

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Children and Young People Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 7 September 2009 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Dennett (Chairman), Horabin (Vice-Chairman), Drakeley, Gilligan, Loftus, J. Lowe, Parker, M. Ratcliffe and Stockton

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Browne and Higginson

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: J. Kirk, T. Crane, C. Halpin, A. McIntyre, G. Meehan, N. Moorhouse, A. Villiers and V. Buchanan

Also in attendance: C. Pollard

### ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

*Action*

#### CYP12 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2009 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be noted.

#### CYP13 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was noted that no public questions had been received.

#### CYP14 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The Board considered a report which contained the minutes relating to the Children and Young People Portfolio which had been considered by the Executive Board and the Executive Board Sub-Committee since the last meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be noted.

(NB: Councillor Stockton declared a personal interest in the following item due to being a Governor of the Grange School).

## CYP15 SSP MINUTES

The Board received the Minutes of the Halton Children's Trust Specialist Strategic Partnership held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2009.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be noted.

## CYP16 COMMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS RELATING TO CHILD CARE SERVICES

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Young People which gave an update and provided an analysis on complaints processed under the Statutory Complaints Procedure to Children and Young People during 2008/2009.

The Board was advised that the regulations came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2006 and aimed for Children and Young People to have their concerns resolved swiftly and wherever possible by the people who provided the service locally.

The Board was advised that a complaint might generally be the sign of an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet in relation to an individual child or young person, which required a response. There were two categories to the representation process;

- (1) Statutory complaint;
- (2) Representation;
- (3) Compliment.

The Board was advised that the formal complaints procedure had a process of four stages, details of which were set out in the report.

The Board was advised that there had been 24 statutory complaints made to the local authority in 2008/09 and there had also been 30 representations made to the local authority over the same time period, details of both were set out in the report.

It was noted that there had been 7 compliments made in respect of Children's Social Services.

It was noted that during 2008/09 Halton Borough Council extended a contract with Barnado's to provide a Children's Right Service, this was a meditation and

advocacy service for children and young people. Two young people used the service last year.

Arising from Members' comments and questions the following was noted:

- that it would be useful to have feedback forms available at care homes;
- the procedure undertaken if complaints were made by non service users; and
- whether there was a need to review the categories to ensure that data was being recorded correctly.

RESOLVED: That the report be accepted as the mechanism by which the local authority be kept informed about the operation of its Complaints Procedure.

#### CYP17 CLIMBIE VISITS

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Young People which reported on the conduct of and outcomes from Climbie visits to front line children in need teams and reviewed the outcome from the recommendations reported to the Board on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2009.

The Board was advised that training had been provided to PPB Members on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2009, and this explained the purpose of both regulation 33 visits to children's homes and Climbie Visits. There were currently four members identified to carry out these visits, two in Runcorn and two in Widnes. Visits were carried out quarterly and a report was then sent to the Operational Director, Specialist Services and to the Divisional Manager, Children in Need to respond to any issues raised.

It was noted that the purpose of Climbie visits were to:

- Ensure that staffing levels were appropriate;
- Check that workloads of individual workers were appropriate;
- Ensure that referral management processes were sound and secure;
- Check on the performance of the Duty Teams;
- Check the progress of implementation of Integrated Children's system (ICS).

It was noted that issues raised around visits had been

predominately around Health and Safety, working conditions for staff and Members had provided support in resolving a number of these issues.

There had also been issues raised in relation to the workload of social workers. Examples of issues and resolutions had been outlined in detail in the report. There were two issues which needed to be addressed to strengthen the conduct of Climbie Visits. Firstly, there had been some difficulties engaging Members to carry out visits. Visits to the Widnes Team were prioritised by the two members involved and took place at appropriate intervals, however, embedding the same process in Runcorn had proved more problematic. All Members in Climbie visits must have an Enhanced CRB Disclosure. Secondly, whilst the visits had had a very positive impact, the expectation following the Baby Peter case, was that Members have a more detailed understanding of the functions of the contact, referral and assessment processes in ensuring children were safeguarded.

Arising from Members' comments and questions the following was noted:

- whether Councillors would be required to have several CRB checks as many had roles as Governors at local schools. It was noted that this would be investigated further;
- changes being made to improve recording of information to reduce social workers administrative tasks; and
- the size and scope of the Teams was felt to be sufficient for workloads as there was significant early intervention work ongoing.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents of the report be noted;
- (2) a new and extended list of available Members be agreed by the Board and rota of Climbie visits agreed;
- (3) following all Climbie visits, the report provided by Members and the responses made by relevant managers should be reported to the PPB and scrutinised bi-annually; and
- (4) the focus of Climbie visits should give increased scrutiny to the core business of contact, referral and

Strategic Director,  
Children and  
Young People

assessment processes and performance data should be routinely be discussed and understood.

## CYP18 RACE EQUALITY – RACIST INCIDENT REPORTING – SCHOOLS

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Young People which updated Members on progress against meeting the targets and requirements arising from the Macpherson Report (Stephen Laurence Inquiry).

The Board was advised that schools were required to ensure that racist incidents were reported to the Governing Body and to the Local Authority. The Local Authority had recommended to schools that reporting to Governors was undertaken by a Headteachers termly report as a Part II Confidential Item.

It was noted that racist incidents in schools has to be reported to the Authority since the introduction of this requirement. They were recorded by a nominated officer in the Directorate who monitored the information and the action taken in response by Headteachers. To date, appropriate action had been undertaken.

It was further noted that the nominated officer ensured that this information was included in the data submitted by the Council for the two Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) on this subject.

BVPI 174 – the number of racist incidents reported to the Council and BVPI 175 – the number of those reported that had been acted upon.

It was noted that the following data had been submitted for the BVPI report period April 2008 – March 2009 and included a summary of some details of incidents.

BVPI 174 – 36

BVPI 175 – 36

Number of Schools

15 schools reported 36 incidents:

9 Primary

6 Secondary

0 Special

## Categories of Incident

It was noted that most incidents had been low level name-calling and that no violent incidents had been reported this time.

Arising from Members' questions and comments the following was noted:

- there were was a likelihood that there a number of unreported incidents and steps being taken to address this;
- that there was a need for a simpler pathway for reporting of incidents; and
- that a key component of Ofsted was the need for schools to promote Community Cohesion.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

### CYP19 SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2009/10 AND IN-YEAR CO-ORDINATION 2010/11

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Young People which updated the Board on the 2009/10 Admissions round to Primary and Secondary Schools and gave information on the commencement of the consultation process with schools, during the autumn term 2009 and the statutory requirement to the local authority to co-ordinate in-year admissions for all schools in the 2010 and subsequent admissions round.

The Board was advised that on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2008, the Executive Board approved a Council School Admissions Policy and Admission arrangements for the September 2009 intake to all community and voluntary-aided primary schools in Halton. Halton's Admission Arrangements continued to reflect the requirements within the revised Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) School Admissions Code.

The Board was further advised that Halton continues to meet above the annual average percentage for first preference applications for secondary schools. For the 2009 admissions round Halton met 90% of first preferences for secondary schools (against a national average of 83%) and 92% first preferences for primary schools.

It was noted that details of the school allocation for the September 2009 intake were attached as Appendix A for secondary schools and Appendix B for primary schools, to

the report.

The Board was further advised that pupil numbers had increased slightly to the 2009 admissions round. 1,448 pupils were admitted to primary schools in 2008 compared to 1,469 in 2009, and 1,438 pupils were admitted to secondary schools in 2008 compared with 1,463 in 2009.

It was important to recognise that where a preference could not be met, parents/carers had a right of appeal to an independent admission appeal panel. The panel could uphold or decline an appeal based on the individual circumstances of the case presented by the parents/carer, and if the panel decided to admit further pupils to the school that this would not prejudice the provision of efficient education and the efficient use of resources at the school. The decisions made by the independent admission appeal panels were legally binding on all parties: the Local Authority and the School Governing Body as Admission Authority, Schools, and parents/carers.

The slight increase in pupil numbers from 2008 to 2009 had an impact on the number of appeals heard. 110 appeals were heard for the September 2008 intake across the primary and secondary sector compared with 136 in 2009. 25 appeals were upheld for the 2009 intake compared with 19 for the 2008 intake.

The report also set out the number of Halton residents where pupils were seeking admission to a secondary school in an neighbouring authority, that whilst Halton was currently a net exporter of pupils that one of the key drivers for the Building Schools for the Future Programme included the introduction of 21<sup>st</sup> Learning, the expansion of popular and successful schools, and the delivery of a diverse range of educational opportunities through community, joint faith, trust and academy schools. It was felt that these factors which were currently being introduced in Halton would support the aims of returning Halton pupils into Halton schools, and attracting where possible out of borough pupils to Halton.

The Board was advised that as part of this secondary school re-organisation process, and links to the BSF Programme, that from September 2010 Fairfield High School would close and re-open as part of an extended Wade Deacon High School operating on two sites.

It was noted that from the academic year 2009/10 onwards, local authorities must co-ordinate all in year

applications. In relation to the academic year 2010/11 the arrangements for co-ordinating these applications must be formulated by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010. Regulations prescribed that parents/carers must complete a common application form allowing them to express at least three preferences which may be for schools within or outside their home local authority area, and to give reasons for their preferences.

It was estimated that between 300 – 350 pupils per term moved between schools either moving between Runcorn and Widnes, within Runcorn, within Widnes or move into the Borough.

Wherever a parent/carer wished to change school, or sought admission to a Halton School for the first time, they would be required to complete a preference form and submit the form to the Local Authority, following which the application would be considered. If a place could be allocated the admission would be agreed, normally from the beginning of the next term, and if a place could not be allocated at the school of preference, an alternative offer would be made and parents would be offered the right of appeal against the school they had been refused.

It was further noted that the in-year co-ordinated scheme would also need links with the Fair Access protocol. The Fair Access Protocol existed to ensure that access to education was secured quickly for children who had no school place but for whom a place at a main stream school or alternative provision was appropriate, and to ensure that all schools in the area admitted their fair share of children with challenging behaviour.

Arising from Members' comments and questions the following was noted:

- what the criteria for entry to Widnes High schools would be following the changes to Wade Deacon and Fairfield High School;
- how the fair access protocol would operate in oversubscribed schools. It was noted that there would be places available at all schools under this protocol;
- the need for careful forward planning to increase admission numbers and that this was being completed incrementally over the next few years.

**RESOLVED:** the report be noted and that a report on the outcome of the consultation would subsequently be reported to the Board.



(NB: Councillor Loftus declared a personal interest in the following item due to being employed by Riverside College).

## CYP20 SUMMARY OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT 2009

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Young People, which reported on the 2009 Performance Data for Foundation Stage Profile and the Key Stages 1-4. It was noted that this was an initial report referring to currently available data. It reported attainment only and did not indicate the effectiveness of service delivery. A more detailed report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Board when further data had become available.

The Board was advised that the Foundation Stage Profile was the continual assessment of a child's ability undertaken throughout the Reception Year and then reported at the end of the year. The main headlines of Halton were summarised in detail in the report.

The Board was further advised that at Key Stage 1 a child's attainment in reading, writing and maths was assessed during Year 2. The main headlines for Halton were summarised in detail in the report.

It was noted that at Key Stage 2 a child's attainment was assessed in English, Reading, Writing, Maths and Science during Year 6. Current data should be treated as provision as validation was still on-going with a number of papers being returned for marking. The main headlines for Halton were summarised in detail in the report.

It was further noted that at Key Stage 3 a child's attainment in English, Maths and Science was measured during Year 9. Performance could not be reported at present, but it was hoped to have summary level information for the next meeting of the Board.

The Board was advised that Key Stage 4 attainment measured a child's GCSE results in Year 11.

The Board requested that the final report include graphical data to enable clearer comparison of results.

**RESOLVED:** That the Board note the attainment of children in Halton's schools for the 2008/2009 academic year.

(NB: Councillor Loftus declared a personal interest in the following item due to being employed by Riverside College. Councillor Stockton declared a personal interest in the following item due to being a Governor of the Grange School).

## CYP21 QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORTS

The Board received a report of the Chief Executive which detailed the first Quarter Performance Management Reports on progress against service plan objectives and performance targets, performance trends/comparisons, and factors affecting services for:

- Business support and commissioning;
- Preventative services;
- Specialist services;
- Universal and Learning Services

The Board requested the following further information and reports:

- a report on the changes to 14-19 Education be submitted to a future meeting of the Board;
- additional budget details be provided in relation financial profiles and where reallocation and reprioritisation have taken place;
- a report on the placement strategy and foster carers be invited to a future meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED: That the first Quarter Performance Management Reports be received.

*Meeting ended at 9.00 p.m.*