

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting8th September 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 up to the end of June 2011.

It was explained that the number of referrals had dropped from 277 in March to 190 in April and stood at 234 in June. Initial assessments and core assessments undertaken in June had been 249 and 124 respectively.

The overall number of children who were subject to a child protection plan stood at 264 which was the highest number since April 2010 (266).

The overall number of looked after children remained very high, but stable during the period, April (301), May (300) and June (301).

With regard to staffing issues it was explained that an external appointment had been made to the post of Targeted Team Manager. The Specialist Team Manager post remained vacant following 4 external advertisements, although the post continued to be covered by an agency manager. This post would not be readvertised pending the completion of the Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation review of children's social care.

In terms of social work posts it was noted that, as at the end of March 2011, there were 1.6 full time equivalent substantive vacancies.

There were no allocated child protection cases but there were 2 unallocated looked after children cases and 12 unallocated children in need cases. Unallocated cases were held by the appropriate team manager.

As a result of the increasing pressures and need to ensure cases were safely allocated and progressed in a timely manner, 5 additional

supernumerary agency staff had been employed within the referral and assessment and specialist social work teams on a strictly time limited basis. These posts were subject to ongoing monitoring and review by Corporate Director and Head of Service.

Cabinet noted the budgetary pressures currently facing the service.

It was explained that a marketing officer was in post and the 'Put yourself in the Picture' marketing campaign was launched in May. There had been a marked increase in the numbers of people expressing an interest in becoming foster carers and adopters. Members recognised the importance of retaining and supporting the people who had expressed an interest.

Cabinet noted that, with regard to the two proposed new children's homes, it was anticipated that the Piper Knowle home would open in November 2011 and the Redcar Road home in January 2012.

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 16 September 2011

Proper Officer
12 September 2011