

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

6 September 2022

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

Present:

Councillor: Jim Lindridge (In the Chair)

Councillors: Councillors Moss Boddy, Christopher Groves, Brenda Harrison and Sue Little

Also Present: Vicky Davidson-Boyd, Adoption Tees Valley

Co-opted Members:

Joanne Wilson, RC Diocesan Representative

Zoe Westley, Special School Head Representative

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2. Councillor Brian Cowie was in attendance as substitute for Councillor John Leedham

Officers: Sally Robinson, Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services
Danielle Swainston, Assistant Director, Joint Commissioning Services
Ann Turner, School Governor Support Manager
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

8. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors John Leedham and Shane Moore, Mark Tilling, Secondary Head Representative and David Turner, Primary Head Representative.

9. Declarations of Interest

None.

10. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2022

Received.

11. Approval of Term Time Holiday Dates 2023-24 *(Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To seek agreement of the Committee to the pattern of school term and holiday dates for the school year 2023-24 for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools.

To seek agreement of the Committee in recommending these dates to governing bodies of Aided and Foundation Schools and academies in Hartlepool.

Issue(s) for consideration

Members were advised that local authorities for a number of years had tried with some success to agree a unified calendar of term dates across the northern region from Yorkshire to Northumberland, based on guiding principles agreed by the regional group in 2012-13.

Representatives from the Tees Valley region and other north east representatives had been consulted on a pattern for 2023-24 based on the guiding principles, details of which were set out in Appendix 1. The proposed pattern enabled schools to begin the academic year on Monday 4 September 2023 and end the year on Tuesday 23 July 2024.

Following consultation, the general consensus from the local authorities within the Tees Valley and other regional authorities was to adopt the model attached as set out in Appendix 1.

Following presentation of the report discussion ensued in relation to access to care during school holidays and the benefits of all schools operating a unified calendar of term dates.

The following decision was agreed with no dissent.

Decision

- (i) That the scheduled term dates and holiday dates for 2023-24 for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, as shown in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.
- (ii) That the scheduled term and holiday dates for 2023-24, be recommended to governing bodies of all Voluntary Aided and Foundation schools, as well as academies in Hartlepool.

12. To Nominate A Local Authority Representative to Serve on the Governing Body of High Tunstall College of Science (*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*)

Type of decision

Non-key

Purpose of report

To consider a nomination for the role of Local Authority Governor position at High Tunstall College of Science.

Issue(s) for consideration

A schedule was submitted with the report setting out details of a vacancy that existed at High Tunstall College of Science together with details of the application received. One application had been received for the position, as set out in a confidential appendix to the report. **This item contained exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government), (Access to Information), (Variations Order 2006) namely, information relating to any individual (Para 1).** Discussions had taken place between the applicant, Chair of Governors and Head Teacher regarding the skills the applicant could contribute to the Governing Body. The application was in relation to a position that was currently vacant.

The following decision was agreed with no dissent.

Decision

The Committee approved the local authority nomination of the applicant as set out in confidential Appendix A in respect of High Tunstall College of Science.

13. 2021/22 Annual Report of Adoption Tees Valley (*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*)

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to provide Children Service's Committee with information relating to the activity of the Adoption Service for the April 2021-

March 2022 (**Appendix 1**). The Adoption Service is ran by Adoption Tees Valley Regional Agency (ATV) and this is for Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Stockton and Redcar and Cleveland Councils. Stockton Borough Council is the host local authority.

Issue(s) for consideration

The report provided 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. Members were referred to the annual report, attached as an appendix which provided a comprehensive overview of the work of ATV throughout 2021/22.

In support of the report, a representative from Adoption Tees Valley, who was in attendance at the meeting, provided a detailed and comprehensive presentation which included information on adoption activity across the Tees Valley as well as Hartlepool as a comparator with the previous year, adoption placements, the child's adoption journey, adoption timescales,, national and regional trends, benchmarking information including number of adopter approvals, key priorities and achievements.

In the discussion that followed the representative responded to issues raised arising from the presentation.

The Committee welcomed the report and commented on the positive outcomes of the regional adoption agency arrangements to date and expressed appreciation to those involved. Whilst the success of virtual adoption panel meetings were acknowledged, a Member commented on the benefits of a face to face / hybrid approach.

Clarification was provided in relation to the circumstances in which placement orders could be refused. A Member sought clarification in relation to the number of placement orders refused. In view of the need to protect the identity of the individual concerned and in order to answer the question, it was agreed that the meeting move into closed session.

14. 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 during part of the discussions on the previous item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, namely information relating to any individual.

Minute 13 – 2021/22 Annual Report of Adoption Tees Valley – This item contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely (para 1) information relating to any individual.

- 13. 2021/22 Annual Report of Adoption Tees Valley**
(*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*) This item contained exempt information under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely (para 1) information relating to any individual.

Further to discussions in the open session of the meeting, the Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services clarified the number of placement orders refused in the reporting period.

- 13. 2021/22 Annual Report of Adoption Tees Valley**
(*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*)

Issue(s) for consideration

Further to discussions in the closed section of the meeting, the meeting returned to open session whereupon the Chair sought any further views on the report.

Decision

The Committee noted the annual report in relation to the work of the Adoption Tees Valley Service and what it had achieved in 2021/22.

- 15. Annual Report of Children Social Care Complaints and Compliments 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022**
(*Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*)

Type of decision

For information

Purpose of report

To present to Members the Annual Report of Children Social Care Complaints and Compliments for 2021/22.

Issue(s) for consideration

Attached at Appendix 1 was an analysis of complaints and compliments during the reporting period 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, 25 of the complaints received in 2021/22 were not considered, leaving 36 complaints for investigation. Details of the different stages of investigation together with the outcome of the investigated complaints were included in the report.

The positive feedback and compliments of individuals as set out in the report was welcomed by Members. A Member took the opportunity to share positive feedback in relation to the success of the holiday schemes.

Decision

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

16. 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.

17. Corporate Parent Training

The Chair highlighted the responsibility of all Elected Members as Corporate Parents and reiterated views expressed at previous meetings that training should be undertaken by all Members of the Council. Concerns were raised that despite additional sessions being offered, take up of the training had been low. Given that corporate parent training was not enforceable views were expressed that young people representatives should be invited to a future meeting of Full Council to ensure Elected Members were provided with a better understanding of the safeguarding agenda and the role of Elected Members as Corporate Parents.

18. Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was reported that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 11 October 2022 at 4.00 pm in the Civic Centre.

The meeting concluded at 5.15 pm.

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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