

EXTRACTS OF EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES RELEVANT TO THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE'S AND FAMILIES POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2014

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| 42 | SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN – STATUTORY GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES |
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which provided an overview of the Schools Causing Concern (SCC) Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities.

The Board was reminded that, at its meeting on 27 February 2014, it had approved the Learning and Achievement Strategy. At the time, this was based on SCC Guidance issued in March 2013. The SCC Guidance was subsequently revised and issued to Local Authorities by the Department for Education in May 2014. It was reported that the Learning and Achievement Strategy would need to be revised to reflect the latest Guidance.

It was noted that the revised Guidance set out the local authority's role in relation to maintained schools causing concern, and the importance of early intervention and swift and robust action to tackle failure. The new Guidance set out ten indicators for local authorities to champion educational excellence. Details of the key changes were contained in the report for Members' information.

RESOLVED: That the proposed changes to Halton's approach to support and intervention in Schools Causing Concern be approved and the Learning and Achievement Strategy be amended accordingly.

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| 43 | BASIC NEED CAPITAL FUNDING – KEY DECISION |
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which provided an update for the allocation and spending of Basic Need Capital Funding.

The Board was advised that the Basic Need allocation supported the capital requirement for providing new pupil places by expanding existing maintained schools, free schools or academies and by establishing new schools. Halton used pupil forecast data to determine the need to provide additional school places in order to meet demand. Basic Need capital funding had been used to carry out building works to provide additional school places at a number of primary schools listed in the report, to alleviate pressure for demand in those areas.

The Board was reminded that in January 2014, Fairfield Junior School was expanded to allow the integration of the Infants School to form the new Fairfield

Primary School. It was proposed that Basic Need capital funding be allocated to address school building and organisational issues at the newly combined school.

It was reported that Basic Need capital funding was allocated to local authorities to provide school places in any type of school. The Board noted that the building needs of all categories of school should be taken into account in the distribution of this funding. The Board further noted that £474,818 of funding would be set aside for the authority to address their strategic building needs. Applications would be assessed against agreed criteria. Once a bid was approved, each responsible body would then cash- flow the project and claim the re-imburement on production of invoices once works were completed.

Reason(s) For Decision

The decision was required to deliver and implement the Capital Programme.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Distributing the total Basic Need allocation – was rejected as funding needed to be retained to address emerging basic needs issues.

Implementation Date

October 2014, following agreement by Council.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve

- 1) the proposal to allocate Basic Need capital funding to the Fairfield Primary School project; and
- 2) the bid process for Responsible Bodies based on Strategic Needs.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2014

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| 59 | HALTON'S CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2014-2017 |
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which provided an overview of the new Halton Children and Young People's Participation Strategy 2014-17 (the Strategy).

The Board was advised that the previous Strategy was devised in 2006 and then renewed and extended until 2011. In November 2013, the INVOLVE group came together to promote and improve the participation of children, young people and their families.

It was noted that work began in January 2014 on the new Strategy, with partnership working between professionals and children, young people and parents

developing new and creative ways of working. The report set out examples of the approaches that had been used to develop the Strategy.

It was reported that the Strategy would sit under the Children and Young People's Plan and was intended as a practical, useful document, which included:-

- An explanation of participation;
- Reasons for participation including legal obligations;
- Possible barriers to participation;
- Current participation and what would be achieved in Halton; and
- What participation would look like in Halton after the Strategy was in place.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the contents of the report be noted;
- 2) the Participation Strategy 2014-17 be endorsed; and
- 3) the roll out of the new Children and Young People's Participation Strategy be supported, in order to embed active participation in the culture of Halton Children's Trust and the wider Halton partnership.

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FOSTER CARE ALLOWANCES – KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, on a revised scheme for the payment of allowances to Halton Foster Carers.

The Board was advised that foster care allowances were determined by each local authority. In 2010, Halton decided to increase allowances beyond the national minimum, as set out in Appendix 1. It was reported that the scheme had worked well, but a review was necessary for the following reasons:

- (i) the current scheme did not recognise the different knowledge and skill level amongst the foster carer population;
- (ii) there was no 'incentive' for carers to complete their necessary core and developmental training;
- (iii) many local authorities and some of the national bodies (e.g. BAAF, Fostering Network) recommended the use of a 'levels' based scheme which recognised the skills of each carer, the training that they do, the experience that they gain and the development they achieve in the caring role; and
- (iv) case law has established that financial support for Special Guardianship Orders should be based on a local authority's 'base' fostering allowance.

It was proposed that in future, allowances would be paid at two levels:-

- Level 1 – base fostering allowance paid to all carers; and
- Level 2 - enhanced allowance paid to those carers who demonstrated additional skills, knowledge and experience.

It was noted that the proposed revised scheme, attached at Appendix 2, had been consulted upon with carers between June and August 2014, had been amended to reflect their feedback and had the support of existing carers.

Reason(s) For Decision

To implement a revised scheme that represented a more effective and efficient use of Council resources and recognised experience, knowledge and skill.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The proposal had been through the consultation process and had been amended as a result of it.

Implementation Date

The revised scheme of payments would be introduced from April 2015 for existing carers and would be advertised from October 2014 for newly recruited carers.

RESOLVED: That the revised scheme be endorsed.