

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting .....18th May 2017

1. Title of Item/Report

Review of Education Psychology Service

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that detailed a reporting in review to the Children and Young People Select Committee on the Stockton Educational Psychology Service.

Stockton Educational Psychology Service (EPS) was a specialist service within Schools and SEN. The scope for the reporting in review of the Stockton Educational Psychology Service was presented to the Children and Young People Select Committee in July 2016.

A report was presented in November 2016. This set out some background information to inform the discussion.

As a consequence of the meeting, the Select Committee gave approval for areas of work to be explored.

The service in Stockton had retained a good reputation with its schools. Evaluation from users remains very positive.

The approach of educational psychologist services in other Tees authorities was explored. In particular, Hartlepool Borough Council's model was scrutinised. This was because the service had no vacant posts, had 9 full time equivalent EPs and maintained trainee EP positions. It was also a service which was held in high regard by schools with a high level of buy-back. The issue was raised with the assistant Directors at the Tees wide meeting and the Principal Educational Psychologist from Hartlepool was invited to speak.

A subsequent meeting had taken place with the senior EP for each of the Tees authorities and the common issues discussed. Strategies to address concerns were being worked up across the Tees.

A partnership with Hartlepool had been established with a trail shared post. This was a senior post to focus on the Future in Mind programme.

The idea was it would be hosted with Hartlepool for the Future in Mind work but would also carry a case load which would be managed by Stockton. It was hoped the post would be recruited to as it provided a unique opportunity for an EP to develop a specialism and work alongside a service of reputation and augment a growing service in Stockton.

A revised structure had been prepared. This revised structure realigns the staffing to ensure the service was more adaptive to the changing context and a more attractive team to work within to improve recruitment.

The ways of working with schools had been renegotiated. The EPS was returning to a model of consultation as its primary method of service delivery. The model recognised teachers as change agents and the skills of both schools and EPs in making a difference.

EPs and assistants would be supporting schools in delivering evidenced based interventions.

As part of the consultation process, interventions and agreed strategies would be evaluated to ensure impact.

This model of service delivery would ensure schools were supported and equipped to address needs. It also meant the EPS could be involved with those children and schools where perhaps the threshold for involvement would not previously have been considered appropriate. The service was also aiming to provide free incentives to those schools who choose to buy in services.

The approach to allocating support to schools had been renegotiated through the model of the 'Enhanced School'. This was in line with the transformation of additional provision for children with special needs in mainstream schools in Stockton. The previous model of additionally resourced provisions (ARPs) had been redesigned into locality based hubs and 'enhanced schools'. These would offer places for children as before but would also be a centre of best practice offering outreach support and advice and guidance to other local schools. They would also be able to offer therapeutic support for children.

Educational Psychologist time would be allocated to the enhanced schools in Stockton and the EPs would be resident there to enable capacity to be developed and early screening and support for the child, family and school to be available.

The capacity of the service to draw in income would increase as the team grew. Presently, there was not enough staff to deliver the work

requested from schools. Funding may also be accessed to grow the service, and provide more free support to schools from:

- Early help
- Troubled families
- The establishment of a Learning Trust in Stockton
- Combined Authority/Tees Valley Challenge
- High Needs funding allocated through the Enhanced Schools

RESOLVED that:-

1. The partnership working continues to develop with other Tees authorities to see if solutions to the shortage of Educational Psychologists (EP) can be found sub regionally.
2. The recruitment strategies be implemented to attempt to build a fully staffed service.
3. The restructure of the service through a formal staffing review be implemented. This would include allocating places for trainee psychologists and considering fixed term contracts for the assistant EP posts to enable through put into accreditation and succession planning for the team.
4. The revised ways of working with schools continues to be developed, especially through the Enhanced Schools model.
5. Funding opportunities be explored as they emerge as other services are reviewed and income streams develop as the council moves towards more traded services and sub-regional and regional working.

3. Reasons for the Decision

There is a need to ensure there is suitable capacity within the Educational Psychology Service to support the improvement of outcomes for children with special educational needs. This fits within the council theme of providing earlier intervention to reduce demand for expensive specialist placements.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

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

Midnight, 26 May 2017

Proper Officer  
22 May 2017