance and Policy Committee had delegated authority to approve funding from the Child and Family Poverty Initiatives Reserve, it was proposed that Members consider these proposals and if agreed, refer them to Finance and Policy Committee for approval.

The Chair restated his previous support for the ongoing work funded by the Child and Family Poverty Initiatives reserve which had a significant impact on the wider community in Hartlepool including the most vulnerable within society. The report showed how the financial support and advice service was crucial across the town. The Chair was pleased to note the success of extension of the holiday hunger scheme across Christmas and the additional £9k financial support provided to Hartlepool Foodbank in November 2017. The Director indicated that there was a £3.5k underspend from funding for the holiday hunger scheme from Christmas. It was suggested that Members may wish to consider proposing the extension of the holiday hunger scheme for the Easter holidays to Finance and Policy Committee to be funded by this

underspend by offering up to £500 to any organisations who wish to deliver this scheme during this holiday period. The Chair supported this suggestion adding that this model be utilised going forward.

A discussion ensued on the development of Hartlepool Youth Foundation and it was noted that a dedicated Officer was now in place and was pursuing potential future funding options for the 5-19 activities. The Assistant Director, Children's and Families' Services added that the Development Officer from the Young People's Foundation be invited to a future meeting of the Committee to provide an update on the development of the Foundation.

The Chair sought clarification on the progress with a cohort of Hartlepool Schools 'poverty proofing' their school day. The Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services confirmed that this was a regional and accredited programme undertaken in conjunction with Children North East that had shown results in other areas and it was proposed to work with up to 10 targeted schools to ascertain which schools would feel the most benefit and be interested in taking part. It was noted that there was the potential to secure match funding from participating schools.

### **Decision**

- (1) The latest position regarding the Child and Family Poverty Initiatives Reserve was noted.
- (2) The proposal to extend the activities 5 -19 grant by a further 6 months (£64,000) funded from the Child and Family Poverty Initiatives Reserve was endorsed.
- (3) The proposal to engage with Children North East to undertake work with a cohort of Hartlepool schools to 'poverty proof' their school day (£15,000), funded from the Child and Family Poverty Initiatives Reserve was endorsed.
- (4) That the Committee's endorsement to use the Child and Family Poverty Initiatives Reserve as noted above be referred to Finance and Policy Committee for approval.
- (5) That the extension of the holiday hunger scheme for the Easter holidays be submitted to Finance and Policy Committee for approval to be funded by this underspend by offering up to £500 to any organisations who wish to deliver this scheme during this holiday period.
- (6) That the Development Officer from the Young People's Foundation be invited to a future meeting of the Committee to provide an update on the development of the Foundation.

**89. Throughcare Service – Looked After Children Annual Report** (*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*)

**Type of decision**

For information.

**Purpose of report**

To provide the Committee with information relating to the work of the ThroughCare Service for the year 2017. The ThroughCare service is a regulated service and as such was required to report regular performance information.

**Issue(s) for consideration**

The report included an overview of the year's activity and performance of the ThroughCare service for Looked After Children in particular:

- Placement and accommodation, including placement stability.
- Education, training and employment activity.
- An update on the health and wellbeing of young people and the services we offer.
- Participation.
- An outline of our achievements and our development work for 2018.

**Decision**

The positive activity and services provided to our children and young people were noted along with the areas of improvement where the service had a clear development plan to aim for improving outcomes.

**90. Throughcare Service – Care Leavers – Annual Report** (*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*)

**Type of decision**

For information.

**Purpose of report**

To provide the Committee with information relating to the work of the ThroughCare Service for the year 2017. The ThroughCare service is a regulated service and as such was required to report regular performance information.

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

The report included an overview of the year's activity and performance of the ThroughCare service for Care Leavers in particular:

- Placement and accommodation, which includes Staying Put.
- Education, training and employment activity and provides an overview on how we are tackling young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).
- An update on the health and wellbeing of young people and the services we offer.
- Participation.
- An outline of our achievements and our development work for 2018.

The Assistant Director, Children's and Families' Services highlighted that a lot of work had been undertaken on Staying Put arrangements for care leavers as well as support for care leavers to progress to independent living.

A Member sought clarification on the level of support provided to children in care who were in the Youth Justice System but released after they were aged 25. The Assistant Director, Children's and Families' Services indicated that it depended on the circumstances surrounding that young person adding that a wraparound support package would be in place in from the Probation Service, when they were released from the Youth Justice system. The Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services added that the Throughcare Model for care leavers enabled social workers to stay with the young person beyond aged 18 to provide consistent support. In addition to this, a restructure was being undertaken with a view to creating two personal advisor roles for those who are aged 18 and over and require a lighter touch such as practical support. The Chair emphasised the importance of intervention work being undertaken during the young person's time within the Youth Justice System to ensure they were signposted in the right direction for support upon release.

A discussion ensued on the level of accommodation provision available for care leavers and the Assistant Director, Children's and Families' Services indicated that Officers work closely with the Housing Team to secure suitable accommodation for care leavers.

Reference was made to the Family Placement Panel and the recent inclusion within the membership of a young person who had experience of local authority care. The Chair commented that the young person would be an integral member of the Panel and every contribution made by young people to any part of the local authority's decision making process was invaluable.

### **Decision**

That the positive activity and services provided to our children and young people were noted along with the areas of improvement where the service had a clear development plan to aim for improving outcomes.

## **91. Pupil Performance 20178 – Headline Indicator Summary** *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

### **Type of decision**

For information.

### **Purpose of report**

To provide the Committee with a summary of the pupil performance measures for Hartlepool from public examinations in the summer of 2017.

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

The report provided an update following on from the indicative performance report received by Committee on 17 October 2017. The published pupil performance measures for 2016 and 2017, along with national averages, were presented at Appendix A. It was highlighted in the report that Hartlepool's quartile placement for each 2017 measure was also presented in the Appendix.

A summary of the performance across early years to key stage 4 were included in the report.

A discussion ensued on the changes to the grading system for GCSE's and how progress was measured. In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director, Education commented that staff within schools were dealing with the changes but added that behaviour was an issue across the whole town, mainly in secondary schools. It was noted that work was ongoing with workforce development to ensure that all staff were equipped with the appropriate level of skills and knowledge to deal with young people's behaviour. The potential to explore ways to develop an alternative curriculum was being looked at although this did come with its own difficulties. The Special School representative commented that Catcote Academy had a specialised curriculum which concentrated on life skills, independent living skills, personal hygiene and supporting the young people into adult life. The importance of the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking and numeracy was emphasised. The Secondary School representative informed the Committee that there was a lot of work ongoing with teachers through workforce development and that secondary schools worked very closely with their feeder primary schools. The Special School representative added that a number of teachers within Catcote Academy had begun their career as Teaching Assistants and had progressed through a degree and teacher training qualification

with the support of the Academy to become teachers.

A Member emphasised the importance of all schools working together no matter what status they were as the current drive to create academies and grammar schools had the potential to be very divisive. The Chair commented on what he perceived as a national disconnect between primary, secondary, Further and Higher Education in outcomes and funding regimes.

The Chair requested a verbal update be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on the numbers of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) who have left the profession, for both the primary and secondary schools, within Hartlepool across the previous 4-5 years. The Secondary School representative indicated that this should be fairly straightforward to obtain for primary NQTs from Hartlepool's Teaching School, but obtaining the information for secondary NQTs would be much more difficult because of the plethora of providers and the Chair accepted this. The Secondary School representative agreed to obtain the primary figures from the local Teaching School.

The young persons' representative commented that there were a number of changes implemented throughout the course of his GCSE's studies and he felt that he was fully supported by all staff during this time. The Chair added that it was good for the Committee to know that pupils were supported in such a way.

### **Decision**

- (1) The report was noted.
- (2) That a verbal update be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on the numbers of Newly Qualified Teachers for both the primary and secondary schools within Hartlepool across the previous 4-5 years.

## **92. Strategic Financial Management Report – as at 31 December 2017** *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

### **Type of decision**

For information.

### **Purpose of report**

To inform the Committee of the 2017/18 forecast General Fund Outturn, 2017/18 Capital Programme Monitoring and provide details for the specific budget areas that this Committee was responsible for.



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

The Head of Finance, Child and Adult Services reported that an updated assessment of the forecast 2017/18 outturn had been completed and a net over spend of £0.124m was now anticipated, which was lower than the previous forecast of £0.250m. Details of the specific budget areas this Committee was responsible for were provided in Appendix A and it was noted that the forecast overspend related to continuing costs in relation to Looked After Children (LAC). The outturn forecast reflected the planned use of £1.4m of the LAC Reserve in 2017/18 with £1.6m remaining in the LAC reserve to be used in 2018/19 to contribute towards these pressures.

The Chair reiterated his frustration at the lack of action from Central Government on the funding for children's services which had left the Local Authority with no other choice than to increase council tax. However, he was hopeful that Central Government's funding of children's services would be re-examined in the near future to ensure the provision of these services was sustainable.

### **Decision**

That the report was noted.

## **93. Children Missing Education** (*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*)

### **Type of decision**

For information.

### **Purpose of report**

To update the Committee in respect of local authority statutory responsibilities in relation to Children Missing Education (CME) and to provide a summary of relevant CME data.

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

The report noted that a regular CME report was considered and scrutinised by Hartlepool Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) and the latest such report was attached at Appendix A for consideration. The Assistant Director, Education highlighted the recent changes in The Education (pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which had resulted in all schools and academies being required to notify the local authority when they remove a child from roll or take a child into their roll. A table at paragraph 3.14 noted the CME referrals which showed a rapidly increasing trend and it was suggested that this was due to tighter referral regulations. However, it was noted that the Attendance Team do an excellent job in tracking and monitoring any instances of CME with

robust process in place.

The Chair referred to the figures outlined in paragraph 3.17 and the Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services commented that there was a high number of CME identified in 2013/14 and a strengthened focus on these vulnerable children in the single inspection framework may have improved efforts to track down any CME. The Assistant Director, Education provided clarification on a number of points in relation to the process involved in tracking and monitoring CME.

### **Decision**

- (1) The report was noted.
- (2) It was noted that the Hartlepool Safeguarding Children's Board had regular oversight of CME.

## **94. Hartlepool Education Commission – Update Report** (*Director of Children and Joint Commissioning Services*)

### **Type of decision**

For information.

### **Purpose of report**

To provide the Committee with an update on the progress of the implementation of the Education Commission's recommendations and impact achieved since the previous report to Committee in July 2017.

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

It was noted that the Education Commission Leadership Group met on a termly basis to oversee the workplan and finances and receive updates from workstream leads at these meetings. Attached at Appendix A was a collation of the latest workstream update reports for Members' consideration. An overview of the budget expenditure and income as at 31 December 2017 was included in the report.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Assistant Director, Education confirmed that an updated catalogue of the approved providers list had been provided and work was ongoing with additional providers with a view to accepting them onto the list. A discussion ensued around safeguarding within schools and it was noted that all schools were acutely aware of safeguarding within schools and the requirement for all contractors entering the site to have DBS clearance, or for Headteachers to make a risk assessment where this was not required. The representative from the Special Schools commented that there were around 40 businesses dealing directly with Catcote Academy and a member of staff visits these businesses to ensure the necessary safeguarding measures were in place including DBS checks. In addition

to this, the Academy had the facility to undertake DBS checks and these were done for any volunteers who were visiting the school.

Reference was made to the new Catcote Skills Centre at the Warren Road site and the Special Schools' representative indicated that all Members of the Committee were welcome to visit by prior appointment where a tour of the facility could be arranged. It was noted that this Centre was an incredible asset for the town which would provide a future proof provision for future generations. A Member added that the education provision at Catcote Academy epitomises everything Hartlepool desires for its young people with the added benefit of the provision of vocational aspects available to students. The Special School representative added that a lot of resources were utilised for training and developing staff but this was proven worthwhile through the Academy's results and outcomes for the young people attending the Academy.

### **Decision**

The report was noted.

## **95. OSTED Inspection Outcomes September 2017 – December 2017** *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

### **Type of decision**

For information.

### **Purpose of report**

To provide a summary of the outcomes of Ofsted inspections of Hartlepool schools in the autumn term 2017.

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

It was noted that Ofsted inspections had been undertaken of four primary schools in the town and the outcome was as follows:

- West View Primary School, September 2017 – judged to remain GOOD.
- Greatham CE Primary School, October 2017 – judged to be GOOD.
- St Teresa's RC Primary School, November 2017 – judged to remain GOOD.
- St Joseph's RC Primary School, November 2017 – judged to remain GOOD.

Further details on the comments received were included in the report.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair sent good wishes to the Headteachers, Governing Bodies and staff on the recent Ofsted

outcomes.

### **Decision**

The report was noted.

## **96. 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.

Minute 97 – Disapplication Request

Minute 98 – Council Motion Update

## **97. Any Other Business – Disapplication Request**

The Assistant Director, Education referred to two disapplication request submitted to the Secretary of State around two elements of school funding. The first element was to request that the Schools Forum transfer funds back into the High Needs Block to support the ongoing demands for children with high needs, this had now been built into the Schools' budget packs. The second element related to the Education Services Grant. This was partly to enable the Local Authority to discharge its statutory responsibility by retaining that element of the funding. The Committee were requested to note the two successful disapplication requests.

### **Decision**

The successful disapplication requests were noted.

## **98. Any Other Business – Council Motion Update**

The Chair referred to the motion which would be submitted to Council on 22 February 2018 in relation to the introduction of the National Funding Formula to Schools which did not provide sufficient funding for Hartlepool schools over the next two years. The Chair indicated that a response had been received and would be shared with the Committee once it had been considered by Council.

The Chair referred to the motion submitted to Council on 14 December 2017 requesting Council to write to the Secretary of State in relation to the introduction of the National Funding Formula to Schools which did not provide sufficient funding for Hartlepool schools over the next two years. A response to this motion had been received and the Chair indicated that

the response would be shared with the Committee once it had been considered by Council on 22 February 2018.

### **Decision**

The update was noted.

The meeting concluded at 6.30pm.

**P J DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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