

APPENDIX 1

Extract of Executive Board and Executive Board Sub Committee Minutes Relevant to the Children and Young People's Policy and Performance Board

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 21 FEBRUARY 2008

EXB89 Anti-bullying policy and practice

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Children and Young People providing an overview of work to develop a local authority anti-bullying policy and guidance.

It was noted that bullying was the principal issue about which children and young people contacted the Office of the Children's Commissioner and Child Line, and it was known locally that young people saw it as one of their major issues. The Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) had been in the process of issuing new guidance on anti-bullying for a considerable time, which had now been published. The local policy had been produced in accordance with this "Safe to Learn" guidance.

The national and local drivers for making dealing with bullying a priority were outlined for the Board's consideration, along with progress to date. It was advised that the guidance aimed to:

- support school governors, staff and volunteers in all children's settings, children and young people, parents and carers in the development of their own anti-bullying policies;
- advise on the monitoring and review of anti-bullying policy and practice;
- build on the good practice which was already present in Halton; and
- promote national and local priorities.

Reason for Decision

It was necessary for the Local Authority to provide a clear anti-bullying framework.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None considered.

Implementation Date

As soon as approved.

RESOLVED: That the policy be approved for adoption by Halton Schools and as the basis for the development of a broader Halton Anti-Bullying Strategy.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 6 MARCH 2008

EXB100 Working Arrangements to Align PCT Child Health Services Within Children and Young People's Directorate and Children's Trust Arrangements in Halton

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Children and Young People's Directorate, and the Operational Director – Halton and St. Helens Primary Care Trust (PCT), seeking agreement on the next steps in the integration of services in Halton for children and young people through new working arrangements between Halton and St. Helens PCT and the Children and Young People's Directorate of Halton Council. Agreement was also sought to place those new arrangements and their governance within the context of Halton's Children's Trust Arrangements (Alliance Board).

The report outlined how the proposals were intended to improve outcomes for children and young people, seeking to build on the integration of Education and Children's Social Care Services that formed the Children and Young People's Directorate in 2006. The proposals focused on the way the Children and Young People's Directorate and its partners would do business together in future. An integrated approach would enhance the Council and its partner's ability to deliver the key objectives of the Community Strategy under the umbrella of the Local Strategic Partnership. All the services within that Partnership would continue to be directly accountable to their parent body for the quality and effectiveness of their services. However, the proposals enhanced the Council's ability to fully discharge its new statutory duties to children and young people in the Borough.

The Health Services referred to were outlined for the Board's consideration and it was advised that health services for children were focused on three on three principal groupings:

- The Sick Child – children who required specific medical interventions due to illness or injury;
- The Vulnerable child – children who had a particular set of circumstances that made their health vulnerable, for example hearing loss, a chronic condition, or their welfare or safety; and
- The Well Child – routine health matters that all children needed.

Integration of those services would be complemented by the further alignment of other health-related services and a dialogue would be established with General Practitioners in the Borough on the "best fit" with General Practice. It was advised that Dentistry Services were not part of this arrangement.

Members noted that the PCT was moving towards being a commissioning organisation and, in light of this, the PCT would explore a relevant NHS provider to deliver services to the “sick” child, whilst entering into this management arrangement with the Council for health services for the “well” and “vulnerable” child.

The proposed structure for the joint new arrangements were attached at Appendix 1 of the report. It was advised that NHS staff would not be subject to TUPE or seconded to the Council and so there would be no change to the terms of employment or conditions of any NHS employee affected by these arrangements. Lines of accountability were outlined for consideration and it was advised that the PCT would identify a named individual (Assistant Director, Children and Family Health, Halton) to become part of the Children and Young People Directorate’s Senior Management Team. This post would have direct line management responsibility for all PCT staff in the new working arrangements. The post would report directly to the Council’s Strategic Director of Children’s Services for day to day management of services and would also report to the Operational Director, Children, Families and Maternity Services for NHS accountability purposes.

The Alliance Board (Children’s Trust Arrangement) would act as the Governance Body for the PCT and Council, cementing the Children’s Trust arrangements that had to be in place by April 2008. A formal agreement was to be developed over the next three months which would be presented to both the Executive Board of the Council and the Primary Care Trust Board. The proposals were initially for one year and then to be reviewed. Information on how arrangements would be dovetailed with services for adults was outlined for the Board’s information, together with options on how the geographic footprint could be used for the future deployment of children’s services.

Reason(s) for Decision

- To bring together a full range of services (Education, Health and Social Care) for Children and Young People within one directorate under the auspices of Halton’s Children’s Trust arrangements;
- The further integration of services would enable the Council and its partners to provide better tailored and co-ordinated services, particularly for vulnerable groups of young people.
- They would provide, over time, the opportunity to create a series of “Teams Around the Child” delivering services in a much more effective and efficient way and one that was much more accessible and understandable to the public.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Alternative options regarding the development of integrated services with the NHS and the proposals on Children's Trusts arrangements included:

- No change, that is, current management arrangements and strategic oversight would remain the same. The principal reason for this option being rejected was that the Council would miss an ideal opportunity to bring together the principal services for Children and Young People under one operational umbrella. It was a requirement that the Council-led Children's Trust arrangements and that this should be fully in place no later than April 2008. It was therefore a requirement that Children's Trust arrangements were cemented within the Borough.

Implementation Date

The Children's Trust arrangements would become effective by 30th April 2008. The new arrangements for aligning NHS services would come into effect at the same time. During 2008/09, work would be undertaken on the development of new structural arrangements at the front line in close consultation with operational staff. Also during 2008/09, a formal agreement would be developed. The new arrangements would be reviewed in April 2009.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the development of new working arrangements for PCT staff working with the "well" and "vulnerable" child within the Council's Children and Young People's Directorate be agreed;
- (2) it be noted that Health Services for the "sick" child remains the exclusive responsibility of the PCT and thus outside these arrangements;
- (3) it be agreed that work be undertaken to use the Alliance Board (Halton's Children's Trust arrangement) as the Governance Body for the new partnership arrangements with the PCT;
- (4) all Council services within the new working arrangements continue to be accountable to the Executive Board;
- (5) it be noted that the geographic footprint that would be used for the future deployment of Children's Services would need to be agreed from the following options depending on the nature of the service:

- a) Boroughwide delivery;
 - b) Runcorn or Widnes based delivery;
 - c) Locality based delivery, perhaps building on the area networks or other recognised locality; and
- (6) Appendix 2 be approved as the structure for the Children's Trust arrangements.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 20 MARCH 2008

EXB105 Primary Capital Programme

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Children and Young People providing an overview of the Primary Capital Programme and an outline of the Government's submission requirements for a Strategy for Change to secure Primary Capital Funding.

It was advised that all authorities were required by Government to develop a Primary Capital Programme aiming to ensure primary schools played a lead role in the heart of their communities by offering local services; providing a 21st learning environment, particularly in ICT; developing world class standards; and promoting personalisation, flexibility, diversity and choice. As part of the programme, consideration needed to be given to local demography, pupil numbers and school standards. In addition, local authorities were required to produce a Strategy for Change (Primary), which had to be formally endorsed by the Council, the diocesan authorities and a majority of primary schools. This document had to be with the Department for Children, Schools, and Families by 16th June 2008. Consultation requirements were outlined for the Board's consideration.

It was advised that Halton's Strategy for Change covered five main elements:

- the local perspective;
- baseline analysis;
- long term aims;
- approach to change; and
- initial investment priorities

Further information was provided on each of these elements together with funding implications. It was expected that the Authority would develop a strategic approach to capital investment for primary schools over fourteen years and indicative figures were provided.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the requirements of the Strategy for Change be noted;
- (2) approval be given to developing the draft Strategy for Change in partnership with schools, the dioceses and other key stakeholders; and
- (3) a further report be provided to the Executive Board in June 2008 detailing the draft Primary Capital Strategy.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 10 APRIL 2008

EXB116 Children in Care Strategy and the Children and Young Persons Bill

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Children and Young People seeking endorsement of the revised Children in Care Strategy, which was the Council's response to the Government's Care Matters Agenda and Children and Young Persons Bill. The Bill sought to ensure that Children and Young People in Care received high quality care and support, and aimed to enable them to achieve the same aspirations that parents had for their own children.

Within Halton, a multi-agency strategy for Children in Care had been in place since 2005. For the past two years, the task of implementing the Strategy had been undertaken by the Partnership Board of the Children in Care Mini Trust and by the Corporate Parenting Group. A list of achievements were outlined within the report for Members' consideration.

The Strategy, attached at Appendix 2 to the report, had now been revised to incorporate the provisions of Care Matters and the Children and Young Persons Bill. Importantly, the strategy also reflected some of the consultation that had taken place with children and young people who were, or had been, in care in Halton Borough Council. By having one clear Children in Care strategy, which incorporated all requirements, expectations were clear and the direction was coherent.

The Action Plan would primarily form the business of the Partnership Board of the Children in Care Mini Trust. Many agencies and partners were represented on this Board, a list of which was provided for Members. It was advised that membership of the Partnership Board was regularly reviewed to ensure wide representation and to address areas of priority. If approved, the Partnership Board would develop the Action Plan further to ensure that impact and outcome measures were clearly identified and timescales for achievement were more precise.

In addition, the Board was advised that, in order to achieve the actions required, additional financial resources had been provided by Government. The indicative figures for Halton were outlined. It was noted that initial estimates suggested that the grant funding alone would be insufficient to meet the likely requirements of the Bill, and the total shortfall in funding was estimated at £96,500. Ways to close the shortfall would be examined in future years but it may be necessary for this to be considered as a part of the budget process.

The Board noted that:

- in addition to the national figure of Children in Care achieving 5 A* to C grades at GSCE (or equivalent), “value added” for these young people was also evaluated;
- the Authority was working increasingly with the private sector and other partners to provide a range of opportunities around employment for young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET);
- as prevention was better than cure, health and wealth had been prioritised at an early age;
- the Authority worked hard to support employers/training establishments, as some young people could, due to their life experiences, present challenging behaviour; and
- Mini Trusts would be requested to put milestones in place to demonstrate achievements.

Reasons for Decision

Endorsement of the multi-agency strategy was sought so that progress could continue on meeting the requirements of Care Matters, the duties of corporate parents and the targets of the Children and Young People Plan.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

There were no alternative options to implementing Care Matters and the Children and Young Persons Bill. Consideration had been given to presenting separate strategies in respect of Children in Care, Care Matters and Corporate Parenting, but as these issues were so integral to each other the production of one coherent strategy had been favoured.

Implementation Date

Work on some of the Care Matters issues was already underway but inspection against improved outcomes for Children in Care would commence in 2008. If approved, work on the strategy would commence in April 2008.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the amended strategy for Children in Care be endorsed; and
- 2) the potential financial implications be noted pending more detailed information and direction from Government.

EXB117 School Admission Arrangements

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Children and Young People, which had been produced in accordance with statutory requirements, outlining Halton Local Authority's (LA's) School Admissions Policy for LA maintained community and voluntary controlled schools, and co-ordinated admission schemes for all primary and secondary schools for September 2009. In addition, the report provided information on the number of on-line applications and the percentage of first preference applications met.

The Board was advised that, in January 2008, the LA had issued a statutorily required consultation paper on the proposed admission arrangements and co-ordinated admission schemes for the September 2009 intake. The paper proposed no changes to the current over-subscription criteria for admission to LA community and voluntary controlled schools, which followed the Department for Children, Schools and Families' (DCSF's) recommendations contained within the revised School Admissions Code of Practice.

However, the revised Code of Practice, which came into force on 28th February 2007, precluded the use of the first preference first system as previously operated in Halton and required all admission authorities to operate an equal preference system. Within the equal preference system all preferences expressed by parents on the application form were considered against each school's published admission criteria. After all preferences had been considered, if only one school named on the preference form could offer a place, the LA would send out an offer of a place. If more than one school could offer a place, parents would be offered a place at whichever of those schools was ranked highest on the preference form.

No responses had been received to the consultation, which had ended on 29th February 2008, and the Halton Admissions Forum at its meeting held on 18th March 2008 had approved the policy and arrangements for consideration and ratification by the Executive Board.

The Board was advised that St. Chad's Catholic High School had been over-subscribed. In addition, it was noted that, for the first time, the parents of 10 children at St. Berteline's Church of England Primary School had put Halton High School as their first preference. Previously, these children had all elected to go to schools out of the Borough. It was considered that these changes could be largely attributed to the Building Schools for the Future proposals.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Admissions Policy and co-ordinated schemes for nursery, primary and secondary admissions for the 2009/10 academic year be approved; and
- 2) the percentage of first preference applications and on-line applications met be noted.