

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

19 October 2021

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

Present:

Councillor Lindridge (In the Chair)

Councillors Boddy, Fleming, Harrison and Moore.

Co-opted members:

Mark Tilling, Secondary Schools Head Representative

Also Present:

Councillor Little

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

Amanda Whitehead, Assistant Director, Education

Amanda Whitaker, Democratic Services Team

25. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Groves

Joanne Wilson, RC Diocesan Representative

David Turner, Primary Schools Head Representative

26. Declarations of Interest

None.

27. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2021 were received.

28. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25 – Issues Referred from Finance and Policy Committee *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework

Purpose of report

To enable the Committee to consider the savings proposals referred from the Finance and Policy Committee and to determine the feedback they wish to refer back to the Finance and Policy Committee.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services presented a detailed report to Members outlining the background to the current financial position the Council faced. At the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee on 13th September 2021 an updated MTFs report had detailed the forecast budget deficits for the next three years, including the impact of reducing the total deficit from £11.435m to £7.523m by increasing Council Tax up to the level of the forecast national Referendum Limit, including the 3% deferred Adult Social Care precept. Members had considered the issues detailed in the report and made detailed recommendation to Council, which were considered and approved on 30 September 2021. A savings plan now needed to be developed to deliver total savings of £7.523m. The majority of this deficit was front loaded in 2022/23. To support the plan it was recommended that reserves were used to phase the deficit over the next three years as set out in the report.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Finance and Policy Committee were seeking the views of individual Policy Committees on the savings proposals for their areas. Accordingly, details of proposed savings for 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 were summarised in exempt appendices which contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation Order 2006) namely: - Paragraph 1 - Information relating to any individual and Paragraph 2 - Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual) the Director stated that they only represented 65% of the total three year deficit of £7.523m. If some of these proposals were not supported by Members this percentage would reduce and alternative savings would have to be identified.

Prior to moving into closed session to consider the savings proposals set out in the exempt appendix to the report, an elected member advised that Officers were having to suggest savings which were 'unpalatable' as

referred to in the introduction to the report by the Chair. It was highlighted that if some of the proposals were agreed, there would be adverse effects on the most vulnerable young people in the town for years to come. Therefore, it was proposed that there needed to be careful consideration of the long term implications of the proposals.

29. 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 30 – Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25 – Issues Referred from Finance and Policy Committee – 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 paragraph 1, information relating to any individual, and paragraph 2, information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

30. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25 – Issues Referred from Finance and Policy Committee

Issue(s) for consideration

The Committee considered the detailed budget proposals set out in the exempt section of the report which contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation Order 2006) namely: - Paragraph 1 - Information relating to any individual and Paragraph 2 - Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual. An outline of the Committee's comments are set out in the Exempt section of the minutes.

Decision

Views expressed by the Committee, to forward to the Finance and Policy Committee, are set out in the Exempt section of the minutes.

Upon returning to the open session of the meeting, the Chair welcomed public back to the meeting and advised that views which had been expressed by the Committee during the closed session of the meeting would be forwarded to the Finance and Policy Committee.

31. 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 of the draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2021-2023 to present to Full Council on 4th November 2021, prior to submission to the Youth Justice Board.

Issue(s) for consideration

Further to minute 18 of the meeting held on 7 September 2021, the Committee was advised that consultation had been completed. The Plan had been presented and had been approved by the Youth Justice Management Board, Safer Hartlepool Partnership and the Audit and Governance Committee. It was noted that there had been no significant amendments to the draft document.

The Chair advised that he considered the Plan to be impressive and commended those involved in compiling the document.

Decision

The Committee noted the consultation process and ratified the Plan, prior to submission to Full Council.

32. Short Breaks Services Statement *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

Type of decision

Non-Key decision

Purpose of report

To approve the Short Break Service Statement and inform the Committee of the short break services that had been delivered over the previous year.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report set out the requirements of a Local Authority to provide a short break service designed to assist individuals who provide care for disabled children. Each Local Authority was required also to produce a short break statement to be reviewed on an annual basis, published and made

available to the general public. The revised Short Breaks Services Statement April 2021-March 2022 was appended to the report. It was noted that the review of the Statement had been undertaken by the Parent Led Forum and officers within the council. The draft Statement had been circulated to members of the Forum, specialist providers of services, officers within the local authority, health and voluntary and community sector organisations. All comments received had been incorporated into the final version of the Statement.

In terms of short break provision, the report advised the Committee that the Authority provided a number of opportunities for short breaks for children with disabilities and their families and the evaluation of the 2020/21 period was appended to the report. Also appended to the report was the evaluation of contract with Families First (North East) to provide Extended Activities, Short Breaks and Specialist Loan Equipment for those children and families with children with additional needs and the evaluation of the work with the Parent Led Forum to support the delivery of a series of activities and peer support to families of disabled children during COVID 19.

Decision

- (i) The Short Breaks Statement was approved.
- (ii) The short breaks services that had been delivered over the last year were noted.

33. 2020/21 Annual Report of Adoption Tees Valley (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 Adoption Service for the period April 2020-March 2021.

Issue(s) for consideration

A copy of the Adoption Tees Valley Annual Report 2020-21 was appended to the report.

The Committee report set out background information in relation to the adoption service being ran by Adoption Tees Valley Regional Agency. The aim of Adoption Tees Valley was to recruit, train and support adopters within the region to ensure children could live locally with families who understand the children's individual backgrounds and provide a good quality of life for children which was achieved through objectives set out in the Committee report.

The Chair welcomed the report and expressed his appreciation to those involved.

Decision

The Committee noted the annual report in relation to the work of Adoption Tees Valley and what it has achieved in 2020/21.

The meeting concluded at 5.45 p.m.

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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