

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

2 September 2019

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

Present:

Councillor: John Lauderdale (In the Chair)

Councillors: Lesley Hamilton, Brenda Harrison, Sue Little and Shane Moore

Also Present: Councillors Marjorie James and Ann Marshall
Edwin Jeffries, Chair of the Joint Trade Unions

Co-opted Members:

Joanne Wilson, RC Diocesan Representative
Zoe Westley, Special Schools Head Representative
Umer Khan, Young Persons Representative

Officers: Jane Young, Assistant Director, Children's and Families
Danielle Swainston, Assistant Director, Joint Commissioning
Amanda Whitehead, Assistant Director, Education
Craig Blundred, Public Health
Rebecca Hunter, Participation Worker
Karen Douglas-Weir, Head of Service for Children in Care and Care Leavers
Zoe McKenna, Youth, Education and Pathways Strategy Lead
Becky Stephenson, Head of Service
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

26. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Leisa Smith, Barbara Ward, Jo Heaton, Church of England Diocesan Representative, David Turner, Primary Schools Head Representative and Evelyn Leck, Healthwatch Representative.

27. Declarations of Interest

None

28. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2019

Received.

29. Unison's Residential Care Charter *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To ask Members to approve the Council's commitment to signing up to Unison's Residential Care Charter and also a separate pledge for the Council's commissioned services.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided background information to the approach by the Trade Union for the Council's commitment to their national Residential Care Charter and pledge for the Council's commissioned services, copies of which were appended to the report. Members were advised that this report had recently been agreed at a Single Table Meeting.

Decision

That the Council's commitment to the Residential Care Charter and the Pledge for Social Care Commissioned Services be approved including the signing arrangements as part of a formal ceremony.

30. Annual Participation Report 2018/19 *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

For Members to note the work undertaken to engage children and young people to promote their participation in shaping the design and development of Council services and the activities that took place to facilitate this during 2018/19.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director presented the report which provided details of the work and participation activities of the Youth Council, Children in Care

Council and Young Inspectors during the period April 2018 to March 2019. Children and Young People's week took place between 2nd and 6th July where all children and young people were encouraged to send postcards to the Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services and the Director also responded to questions that were submitted through Twitter. A total of 1474 post cards were returned or completed online, feedback of which would be reported to a future meeting of this Committee.

The Committee welcomed the report and the involvement of the young people in shaping Council services and were pleased to note the recruitment of 6 young people to the Youth Council. Officers responded to queries raised arising from the report. Clarification was provided in relation to the involvement of parents in the activities of the young people. In response to a query raised as to whether there was a joined up approach between the Youth Council and Children in Care Council and whether there was widespread representation across the town, the Assistant Director, Joint Commissioning advised that whilst the recent recruitment to the Youth Council was encouraging more work was needed around full representation. Further engagement activities would continue with secondary and primary schools with a view to expanding membership of the Children in Care Council and Young Inspectors.

Decision

That the contents of the report and comments of Members be noted.

31. Schools Health Related Behaviour Survey (*Director of Public Health*)

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

To share the results of the questionnaire and to identify any areas of interest with the intention of making recommendations on next steps.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided background information to the School's Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire. Schools participated across the county, which provided a useful information resource which enabled Hartlepool to benchmark against the national cohort of schools taking part. A total of 992 pupils took part in the questionnaire, the results of which were set out in a summary document attached at Appendix 1. A full analysis would be produced in due course.

Particular attention was drawn to emotional health and wellbeing, obesity/physical activity/healthy eating, drugs, alcohol and tobacco as well as relationships and sexual health.

In the discussion that followed Members considered the significant differences when comparing Hartlepool to the wider data sample from schools across the country. Some concerns were raised that 53% of Year 6 children in Hartlepool were more likely to worry about SAT's. A school representative in attendance, whilst welcoming the data, was disappointed to note that 76% were less likely to say they enjoyed physical activities given the hard work that had been undertaken to secure activity grants. A school representative also commented on the need for recommendations within the report to which the Public Health representative advised that more work would be done in terms of the key points which would feed into a future report.

Clarification was sought in terms of progress made in relation to roll out of the Baby Box Scheme. Members were advised that issues around funding were currently being explored given the limited resources available to fund schemes of this type. The need to seek funding or sponsorship opportunities via links with the Health and Wellbeing Board, key partners and other potential beneficiaries of the scheme was suggested. The potential long term wider benefits of such a scheme were outlined. The Leader advised he would consider this as part of discussions in relation to the Family Reserve Fund.

In response to concerns raised regarding the importance of education around the long term impact of drug and substance misuse, the Committee was advised that prevention would form part of future service provision which would be going out to tender shortly.

Decision

- (i) That the findings of the report and comments of Members be noted.
- (ii) That recommendations arising from the report be presented to a future meeting of this Committee.
- (iii) That funding/sponsorship opportunities be explored in relation to the Baby Box Scheme.

32. Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2018/19 (*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*)

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

To advise Members of the latest Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided the background to the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. A summary of early education and childcare offer was detailed in the report of which parents were supported to secure and pay for childcare themselves and use the national offer to supplement their needs. Detailed information in relation to provision was provided in the assessment, appended to the report. I

It was reported that early years and childcare team had identified a number of key actions to take forward in the next year, details of which were set out in the report. The Assistant Director, Joint Commissioning advised that in the vast majority of cases, Hartlepool's current childcare market was able to meet parental needs.

The Assistant Director responded to queries raised in relation to the challenges in terms of funding for early years and concerns raised regarding the lack of provision in schools for 2 year olds. The issues facing working parents in terms of having to utilise different provisions for siblings were highlighted as well as the impact of funding restrictions facing local education authority schools in relation to provision.

Decision

The Committee noted the report.

33. Annual Complaints, Compliments and Representations Report 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019 (*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*)

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

To present to Members of the Annual Complaints, Compliments and Representations report for 2018/19.

Issue(s) for consideration

Attached at Appendix 1 was an analysis of complaints and compliments and demonstrated learning that had occurred from complaints and actions implemented as a result. The Assistant Director, Joint Commissioning advised that although there had been an increase in the number of complaints received, 16 of the complaints received in 2018/19 were not considered, leaving 15 complaints for investigation.

Of the 15 complaints investigated, 12 had been concluded with the 3 remaining carried forward into 2019/20. The outcome of the investigated complaints were outlined in the report.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report and that the report will be published on line.

34. Fostering Service Interim Report 1st April 2019 – 30 June 2019 *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

To provide Children Service's Committee with information relating to the activity of the Fostering Service for the first quarter of 2019/20 financial year. The Fostering Service is a regulated service and as such there is a requirement to provide the executive side of the Council with performance information.

Issue(s) for consideration

Members were advised of the performance of the Fostering Service for the first quarter (1 April to 30 June 2019) which provided an update on Recruitment and Retention, the work of the Fostering Panel, staffing arrangements as well as service developments. It was noted there had been a net loss of foster carers, the reasons for which were included in the report. Hartlepool's recent annual foster care conference had been well attended, the subject areas of which were set out in the report.

Decision

That the contents of the report be noted.

35. Young People Not in Education Employment or Training *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

Type of decision

For information only

Purpose of report

To provide an update on the progress in relation to reducing the number of young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or are Not Known (these are young people that the team is not able to contact) and compare this to regional and national performance.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided background information to the tracking arrangements and the removal in September 2016 of the requirement to track all 18 year olds in relation to NEET and not known. However, as a local authority Hartlepool recognised the importance of support for young people aged 18/19 and continued to track and support these young people.

The Committee was provided with a detailed and comprehensive report which included a breakdown of the percentage of young people not in education, employment or training and whose activity was not known in Hartlepool compared to the sub regional, regional and national picture across Hartlepool, Tees Valley, the North East and England. A breakdown by school and academic age was also included in the report.

It was noted that Hartlepool had made progress in both the reduction of NEETS and Not Known's in 2018/19, the background to which was provided. Members were referred to the factors attributing to the results as detailed in the report.

In the lengthy discussion that followed, officers responded to issues raised arising from the report. Clarification was provided in relation to the statutory responsibilities around tracking arrangements. Concerns were raised regarding the number of young people being home educated and the reasons for such increases were debated as well as the implications as a result. The Assistant Director commented on the limited powers available to the local authority to address home schooling concerns. Members welcomed the opportunities for children and young people to undertake apprenticeships as opposed to an academic route.

Decision

The contents of the report were noted.

36. Ofsted Inspection Outcomes: November 2018- July 2019 *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

Type of decision

For information only

Purpose of report

To provide a summary of the outcomes of Ofsted inspections of Hartlepool schools in the late autumn term, spring and summer terms of the 2018-19 academic year.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Committee was referred to the outcomes and areas for improvements/next steps identified by the Ofsted inspections for the following schools as detailed in the report:

Rift House Primary School (November 2018) – judged to remain Good;
West Park Primary School (November 2018) – judged to remain Good;
Eskdale Academy (December 2018) – judged to remain Good;
Kingsley Primary School – (December 2019) – judged Good previously required improvement;
St Helen's Primary School (January 2019) – judged Good previously required improvement;
Sacred Heart RC Primary School (January 2019) – judged to require improvement previously Outstanding;
Eldon Grove Academy (January 2019) – judged Good previously Outstanding;
Dyke House Sports and Technology College (March 2019) – judged to remain Good;
Ward Jackson CE VA Primary School (April 2019) – moved to Good previously required improvement

A summary of the overall effectiveness for each of the 16 schools that were inspected was included in the report.

In line with national trends, the overall performance of Hartlepool schools is being 'bunched' around Grade 2 (Good). The overall proportion of Hartlepool schools judged to be good or better has increased since 2017-18 and is now 87%, compared to 82% in 2017/18. However, the proportion of outstanding school had decreased from 21% to 16%.

Comments were raised that some schools had been judged harshly and that the schools that had been identified as 'requires improvement' would continue to be supported by the local authority. The potential reasons for a decrease in ratings were debated. Positive views were expressed in relation to the continuing excellent standards of education provision within the town.

The Head Teachers in attendance commented that schools were constantly aiming to raise standards and considered that there may be some disparity in relation to the Ofsted data as well as potential inconsistencies in the inspection process. Schools who had not been inspected for long periods of time sometimes struggled with the changes to the inspection process which impacted on their overall rating.

Decision

That the contents of the report and comments of Members be noted.

37. Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was reported that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 1 October 2019 at 4.00 pm in the Civic Centre.

The meeting concluded at 5.30 pm.

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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