

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting14th January 2010

1. Title of Item/Report

Children's Social Care Workload Pressures

2. Record of the Decision

Further to the last update received on 1st October 2009, Cabinet was advised of the latest position with regard to the recent growth in the number of social care referrals being received by the Council.

The number of referrals and assessments during September and October had continued to fall, and it was hoped that this could be the beginning of a levelling off of these pressures.

Although the number of child who were subject to a child protection plan had steadily increased over the last three months, the number of child protection conferences and children subject to a child protection plan, had remained relatively stable. In terms of the reasons for child protection conferences, neglect continued to be a significant and increasing issue.

The overall numbers of looked after children had peaked in August, but had since reduced slightly in October to 245.

Reference was also made to difficulties in being able to recruit to permanent positions within the section, the number of vacancies of social work posts being currently 5, as opposed to 2.8 reported previously.

The budgetary impact of these pressures was being considered as part the overall Medium Term Financial Plan and particular budget pressures regarding the independent fostering agency, social work staffing budget and child protection conferences and looked after children, was noted.

Following the introduction in June 2009 of unannounced inspections of contact, referral and assessment by Ofsted, three local authorities within the region had now had an unannounced inspection. This Council had taken part in a mock inspection carried out by external consultants as part of our preparations for an unannounced inspection.

RESOLVED that:-

1.Cabinet note the continued workload pressures within the social care system and the associated impact this is having on caseloads, performance and budget.

2.Cabinet receive further update reports on a quarterly basis in order to continue to monitor the impact of these workload pressures.

3. Reasons for the Decision

There is a significant and continuing rise in social care workload which could potentially impact on the Council's ability to effectively safeguard children, fulfil statutory duties and remain within allocated budget.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not Applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Not later than Midnight on Friday 22nd January 2010.

Proper Officer
18 January 2010