

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

19 March 2019

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm at High Tunstall College of Science,
Elwick Road, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Brenda Harrison (In the Chair)

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

Co-opted members:

Jo Heaton, C of E Diocesan Representative
Joanne Wilson, RC Diocesan Representative
Mark Tilling, Secondary Schools Head Representative
David Turner, Primary Schools Head Representative
Zoe Westley, Special Schools Head Representative

Healthwatch representatives: Ruby Marshall

Young people's representatives:

Jasmine Khan and Umar Khan

Pupils from High Tunstall College of Science:

Josh Bedding, Theo Corbett, Abbie Dixon, Shakayla Harland, James
Ridgway, Sarah Shears and Callum Smith

Also: Nik Marco, Hartlepool Mail

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

Jane Young, Assistant Director, Children's and Families

Danielle Swainston, Assistant Director, Joint Commissioning

Mark Patton, Assistant Director, Education

Rebecca Hunter, Participation Team

Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

81. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor John Lauderdale and Evelyn Leck.

82. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations at this point in the meeting, see minute 86.

83. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

The Chair 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 84 – Any Other Business – Children's Services Award

84. Any Other Business – Children's Services Awards

The Chair highlighted that at a recent awards event held in London by the Local Government Chronicle, Children's Services won an award for the Best Children's Services in the country. This highlighted nationally the good things and hard work and commitment that were ongoing in Hartlepool. On behalf of the Committee, the Chair congratulated the Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services on her leadership of such an excellent team and presented the Director with a bouquet of flowers.

85. Minutes

- (i) Minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2019 – Received.
- (ii) Notes of the Children's Services Committee Working Group held on 25 February 2019 – Confirmed.

86. Matters arising

A discussion ensued on the item to extend the Children's 5-19 Activities Grant for a further 12 months which was considered at the Children's Services Committee Working Group on 25 February 2019. Members reiterated their earlier decision not to support the extension of this grant in view of the previous funding allocated to the Consortium for the provision of these activities along with their desire to maximise the impact of the Child and Family Poverty Reserve across the whole town, to a larger and more diverse group of children and young people.

It was noted that an additional meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee had been called on 21 March to consider this request. The recommendations to the Finance and Policy Committee included reference to the Children's Services Committee to agree the specification for a service, should the extension to this grant be approved. However, concern was expressed by Members that there were no further meetings

of the Children's Services Committee scheduled until the new municipal year and were unsure when the Committee would be able to consider a specification.

Councillor Sue Little declared a registerable personal interest and left the meeting during the consideration of the remainder of this item.

It was noted that for several years, the Council has been faced with significant budgetary reductions, including across the provision of a range of services for children in early help and the Youth Service. Concern was expressed that the Finance and Policy Committee were revisiting a decision taken by the Children's Services Committee and requested that decision of Children's Services Committee be respected. It was further noted that the decision to cease the provision of funding to the 5 – 19 activities contract had been ratified by Children's Services Committee, Finance and Policy Committee and full Council in 2016/17.

A Member highlighted that there were a high number of children in all areas of the town who could benefit from the funding of town-wide provision from within the Child and Family Poverty Reserve. The Headteachers present endorsed this view and suggested that it would be beneficial to speak to the young people in this age range about what type of activities they would want in order to maximise the funding across a wider range of children and young people. An example was given of the Free Swims Initiative and the Holiday Hunger Scheme that were available to children across the whole town.

Concern was expressed at the recommendations being reported to the Finance and Policy Committee on 21 March 2019 and the timescales involved in agreeing a specification and developing an exit strategy, should it be decided to extend the Consortium's grant for another year.

Decision

The Committee reiterated its earlier decision not to support the extension of the Children's 5-19 Activities Grant for a further 12 months. This view would be reported to the Finance and Policy Committee on 21 March 2019 by Members of this Committee.

Councillor Sue Little rejoined the meeting.

87. 2019/20 Schools' Capital Works Programme (*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*)

Type of decision

Key decision – Test (i) and (ii) apply – Forward Plan Reference Number CJCS081/18.

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to the 2019/20 Schools' Capital Works Programme, as detailed in confidential APPENDIX A 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.

This item (APPENDIX A) contains 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 report advised the Committee that each year, during January or February, the Department for Education announced capital funding allocations, these being School Condition Allocations (SCA), for the school estate in Hartlepool both for the Local Authority (LA) and the Voluntary Aided (VA) sector. At the time of writing the report, capital funding allocations had not been communicated to the Local Authority. However, the DfE had previously stated that SCA allocations for the current year would be indicative of the funding that responsible bodies will receive in future years. The DfE had further stated that the SCA would be revised annually to reflect any schools moving to a different responsible body e.g. converting to academy status, opening or closing. During 2018/19 (financial year), one small community school converted to academy status, therefore it was expected that the 2019/20 SCA allocation would be reduced slightly when compared with 2018/19 and this had been taken into consideration when formulating the programme. Approval was sought for the schemes proposed in confidential Appendix A. **This item (Appendix A) 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).**

In addition to the SCA schemes, approval was sought for works and contingency totalling £815,250 which slightly exceeded the available funding. However, all schemes had a contingency figure built into the costs, therefore officers were confident that the programme was affordable. The programme will be carefully managed to ensure there was no risk of overspending.

In March 2017, the DfE announced special provision to fund allocations to all Local Authorities. This new funding was to create new school places and improve existing facilities for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) with an education, health and care (EHC) plan. In March 2018, the Committee approved a project to increase capacity for autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). This

project also improved provision for social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) at Springwell Special School.

It was noted that as in previous years, the overall programme recommended to Committee for approval included a separate contingency fund which had been allocated from the SCA. Within the 2018/19 programme, there was a contingency allocation of £80,000 from which one emergency scheme was funded, further details were included within confidential Appendix A. This scheme was initially approved by the Director of Child and Adult Services and the Chair of Children's Services Committee and therefore retrospective Committee approval was sought.

In May 2018, the DfE announced top-up of the Special Provision Capital Fund; a further £116,000 was allocated to the LA. Although this was a relative small amount, a scheme had been identified to increase capacity at Catcote Academy to create an additional five places for young people with ASD at the Academy. Committee approval was sought on the use of the Special Provision Capital Fund (SPCF) as noted above.

An update on the special and alternative provision (AP) free school applications was included in the report. The Assistant Director, Education highlighted that the bid for funding for a SEND Free School had been successful and would be progressing to competition stage. It was anticipated that expressions of interest in the specification would be received during the autumn term and certainly by 30 September 2019. Further information on the Priority School Build Programme (PSBP) Phase 2 was outlined in the report and it was noted that the new builds at English Martyrs School and Sixth Form College and High Tunstall College of Science were on track for the respective estimated completion dates.

The report referred to a previous approval of the Committee to rebuild the western boundary (stone wall) and to also provide railings offset from western, northern and eastern boundaries. Discussions were ongoing with Historic England in relation to the requirement for a Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) application. As a result of this, Committee approval was sought to allow the Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services dispensation and discretion to authorise additional funding from within existing resources to address the investigative works in respect of the SMC application.

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director, Education confirmed that the new SEND School would operate as an academy and work closely with the local authority community schools within the town on the management of places and would have 25 places available.

Decision

The decision is detailed below.

88. Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation Order) 2006

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public were excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs referred to below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

Minute 87 – 2019/20 Schools' Capital Works Programme (*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*) – This item contains 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).

87. 2019/20 Schools' Capital Works Programme (*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*) This item contains 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 Headteacher of High Tunstall College of Science confirmed that 26% of the current school building would be retained after the new build is complete, including D Block.

Decision

The decision is contained below.

The meeting returned to open session and everyone rejoined the meeting.

87. 2019/20 Schools' Capital Works Programme (*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*)

The Assistant Director, Education provided all attendees with an explanation of the process for the Committee moving into closed session.

Decision

- a) The schedule of 2019/20 capital works programme as summarised in **APPENDIX A**, subject to the LA agreeing contributions from schools towards individual schemes in line with the shared funding principles established by the Schools Forum was approved.

This item (Appendix A) contains 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).

- b) Retrospective approval was given to the scheme that has been funded from 2018/19 contingency which is also detailed in confidential **APPENDIX A**.

This item (Appendix A) contains 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).

- c) The Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services, in consultation with the Chair of this Committee, was given dispensation and discretion to authorise works where an emergency (eg risk of school closure) or a significant health and safety risk is exposed.
- d) The use of the Special Provision Capital Fund to provide additional capacity at Catcote Academy, as detailed in confidential **APPENDIX A** was approved.

This item (Appendix A) contains 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).

- e) The update in respect of the successful application made to the DfE in respect of a new SEND Free School in Hartlepool was noted.
- f) The update in respect of Priority Schools Build Programme – Phase 2 was noted.
- g) The Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services, in

consultation with the Chair of this Committee, was given dispensation and discretion to authorise additional funding from within existing resources to address the investigative works in respect of the Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) application to effect repairs to the boundary wall and to erect fencing at Hart Primary School.

88. Outcomes of School Funding Disapplication Requests for FY 2019/20 *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To inform the Committee of the outcomes of the Local Authority's recent applications to the Secretary of State for Education in respect of elements of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the financial year (FY) 2019/20.

Issue(s) for consideration

It was noted that on 18 February 2019, the ESFA contacted the Council to confirm that the Secretary of State had approved the requested transfer of £0.621m from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for the financial year 2019/20.

On 20 February 2019, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) contacted the Council to confirm that the Secretary of State had approved the disapplication request to set the Education Services General Duties rate at £60 per pupil/place for 2019/20 financial year. This was the third successive year that this particular request had been approved.

Both of these outcomes had been shared formally with schools to enable school budgets to be set for 2019/20. This information was shared at the Schools' Forum meeting on 15 March 2019.

Decision

The update was noted.

89. Any Other Business – Assistant Director, Education

The Chair noted that this was the last meeting that the Assistant Director,

Education would be attending as he had secured employment with Newcastle City Council. During his employment at Hartlepool he had made a significant and positive impact on the provision of education within the town with nothing but praise given from the schools. On behalf of the Committee, the Chair wished him well for the future and presented him with a bottle of wine as a token of appreciation from the Committee.

90. Commissioning of Mentoring Services (*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To ask Members to approve a procurement process through tender submissions for mentoring services for children and young people to support our Signs of Safety approach.

Issue(s) for consideration

It was noted that the Children's Strategic Partnership had recently agreed to focus on improving the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people as a priority for the forthcoming years. A mentoring service would support this priority.

It was proposed to commission a mentoring service for children, young people and families that supported the Signs of Safety approach. This would be a new approach to the current mentoring service and there would need to be a regular review of this approach to understand if it is supporting the principles of Signs of Safety. It was proposed to commission the service for one year from June 2019 to June 2020. A review will be held at the end of 2019 to evaluate the impact and future service decisions.

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director, Joint Commissioning confirmed that Headland Futures became Changing Futures North East adding that the organisation had a very positive reputation both across the Tees Valley and regionally.

Decision

The procurement of mentoring services to support our Signs of Safety approach was approved.

91. Presentation – Making a Difference in Hartlepool (*Pupils of High Tunstall College of Science*)

Several pupils from High Tunstall College of Science had prepared a

presentation for the Committee which explored ways that young people can make a difference in society. It was noted that the pupils had visited Hartlepool's MP, Mike Hill, at the Houses of Parliament and he had been very interested in hearing their views and ideas.

The key aim of the presentation was to highlight how young people should be positive and proud of their town which at a population of just over 93k was somewhat of a tight knit community. Three key areas the young people commented on were:

- The need to be united, to communicate, reflect and be creative;
- The need to connect with people who you do not know, discuss and reflect on issues, promote morale values and be innovative within the community; and
- To create communities of young people to develop initiatives and provide a greater voice with a growing momentum to influence policy makers.

The time young people and adults spend on their mobile phones accessing social media was highlighted as an issue and it was suggested that a 'switch off and connect' day be promoted across the town, including businesses.

The presentation concluded by highlighting that 'pride' was the final domino in the process of reiterating that Hartlepool was a town that everyone should be proud of.

All Members thanked the pupils for their very informative and though provoking presentation. A discussion ensued on the valued input young people can have on influencing the behaviour of others and on the decision making and policy development in the town. It was suggested by a Member that the re-introduction of Community Awards be explored to recognise the achievements of young people in the town.

The Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services highlighted that Children and Young People's week was held in July each year and this could be timely to incorporate the 'switch off and connect' day and be utilised to invigorate the passion and energy around young people. The Director also highlighted the 'Future's Bright' Awards take place during the same week, celebrating the success and achievements of young people. A Member suggested that the 'switch off and connect' day could be sponsored with a view to raising money for the young people to utilise for projects and initiatives that would benefit young people across the town.

The Assistant Director, Joint Commissioning indicated that work was ongoing in relation to Children and Young People's week. The pupils in attendance were invited to form a reference group to inform the further development of the week and they accepted the offer.

Members were encouraged to hear such positive views on the town from

young people and hoped to build on that further in the future, including the retention of their skills and into employment, for example into the successful and expanding creative and digital sector in the town.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked the pupils for the very informative presentation and wished them luck in the forthcoming examinations.

Decision

- (1) The presentation was noted.
- (2) That ways of involving children and young people in the development of Children and Young People's week be explore further including the creation of a reference group.
- (3) That the inclusion of the 'switch off and connect' initiative be incorporated into Children and Young People's week and that the suggestion of sponsorship for this initiative be explored.

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.

Minute 93 – Any Other Business – High Tunstall College of Science New Build – Children's Services Committee Site Visit

Minute 94 – Any Other Business – Last meeting of the Children's Services Committee in the current municipal year

93. Any Other Business – High Tunstall College of Science New Build – Children's Services Committee Site Visit

The Chair highlighted that the Headteacher had invited the Children's Services Committee to visit the new build at High Tunstall College of Science for a guided tour. Arrangements to facilitate this would be put in place and Members would be informed in due course.

Decision

That arrangements be made in conjunction with the Headteacher of High Tunstall College of Science and the Chair to facilitate a visit and guided tour of the new School for the Children's Services Committee.

94. Any Other Business – Last Meeting

The Chair noted that this was the last meeting of the Children's Services Committee in the current municipal year and passed on her thanks and gratitude for all the hard work and commitment of Elected Members, Co-opted Members, Young People and Officers in the work of the Children's Services Committee over the last municipal year.

The meeting concluded at 5.40pm

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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