

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

19 February 2019

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

Present:

Councillor: Brenda Harrison (In the Chair)

Councillors: Marjorie James, Ann Marshall, John Lauderdale, Sue Little and Shane Moore

Also in attendance:

Dave Wise, West View Advice and Resource Centre

Sasha Bedding, Wharton Trust

Alex Sedgewick, Belle Vue Community and Sports Centre

Nic Marko, Hartlepool Mail

Officers: Sally Robinson, Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services

Jane Young, Assistant Director, Children's and Families

Julie Reed, School Place Planning, Admissions and Capital Manager

Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

72. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received by Councillor Katie Trueman, Jo Heaton, David Turner, Mark Tilling, Joanne Wilson, Zoe Westley and Ruby Marshall.

73. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Sue Little declared a prejudicial interest in item 5.3 and indicated she would leave the meeting during the consideration of that item.

74. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2019

Received.

75. School Admission Arrangements for 2010-21

(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (ii) applies - Forward Plan Ref CJCS077/18.

Purpose of report

To consider and agree the proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in Hartlepool for 2020-21.

Issue(s) for consideration

It was reported that all admission authorities were required to set admission arrangements annually. Where changes were proposed to admission arrangements, the admission authority had to first consult on those arrangements. If there were no changes proposed they only needed to be consulted on at least every 7 years.

The published admission number for each Community and Voluntary Controlled School was detailed in appendix 1 to the report which Committee was requested to approve. The admission numbers for Voluntary Aided, Foundation Schools and Academies were included for information.

The admission arrangements including the over-subscription criteria in respect of Community and Voluntary Controlled schools were set out in appendix 2 to the report.

The coordinated Admission Schemes for primary schools and secondary schools for 2020/21 be formulated and published on the Authority's website in January 2020 in accordance with the 2014 Schools Admissions Code.

In response to a question from a Member, the School Place Planning, Admissions and Capital Manager provided clarification on the measurement criteria for both school admissions and home to school transport.

Decision

1. That in respect of Community and Voluntary Controlled schools admission arrangements for 2020/21, the admission numbers as set out in Appendix 1 to the report were approved.
2. That in respect of Community and Voluntary Controlled schools admission arrangements for 2020/21, the current admission arrangements as set out in Appendix 2 to the report were approved.

76. Commissioning of Short Break and Support Services for Children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

Type of decision

Key Decision – Test (i) and (ii) apply – Forward Plan Reference CJCS 083/19.

Purpose of report

To ask members to approve a procurement process through tender submissions for short break and toy library services for children with SEND (Special Education Needs and/ or Disabilities) and their families.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services highlighted that the short break and toy library services for children with SEND were currently operating as two individual contracts. However it was proposed to join these services together to tender for a joint Short Breaks Extended Activities and Toy Library Service to allow providers to be innovative in their approach to how they provide both of these services. This tender will be advertised as a three year contract with the option of one year plus one year extension.

A discussion ensued on the benefits of joining these services and it was noted that both services were valued and well used by the local communities.

Decision

That the procurement of a joint Short Breaks Extended Activities and Toy Library Service for children and young people with SEND be approved.

Due to her earlier declaration of a prejudicial interest, Councillor Sue Little left the meeting during the consideration of the following item.

77. Extension of the Children's 5-19 Activities Grant for 12 Months *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

Type of decision

Key Decision – General Exception provisions apply

Purpose of report

To seek Members' views on the proposal to extend the Children's 5-19 Activities Grant for a further period of 12 months and to refer this matter to Finance and Policy Committee for a funding decision.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services presented the report which outlined the background to the provision of the Children's 5-19 Activities Grant. Members were requested to consider a proposal that a grant of £100,000 be provided to support the continuance of the 5-19 activities programme in Hartlepool which was delivered by the VCS Consortium for the financial year 2019/20. It was highlighted that the consortium had been successful in attracting a number of small grants to contribute to the running of the services, however due to a turnover of staff within Hartlepool Youth Foundation, the Consortium has not yet been able to secure sustainability funding to support the whole activities programme. The Consortium remained committed to the Foundation and to date had raised £120,000 ringfenced funding to support the further development of the Foundation. The Board of Trustees had also recently engaged Youth Focus North East to review the process so far and advise on the sustainability.

It was proposed that should Members support this proposal, a condition of the grant being provided would be that the Consortium provide the local authority with an action plan outlining their transition for sustainability when the funding ceased at the end of March 2020.

A lengthy discussion took place during which Members expressed concern that funding had been provided on three separate occasions by the Council to support the Consortium and there appeared to have been limited progress with the securing of external funding into Hartlepool to create sustainability to the programme delivered by the Voluntary and Community Sector. There were representatives from the Consortium in attendance and they informed Members of the work that was ongoing along with some of the difficulties that they had faced. It was highlighted that the previous financial assistance provided to the Consortium had been funded from the Child and Poverty Fund and this fund was to be utilised to provide support to children and families across the whole town.

It was proposed by a Member that the Council could look to support the Consortium up to a maximum of £50k to match fund any resources secured from elsewhere. It was also suggested that the feasibility of providing support through the secondment of a Council officer to assist the Consortium with submitting bids for funding be explored. Representatives from the Consortium were not confident that this funding would be sufficient to support the delivery of the support provided and would need to re-examine the figures and may result in the reduction of the provision of some services and potential redundancies.

It was suggested that Members and officers meet informally to discuss the issues further and explore potential options for the provision of this funding.

Decision

That Members of the Committee and Officers meet informally to discuss the issues further and explore potential options for the provision of this funding. See further information below.

Councillor Sue Little rejoined the meeting.

78. 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 Members 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

The nomination for a local authority governor position as set out in confidential Appendix B of the report was approved.

79. Adoption Tees Valley – Half Year Report – May – December 2018 (*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To note the contents for the half year report of Adoption Tees Valley for the period May to December 2018 as attached as Appendix A.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Children's and Families presented the report which provided background information to creation of Adoption Tees Valley who had delegated responsibility to carry out a number of statutory adoption functions on behalf of the Council.

The report provided details of the work of Adoption Tees Valley since its creation which included the half year position of the Adoption Tees Valley against key performance and Adoption Leadership Board scorecard indicators, staffing arrangements, recruitment and matching activity, the work of the Adoption Panel, training adoption support, quality assurance and governance. The report also detailed the plans for the development of the service over the next 12 months.

The Chair indicated that she had observed an Adoption Panel and was impressed with the very robust way the discussions were undertaken adding it was wonderful to see something working so well with adoptive parents being successful.

Decision

That the half year report of Adoption Tees Valley for the period May to December 2018 be noted.

77. Extension of the Children's 5-19 Activities Grant for 12 Months (continued) (*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*)

A brief discussion took place on the arrangements to enable Members to explore the options available in relation to the request received for additional funding for the extension of the children's 5-19 activities grant for 12 months. It was suggested that an informal Working Group be arranged for all Members of the Committee to meet on Monday 25 February 2019 at 1.00pm with the recommendations of this Working Group to be reported to the Finance and Policy Committee for decision

on 11 March 2019.

Decision

That an informal Working Group be held on Monday 25 February 2019 at 1.00pm to consider the request for additional funding for the children's 5-19 activities grant for 12 months and that the recommendations of this Working Group be reported to Finance and Policy Committee on 11 March 2019 for decision.

80. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent – Future meetings of the Children's Services Committee

In view of the difficulties encountered by Headteachers in attending meetings of the Committees during school holidays, it was requested that future meetings of the Children's Services Committee are not scheduled during half term holidays.

The meeting concluded at 5.15pm

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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