

## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD**

27<sup>th</sup> April, 2007

The meeting commenced at 3.00 pm  
at the Municipal Buildings, Hartlepool

### **Present:**

Councillor Pam Hargreaves (Children's Services Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Adrienne Simcock, Director of Children's Services  
Phil Warriow, Interim Manager, Children and Families  
Sue Johnson, Assistant Director, Children's Services  
John Collings, Assistant Director, Performance and Achievement  
Danielle Swainston, Early Years Manager  
Pat Watson, Democratic Services Officer

### **40. Association of Director's of Children's Services – Financial Contribution** (*Director of Children's Services*)

#### **Type of decision**

Non-key

#### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval of the Portfolio Holder to the payment of a contribution to the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) and 2007 and thereafter annually

#### **Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder**

The report set out the purpose and role of ADCS including its benefits to local authorities generally and to the development of individual officers as members. It recommended that in line with the majority of local authorities, the requested financial contribution be made.

#### **Decision**

That the payment of the financial contribution of £1000 to ADCS in 2007 be approved and similar payments be made in future years unless a significant increase over and above inflation is proposed, in which case a further report would be presented.

## **41. Anti-Bullying Strategy** *(Director of Children's Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key

### **Purpose of report**

To inform the Children's Portfolio Holder of the development and launch of an anti-bullying Strategy and Pledge for Hartlepool

### **Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder**

The report outlined the current position in relation to the development of an anti-bullying strategy for Hartlepool.

The Portfolio Holder was advised that bullying sits within the Every Child Matters agenda under "Stay Safe" and "Make a Positive Contribution" outcomes. It is also a priority area for Hartlepool within the CYPP because it featured strongly during the consultation process in 2006.

The report indicated that the "Life in Hartlepool" anti-bullying survey in 2006 had been conducted in twenty centres across Hartlepool to gain local research on which to base the development of work programmes.

Based on the results of this survey an anti-bullying strategy and Pledge had been developed to raise the profile of anti-bullying issues and copies were attached as appendices to the report. The Portfolio Holder indicated that she would like to be a signatory to the Pledge and hoped that the press would assist with publicity in an effort to get as many organisations as possible involved and signed up.

### **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder approved the proposed strategy and Pledge for Hartlepool and requested that, in relation to review of the strategy, regular updates be reported to the Portfolio Holder.

## **42. 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's 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 summarised the process for inviting applications for representative governors and outlined the criteria for their selection.

The Portfolio Holder was advised that applications were 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 were 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 which were considered and recommended for approval by members of the General Purposes Sub-Committee at their meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2007.

### **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder approved the recommendations of the General Purposes Committee, as indicated in the report, in respect of the appointment of Local Authority representative governors to serve on School Governing Bodies.

## **43. Children's Services Department Plans – Departmental, Divisional and Operational Plans 2007/08** (*Director of Children's Services*)

### **Type of decision**

Non-key

### **Purpose of report**

To request approval of the Children's Services Departmental Plan 2007/08 to 2009/10 and to note the Children's Services Departmental Divisional Plans and Operational Plans 2007/08

### **Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder**

The Children's Services Departmental Plan 2007-08 – 2009-10 was attached to the report. The Portfolio Holder was advised that in line with Corporate policy there was a departmental plan and four separate service plans for the divisions within the department. In addition, the operational plans for the individual teams within the department were also attached. The report provided the Portfolio Holder with information about the work that would be undertaken in the Children's Services Department during 2007/08.

The Portfolio Holder asked if any issues raised from the JAR inspection had been picked up. The Assistant Director indicated that the JAR had confirmed that the self-assessment for inspection had been accurate. Consequently areas for development were already highlighted for inclusion in relevant plans. An issue raised by the JAR might be covered by work undertaken by more than one team and so covered by specific activities in more than one operational plan. The post JAR Action Plan would include cross-referencing.

The Assistant Director explained the reason why the Youth Programme was a bigger document. The inspection outcome had recommended development of strategic planning specifically for the Youth Service, additional to that already contained within the Children and Young People's Plan.

### **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder approved the Children's Services Departmental Plan 2007/08 and noted the Children's Services Divisional and Operational Plans 2007/08.

## **44. Nursery Education Capital Works 2006-2008** *(Director of Children's Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key

### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval for capital works for Nursery Education 2006-2008

### **Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder**

The report contained detailed background information and an attached spreadsheet outlined seven projects which had been identified in line with the selection criteria. Information was provided on two projects at Jesmond Road and Throston Primary Schools that had been approved as part of other strategies and had been completed.

The report also outlined information relation to risk implications, financial considerations, and equality and diversity considerations.

### **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder approved the programme of capital works for Nursery Education for 2006-2008.

## **45. Review of Placement Strategy for Looked After Children** *(Director of Children's Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non-key

### **Purpose of report**

To seek authorisation to consult with independent fostering service providers, other stakeholders and children and young people to explore ways in which the placement strategy for looked after children could be improved.

### **Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder**

The report informed the Portfolio Holder of the background relating to the current placement strategy for looked after children and outlined the reasons why the strategy should be reviewed, with a view to ensuring the future supply of care placements for some of the town's most vulnerable children and young people.

The report detailed information on the following:

- Current position;
- GAP Analysis;
  - (a) Placement Choice
  - (b) A Supported Lodgings Scheme
  - (c) Remand Fostering
- Foster Care Market Management;
- Proposed Action;
- Financial Implications;
- Legal Implications.

The Portfolio Holder stressed the necessity for all relevant parties to be involved.

### **Decision**

That Portfolio Holder:

- (a) authorised consultation with independent fostering service providers, stakeholders and children and young people to explore ways in which the Placement Strategy for looked after children could be developed, and

- (b) agreed to receive a further report detailing the outcome of the consultation and options for development of a new placement strategy.

**46. School Improvement Partners (Primary)** *(Assistant Director of Children's Services (Performance and Achievement))*

**Type of decision**

Non-key

**Purpose of report**

To seek approval for the use of external consultants to implement the School Improvement Partner element of DfES' New Relationship with Schools from May 2007.

**Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder**

The report explained the requirements now placed upon the Local Authority to employ School Improvement Partners (SIPs) as part of schools' annual 'Single Conversation' with DfES. It also explained what arrangements currently exist and how these would be adapted when the SIPs are introduced. The report identified a preferred option for roll out of the SIP function in Hartlepool using Link Advisers, a head-teacher and two external consultants. The financial implications were also included in the report.

The terms of the proposed contract were contained in an appendix which was exempt under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006) namely, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (para 3).

The Portfolio Holder asked if the cost to the Children's Services Department of this new development had been budgeted for. The Assistant Director (Performance & Achievement) indicated that a grant from DfES had been received to support the implementation of the Primary SIP function but that the expectation is that over time the department would have to look at how they structure and deliver the school improvement service to accommodate SIPs. This process of review had begun.

The Portfolio Holder asked if the Link Advisers would remain, apart from those retiring or leaving of their own accord. The Assistant Director indicated that they would in the first instance because they have other roles and a continued first point of contact with the schools was required. The current situation is not, however, sustainable in the long term so consequently the review is considering the type of work they are doing. It was noted that SIPs provide more time to the schools than in the past.

## **Decision**

The Portfolio Holder approved the use of external consultants working with LA link advisers to implement the School Improvement Partner element of the DfES' New Relationship with Schools.

### **47. Manor College of Technology – Foundation Status** *(Director of Children's Services)*

#### **Type of decision**

Non-key

#### **Purpose of report**

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the outcome of the Statutory Notice proposal in relation to Manor College of Technology's consideration of a change to Foundation Status.

#### **Issue(s) considered by the Portfolio Holder**

The report set out the background to Manor College of Technology's consideration of Foundation Status and provided, as an appendix, the letter from the Chair of Governors indicating that the governors had decided to change the status of the school to Foundation Status. The next stage of the process was also outlined in the report.

The Portfolio Holder commented that she respected it was the right of governors' to make this decision but it was important that the authority continue to be involved with the school and governors on some issues and in the Building Schools for the Future planning.

## **Decision**

That the decision of the governors of Manor College of Technology to change the status of the school to Foundation be noted and that the work which officers will be undertaking with the school to ensure the process for a change in status is appropriately undertaken.

The Portfolio Holder thanked The Director, Assistant Directors and all members of their teams for their hard work throughout the municipal year. She felt there had been good relationships and she had enjoyed working with the department.

**J A BROWN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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