

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Children and Young People Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 4 September 2006 at the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Dennett (Chairman), Fraser, Lewis, Marlow, Parker, Stockton and Mr C. Chorley

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Gilligan and Higginson

Absence declared on Council business: (none)

Officers present: M. Simpson, L. Butcher, H. Bell, I. Grady, J. John, N. Moorhouse and A. Villiers

Also in attendance: Councillor McInerney (in accordance with Standing Order 33).

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

CYP12 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was noted that no public questions had been received.

CYP13 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The Minutes of the Executive Board relating to the work of the Children and Young People Policy and Performance Board were submitted for information.

An issue was raised regarding the appeals procedure for the allocation of assisted school transport as some Members felt that the responsibility for the appeals should not be relocated to Senior Officers. It was agreed that all Members of the Board would be contacted explaining the clear reasons for and against Senior Officers taking on this role asking for their response to who Members would prefer to carry out this role.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Minutes be noted; and

Action

(2) Members be contacted regarding whether or not the matter should be referred back to Executive Board to re-consideration.

Chairman of
the Board

CYP14 WORK PROGRAMME

At the last meeting the Chairman asked Members of the Board to submit suggestions for work topic groups. To begin with the following topic groups would be introduced:

- out of borough school admissions;
- transition from school to adulthood with complex needs

Members were requested to inform the chair which topic group they would be willing to take part in. In addition it was noted that other topic groups would be implemented on a phased programme throughout the coming year.

All Board
Members

RESOLVED: That Members contact the Chairman with what topic group they would be willing take part in.

CYP15 QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORTS

The Board was informed of the new process for reporting on performance monitoring. It was noted that the first quarter monitoring reports were published last month both electronically and in hard copy formats. The purpose of the reports was to draw attention to particular aspects contained in the full version of the monitoring reports and to act as a “signpost” to assist Board Members to carry out their performance management function.

The performance considerations had been distributed with the agenda and highlighted some key findings and areas for further consideration in the quarterly monitoring reports for the following services:

- School Support and Advisory Services;
- Student Services and Lifelong Learning; and
- Children’s Services (Social Care).

The Board was informed that GCSE results were successful this year with a 3% improvement on last year’s figures, with Halton High having the largest percentage of improvement. A more detailed report would come to a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Policy and Performance Board scrutinise service performance and progress towards achieving objectives and targets and raise any questions or points for clarification in respect of the information contained in the quarterly monitoring reports; and

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(2) the Board highlight any areas of interest and/or concern that require further information or action to be reported at a future meeting of the Policy and Performance Board where appropriate.

(NB: Councillor Parker declared a personal interest in the following item due to being his daughter in law being employed by Alder Hey).

CYP16 ALDER HEY FOUNDATION STATUS JOINT PPB

The Board received a report which sought to ratify the process for responding to Royal Liverpool Children's NHS Trust's consultation regarding Alder Hey Hospital's proposals to become a foundation trust. The consultation period of 12 weeks commenced Monday 31 July 2006 and would end on Monday 23 October 2006.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) a joint meeting be held between the Healthy Halton PPB and Children and Young People PPB to consider the proposals;
- (2) the following members would be representatives at the joint scrutiny meeting – Cllr Dennett and Stockton; and
- (3) the authority be delegated to the chairman to delegate a final member of the Board.

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CYP17 GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

The Board received a report outlining the findings from the Gifted and Talented Topic Team. The Board considered a review of documentation taken to develop an understanding of the types of staff development opportunities, events and visits arranged to date and the judgements made about the quality of those opportunities.

A summary of recommendations that should be included in the Gifted and Talented strategy was detailed in the report. The report also detailed the scope for scrutinising the topic, which would investigate strategies for

raising the aspiration of young people in Halton, strategies for raising the attainment of young people in Halton and the impact of strategies on stakeholders.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The report and comments made on contents and recommendations be noted; and
- (2) the implementation of agreed actions arising from the Topic report be monitored.

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CYP18 LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS

The Board received a report outlining the need for a Local Area Agreement (LAA) to be negotiated by next April. It was reported that LAA was a three year protocol that set out the priorities for a local area, agreed between central government and the area itself, as represented by the lead local authority and other key partners through Local Strategic Partnership. It was noted that the Government had stipulated that Halton would be in round three of the programme. The report updated the board on the progress made to date.

It was noted that there would be an opportunity within LAAs to request enabling measures where Halton Borough Council could wish to remove government-imposed barriers, which would get in the way of delivering LAA outcomes and targets.

It was reported that a draft agreement would be submitted to Executive Board on 21 September 2006 for comments. A final version of the agreement would go to Executive Board in December.

In addition the report outlined the following:

- Transformational issues;
- Funding;
- Sustainability;
- Development of the LAA; and
- Governance arrangements.

The key objectives for Children and Young People in Halton were also outlined in detail for consideration.

Discussions arose around the Initial Outcomes Framework document regarding the targets set by government and internally.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and outline of the process be noted; and
- (2) comments to Executive Board on the draft Agreement be provided prior to its approval and submission to Government by the end of September.

CYP19 SECONDARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The Board received a report reviewing the action on secondary school attendance which highlighted the best secondary school absence figures since Halton had become a unitary authority and represented the second consecutive year that secondary attendance had improved.

It was noted that the improvement in the levels of unauthorised absence fitted well within the DfES' current agenda to target authorities and schools with high levels of unauthorised absence.

It was reported that in relation to other local authorities Halton had historically performed poorly on secondary absence. It was felt that this was due to insufficient focus on school attendance therefore people weren't aware of the level of performance.

There were plans to engage with and help schools with policy issues as there was a lack of a systematic approach to managing attendance in a proportion of secondary schools. Additional resources had been invested into the service to reinforce efforts to improve attendance.

Discussions arose regarding attendance sweeps, taking parents to court and press releases spreading the message for the penalties of truancy.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the PPB acknowledge the issues which have led to poor secondary school attendance were long standing and systematic both in the local authority and some of the secondary schools be noted;
- (2) actions to improve school attendance in Halton continue to be addressed through the implementation of the attendance action plan;
- (3) a Member's seminar on school attendance will

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- (4) be held on 14th September 2006; and as a major employer within the borough, the Council explore the steps that the authority can take to publicise the need for improving school attendance amongst our employees, who are parents of school aged children and young people.

CYP20 STANDING ORDER 51

The Board was reminded that Standing Order 51 of the Council's Constitution stated that meetings should not continue beyond 9.00pm.

RESOLVED: That Standing Order 51 be waived.

CYP21 SEN REVIEW - PROGRESS UPDATE

The Board considered a report that provided a progress update on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Review. It was reported that the OfSTED inspection on the LEA in January 2004 identified the strengths and areas for development relating to SEN.

It was noted that significant progress had been made, a lot of activity was underway and the SEN strategy was being reviewed. The Board heard how Halton had the highest percentage of statements in the country, however this would not be the case next year, as the processes would be tightened and if any schools had balances they would be asked to use those funds for SEN.

Members discussed the possibility of having a team of school based staff trained specifically to deal with SEN, the amount of SEN units attached to schools and the need to address SEN earlier in a child's life.

In addition it was reported that alterations to Ashley school had been completed and the restructuring of Brookfields and Cavendish school would take place in September 2009.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CYP22 EVERY CHILD MATTERS IN SCHOOL - THE SECONDARY SCHOOL PERSPECTIVE

This item was for information only and was to be

deferred to a future meeting.

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Meeting ended at 9.06 p.m.