

# **CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

7 September 2021

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

**Present:**

Councillor: Jim Lindridge (In the Chair)

Councillors: Boddy, Fleming, Groves, Harrison and Moore

Co-opted members:

Mark Tilling, Secondary Schools Head Representative

Also in attendance – Councillor Little

Officers: Sally Robinson, Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services  
Amanda Whitehead, Assistant Director, Education  
Lisa Cushlow, Head of Service, Looked After Children and Care Leavers  
Roni Checksfield, Team Manager, Youth Offending Service  
Julian Heward, Senior Public Relations Officer  
Jane Wilson, Team Manager, Placement and Fostering.  
Amanda Whitaker, Democratic Services Team Manager

### **15. Apologies for Absence**

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

### **16. Declarations of Interest**

None

### **17. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2021 were received.

## **18. Youth Justice Strategic Plan** (*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*)

### **Type of decision**

Budget and Policy Framework

### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval from the Committee to begin a consultation process for the approval of the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2021/23

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

A copy of the draft Hartlepool Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2021/2023 was appended to the report. The report set out the process which would be followed with a further report being submitted to this Committee on the 12 October prior to submission to Full Council on the 4 November to seek adoption of the Plan. The final Plan would also be sent to the National Youth Justice Board.

The Committee was advised that the Youth Justice Plan provided an overview of how the Youth Justice Service, the Youth Justice Service Strategic Management Board and wider partnership would ensure that the service has sufficient resources and infrastructure to deliver youth justice services in its area in line with the requirements of the *National Standards for Youth Justice Services*. The Youth Justice Service had been inspected by HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) in October 2020. Overall, Hartlepool YJS had been rated as 'Good' which provided the Authority with a level of assurance. It was noted that the recommendations for improvement identified in the inspection report had been addressed in the Plan submitted to the Committee.

It was proposed that the Youth Offending Service and broader youth justice Partnership focus on key strategic objectives, during 2021/23, as set out in the report;

Following presentation of the report, an elected member suggested it would be appropriate for the Committee to be represented on the Youth Justice Service Strategic Management Board. The Committee Chair, Councillor Lindridge, advised that he would be content to represent the Committee on the Board.

### **Decision**

- (i) The Committee noted the progress made against the local Youth Justice Plan (2019/2021) and approved the required process of consultation.
- (ii) That Councillor Lindridge be appointed to the Youth Justice Service Strategic Management Board.

## **19. Overview of Education – Autumn 2021** *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

### **Type of decision**

For information

### **Purpose of report**

To provide a summary of the educational measures for Hartlepool up to summer 2021.

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

The report set out headline data and information from 2021 across all Key Stages in terms of attainment and achievement, attendance, exclusions, elective home education, OFSTED ratings and NEET rates.

It was highlighted that since the report had been drafted an OFSTED report had been published for High Tunstall secondary school. The Head teacher of the school advised the Committee of the positive outcome of the inspection and elected members joined the Chair in commending all those involved.

Elected members debated issues arising from the information set out in the report in relation to elective home education. It was highlighted that the issues raised were not unique to Hartlepool and were a national issue. Consideration was being given by Government to give powers to Local Authorities to intervene if appropriate for education and wellbeing reasons.

### **Decision**

The report was noted.

**20. Full Ofsted Inspection of Exmoor Grove** *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

**Type of decision**

For information.

**Purpose of report**

To present to Children's Services Committee the recent full inspection report of Exmoor Grove Children's Home by OFSTED which had taken place on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of June 2021.

**Issue(s) for consideration**

The Committee was advised that a full inspection of Exmoor Grove had taken place on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021 against the judgments and descriptors outlined in the report and the service was judged as outstanding overall. Therefore meeting the criteria that 'The children's home provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contributed to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care'. The inspection report had been circulated with agenda documentation. The headlines and reasons why the Children's Home provision was judged outstanding were set out in the report.

**Decision**

The positive inspection report of Exmoor Grove Children's Home was noted.

**21. Full Ofsted Inspection of St David's Walk Children's Home** *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

**Type of decision**

For information.

**Purpose of report**

To present to Committee the recent full inspection report of St David's Walk Children's Home by OFSTED which had taken place on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of May 2021.

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

A full inspection of St David's Walk had taken place on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021 against the judgments and descriptors outlined in the report. The service had been judged as Good overall. The report of the inspection was appended to the report. The headlines and reasons why the Children's Home provision was judged good were set out in the report.

### **Decision**

The positive inspection report of St David's Walk Children's Home was noted.

Following presentation of both inspection reports, the Chair acknowledged the care, commitment and skill of the staff teams which had contributed to the positive inspection reports.

## **22. Fostering Service Interim Report 1 April – 30 June 2021** *(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 activity of the Fostering Service for the first quarter of 2021. The Fostering Service is a regulated service and as such there is a requirement to provide performance information.

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

The report set out details of the staffing arrangements in the service, training received by both staff and Foster Carers, the constitution of the Fostering Panel, activity in relation to the recruitment, preparation and assessment of prospective Foster Carers and progress in relation to the priorities set out in the Fostering Annual Report.

### **Decision**

The report was noted.

## **23. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent**

The Chairman ruled that the following item 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.

## **24. Corporate Parent Training**

The Chair highlighted the responsibility of all elected members as corporate parents and reiterated that training should be undertaken by all members. It was highlighted that for membership on some Committees training was mandatory and the view was expressed that the Constitution should be updated to ensure corporate parent training was also mandatory.

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on 12 October 2021 at 4.00pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

The meeting concluded at 5.15 p.m.

**H MARTIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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