

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting16th June 2011

1. Title of Item/Report

Children's Social Care Workload Pressures

2. Record of the Decision

Cabinet considered a further report relating to workload pressures within Children's Social Care. Members were updated on those pressures and were provided with information to the end of March 2011.

It was explained that the number of referrals had increased to 277, which was the busiest month on record.

This had been reflected in the numbers of initial assessments undertaken, with February 2011 (247) and March 2011 (267).

The overall number of children who were subject to a child protection plan had continued to reduce from the peak of 282 in February 2010 to 200 in February 2011.

The number of section 47 investigations had fallen although this had not impacted significantly on the number of child protection conferences and children becoming subject to a child protection plan.

The Overall number of looked after children remained very high, although this had dropped slightly from the peak of 303 in September 2010 to 292 in March 2011.

Reference was made to staffing issues which remained very positive and it was noted that there were no social work vacancies overall. However, a large number of staff were relatively inexperienced so it would still take some time to reach full capacity.

Cabinet noted the budgetary pressures currently facing the service.

Members noted that the second annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment services in Stockton-on-Tees was conducted by Ofsted on 10 and 11 May 2011.

The previous inspection, on 5 and 6 January 2010, had identified a number of areas for further development and two areas for priority action.

The outcome of the second inspection confirmed that significant progress had been made in addressing these issues, with the inspectors being satisfied that both priority actions and all but two of the areas for development had been satisfactorily addressed. The inspectors believed that further work was required on the outstanding two areas to fully address these. The inspectors also identified a small number of additional areas for further development.

It was explained that an action plan would be drawn up in response to these identified areas for development.

Whilst there was no room for complacency, this inspection highlighted the progress that had been made over the last 12-18 months in this area of service.

The letter was published on 9 June 2011 and a copy of this was provided to members.

Cabinet was provided with details of the 15 recommendations coming from the Munro Review, which had looked at the child protection system in England.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the continued workload pressures within the social care system and the associated impact this was having on caseloads, performance and budget be noted.
2. further update reports be submitted to Cabinet, on a quarterly basis, in order to continue to monitor the impact of these workload pressures.

3. Reasons for the Decision

There was 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

Midnight on Friday 24 June 2011

Proper Officer
20 June 2011