

CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

27th October 2006

Present:

Councillor Pam Hargreaves (Children's Services Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Adrienne Simcock, Director of Children's Services
Sue Johnson, Assistant Director of Children's Services
Ian Merritt, Senior Education Officer
Pat Watson, Democratic Services Officer

20. Appointment of Local Authority Representatives to serve on School Governing Bodies – *Director of Children's Services*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To request the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services consideration and approval of the recommendations of the General Purposes Committee, in respect of the appointment of Local Authority representative Governors, to serve on school governing bodies where vacancies currently exist.

Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder

The report indicated that applications had been invited from members of the general public, elected members and those governors whose term of office was about to expire who were interested in serving or wish to continue serving as a Local Authority representative governor on school governing bodies.

The criteria for the recruitment of Local Education Authority representatives had been agreed by the Borough Council in 2000 and this was detailed in the report. Attached by way of appendix was a schedule setting out details of vacancies together with applications received in respect of the vacancies considered by members of the General Purposes Sub-Committee at their meeting held on 29th September 2006.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder approved the recommendations of the General Purposes Committee, in respect of the appointment of representative Governors to serve on school governing bodies where vacancies exist.

21. Children's Centre Capital Works 2006-08 – Director of Children's Services

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To seek approval for the planned programme of capital works for children's centres as part of the Children's Centres and Extended Schools Strategy.

Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder

The report indicated that Cabinet had approved a 'Strategic Proposal for Children's Centres and New Childcare Place Development' in September 2003, to be submitted to the Sure Start unit in the Department for Education and Skills. The Location of the first 5 children's centres in Hartlepool was identified along with the capital funding which would be allocated from the Sure Start unit to support their development.

The Portfolio Holder was advised that, in December 2004, the government had published its 10 Year Childcare Strategy, requiring the authority to develop children's centres across the borough, and ensure that an extended schools core offer is in place for pupils, by 2010. A 'Children's Centres and Extended Schools Strategy' document had been developed setting out the process of ensuring that the two requirements are met in Hartlepool and brought together in one coherent strategy. Following an extensive period of consultation it had been agreed that children's centres and extended schools activities would be focused around 5 localities across the town. Cabinet had approved the final strategy on 19th June 2006.

The proposed timetable for 2006-08 was appended to the report for the Portfolio Holder's attention. The development would be based on delivery across 5 localities with a range of differing services in each locality depending on local need. Details of specific sites and services were also appended to the report. The Director of Children's Services advised that capital works carried a risk that projects may go over budget if building work encountered unforeseen problems. The estimated cost for the current proposals was £600,955 from a total budget of £718,190 to mitigate the risk of overspends. Any under-spend would be used toward furniture and resources. Funding was provided entirely through the central government grant for children's centres capital.

The Portfolio Holder asked if each of the areas could be seen to have received their fair share of the available consideration and funding. The Assistant Director felt that this had been the case and indicated that there had been differing needs in each area; each locality would need to provide the full range of children's centre services but providers need to work together collaboratively to achieve this.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder approved the planned programme of Children's Centres Capital works.

22. Manor College: Consideration of Foundation Status – *Director of Children's Services*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To request agreement to a process and timescale for the submission of comments to Manor College governors should they determine that they wish to investigate the possibility of seeking Foundation Status.

Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder

The report detailed the history and background of the Governors of Manor College of Technology interest in the possibility of seeking Foundation Status for the College. The report also outlined information relating to the following:

- The nature of Foundation status;
- Land Buildings and Asset Management;
- Employment of Staff;
- Governing Body;
- Ability to Forge Partnerships with Outside Sponsors and Educational Foundations;
- Admissions;
- Ability to Publish Statutory Proposals for other changes;
- Financial implications;
- Other implications of Foundation status;

The report indicated that should Manor College governors agree to investigate the possibility of seeking Foundation Status at their meeting on 20th October, then the Portfolio holder may wish to consider the submission of a response to the governors as part of their consultation process. Depending on the information provided by the governors, the response might be in line with the Council's previously expressed views and may

include reference to the following issues:

- The Councils wish for strong collaboration between schools for Hartlepool, as expressed in its minute of 13th April 2006;
- The potential impact of the move to Foundation Status on outcomes for children, not just in Manor College, but in the Hartlepool community of schools;
- The potential risks for staff at the school in relation to Health and Safety, comparative salary levels and liabilities;
- The potential costs to Manor College in respect of undertaking its new responsibilities;
- The potential impact on the timescale for Building Schools for the Future and access to capital funding;
- The potential impact on relationships within the town;
- The need for the school to ensure that there has been a full and balanced consideration of the issues involved in moving to foundation status, a full and proper consultation process and engagement with an appropriate range of stakeholders.

Decision

The Portfolio agreed, subject to further notification from Manor College about whether or not they wish to consider the possibility of Foundation Status, that the Director of Children's Services be asked to provide a draft response to Manor College governors for consideration and approval by the Portfolio Holder. Depending on the governors' decision in relation to a consultation timetable, the draft response could either:

- be considered at the next appropriate Portfolio Holder meeting if the consultation timetable permits, or
- be approved by the Portfolio Holder and reported to the next meeting if the end date of any consultation period is prior to the next Portfolio Holder meeting.
- That consideration be given to all Members of the Council being invited to the next Portfolio Holder meeting.

Should Manor Governors decide not to pursue the option of Foundation Status, then no consultation would take place and no response would be required.

J A BROWN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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