

CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Children Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 11 June 2018 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Dennett (Chair), Logan (Vice-Chair), Carlin, Cassidy, P. Hignett, Horabin, Leck, P. Lloyd Jones, J. Stockton and Whitley

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Rowe

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. McIntyre, A. Jones, T. Coffey and H. Bell

Also in attendance: One member of the public

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

CYP1 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2018 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CYP2 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.

CYP3 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The minutes relating to the Children, Young People and Families Portfolio that have been considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of this Board, were attached at Appendix 1 for information.

RESOLVED: That the minutes are noted.

CYP4 SSP MINUTES

The minutes of the Halton Children's Trust meeting held on 22 February 2018 were submitted to the Board for information.

Smoking and Vaping – vaping would be an ongoing matter

for discussion at the Trust. The Police had given a presentation to the Trust on vaping and the information would be sent to the Board. Members were concerned that pupils were using vapourisers on school transport.

Halton's Children Safeguarding Board arrangements – Members would be included in the consultation which would begin in September 2018.

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RESOLVED: That the minutes are noted.

CYP5 ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

The Chair presented the Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board's Annual Report for 2017-18.

He wished to place on record his thanks to Members and Officers for their commitment, support and hard work carried out throughout the year.

RESOLVED: That the 2017-18 Annual Report be received and noted.

CYP6 APPLYING CORPORATE PARENTING PRINCIPLES FOR CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – People, informing them of the changes to statutory duties for children in care and the introduction of seven corporate parenting principles under the *Children and Social Work Act 2017*.

It was reported that the principles should shape the mind-set and culture of every part of a local authority in how it carried out all of its functions in relation to looked after children and care leavers. The guidance gave a number of examples and questions that Members and Officers should ask in evaluating how effective corporate parenting was demonstrated in relation to high ambition and support for children and care leavers.

It was noted that although the statutory duties applied directly to local authorities, they could not be delivered in isolation from agency partners who played a central part and had given their commitment to partnership working.

Appended to the report was the Department for Education's *Applying Corporate Parenting Principles to Looked After Children and Care Leavers*, the statutory

guidance for local authorities (February 2018).

Members raised the following points/queries:

Section 4 – Implementing the Principles: Examples of questions for local authorities – could we see a report based on these to demonstrate our effectiveness?

Yes a report would be compiled based on these.

How were the aspirations of young people taken into consideration?

There were a range of methods used for this such as: one to one's; continuity via the social worker; and CIC Council involvement.

Are you satisfied that you could pick up serious issues with abuse?

Yes, there are a number of different avenues for this to be identified such as within schools, allegations that are made, the individual review officers and independent visitors. It was also important to reassure the child that they could speak openly to these people around them.

Can the Children in Care (CIC) Council be invited to a Board meeting?

They would be approached and invited. It was announced that there was a CIC event on 26 June 2018, which had been designed by the CIC Council to celebrate their achievements and those of their carers and foster carers.

Members agreed that it was important to know what our children in care's wishes and feelings and aspirations were. Other than the methods discussed above, it was noted that this dialogue was encouraged through education, social and leisure activities and the citizen work that they did.

The Chair requested that the Elected Members' social worker visits be reinstated, as these had been carried out in the past. Officers would arrange these and advise Members when more information was available.

RESOLVED: That Members note the seven principles and revised expectations in acting as corporate parents.

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CYP7 CHILDREN IN CARE PLACEMENTS

Members received a report from the Strategic Director – People, which provided the Children in Care Scorecard for the end of year (31 March 2018), with a

particular focus on children's placements.

It was reported that the majority of children in care were in foster placements; a mix of in-house foster placements and external independent foster placements (IFAs). There were 76 fostering households within Halton and 19 households were at various stages of the assessment process.

Members were advised that a collaboration had been launched with Warrington, Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester, to improve the marketing, recruitment and assessment of foster carers via a co-ordinated recruitment and marketing hub which was launched in April this year. Staff had already seen an increase in enquiries to Halton to be assessed as foster carers.

The report discussed the importance of having sufficient foster carers within the Borough and advised that the training and support given to foster carers was being revised, to help them develop skills to care for children with more complex and challenging behaviour. The report also provided detailed information on the various different types of placements of children in care.

The Board was advised that the sufficiency strategy for placements had been refreshed and a number of actions were identified, as the capacity in fostering and residential services both in-house and via agencies had been reducing. Shortly a placement team would be established with dedicated roles to manage the identification and sourcing of independent fostering and residential placements and to build better relationships with the independent sector, as detailed in the report.

Members raised the following questions:

Can an individual foster in two different Boroughs?

No you have to be registered with one agency.

With regards to SafeBase and attachment training – could this be extended to schools' governors?

The Virtual School Head (VSH) had additional duties under the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Officers agreed to raise with the VSH how governors could be informed about the work that was being done with schools. It was reported that the Council was in the process of bidding for an area of funding for the Virtual School Head to be able to assist and support children in care.

Were there any statistics relating to the success of adoptions in Halton?

The Local Authority remained in touch with adopting parents for 3 years after the order was made. Following that contact was taken over by the area where the family live. It was highlighted that the teenage years tend to be when problems arise, relating to social media for example, and the child contacting the birth family.

The *Adoption Support Fund* was available whereby an adopting parent can request an assessment of the child and apply for help such as therapy. Actual percentages of breakdowns were not immediately at hand, however a company called *CoramBAAF* had data relating to this. Officers would apply for this and forward to the Board.

Were the time limits still in place for adoptions?

Yes they were and challenges were still being faced regarding adoptions of siblings and BME children.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

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CYP8 EVERYONE EARLY HELP STRATEGY 2018-2021

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – People, which presented the new *Everyone Early Help Strategy* that combined children, adults and public health. The draft document was appended to the report.

It was reported that services to support children, families and vulnerable adults were facing unprecedented challenges. It was clear that early help and prevention services should make up the cornerstone of any delivery model. If low-level needs could be prevented from developing into more serious or acute needs, then this was advantageous to both the provider and service user. It was noted that effective early help and prevention could not only increase independence, improve outcomes and the quality of life for individuals, but also provide a financial return to the Local Authority in the form of cost avoidance and a reduction in the use of more expensive, acute resources.

Members were advised that this transformation in thinking was about undertaking a whole system review of the approach to early help and prevention, with a focus on increasing the resilience of communities and their potential to help themselves, supported by a planned prioritisation of resources, integration, collaboration and understanding the benefits that early help could have on a wide range of longer term outcomes for everyone involved.

The report advised of Halton's approach to early help and prevention where there had been a long standing commitment across all agencies and strategic partners. It was noted that the Council had restructured in 2016-17 to combine the adult and children directorates to create the People's Directorate. Following this it was agreed to create a new joint early help strategy that would sit across the new People Directorate. The report continued, discussing the five key aims of the Strategy, and then the three priorities within the Strategy that all agencies would work towards to help further embed early help principles.

In response to Members' comments the following was noted:

- once the Strategy had been approved the final KPI would be developed and shared with the Board;
- that the Strategy was aimed at all partners including the CCG and had been aligned to the original One Halton approach. The CCG were members of the Strategic Group; the Early Intervention Strategic Partnership Board; and
- It was agreed that self-reliance and resilience building was crucial and there was work being carried out in schools and with families as well as in early years to instil skills which would help parents/carers to better support their own children rather than rely on others to do it for them.

The Board supported the Strategy and requested to be kept up to date with its progress. The Strategy would also be shared with the Health PPB and the Children's Trust.

RESOLVED: That the Board receives the draft strategy and comments made are noted.

CYP9 FURTHER DEVELOPING LINKS BETWEEN HALTON'S BUSINESSES AND SCHOOLS

The Board received the final recommendations proposed by the Scrutiny Topic Group agreed in January 2017 titled '*Further developing links between Halton's Businesses and Schools*'.

It was reported that three lines of enquiry were agreed and then explored:

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- Employer engagement;
- Careers education information; and
- Business needs.

It was noted that whilst the scrutiny work was taking place, the Government released its new Careers Strategy: *Making the most of everyone's skills and talents*. Following this the statutory guidance for schools and colleges about the requirements for delivering careers guidance and linking with employers was updated. These documents were reviewed by the Topic Group during their final meeting and had also influenced the final recommendations. The final recommendations developed by the Scrutiny Topic Group were listed in paragraph 3.4 of the report and were discussed.

Members made the following comments:

- The Careers and Enterprise Company based in St Helens had selected the 3 schools to be involved in the pilot mentoring programme in Halton without any input from Halton itself, so Members asked if Halton could be involved in future initiatives to support the selection process;
- Members noted that although the termly Director's report to Governors contained information about careers guidance and developing employability skills, this needed highlighting so that Governors were encouraged to read and disseminate the information. Officers advised that there was also a 'Chair of Governors' briefing termly, and the careers articles were highlighted in those meetings; and
- Members requested that the Careers and Enterprise Company attend a future Board meeting.

In response to Members' queries regarding the quality assurance of Careers Plans developed by schools/colleges, Members were advised that the recommendation made by the Scrutiny Topic Group was to monitor the existence of plans in line with the National Careers Strategy. The scrutiny of Careers Plans and also Careers Guidance in schools/colleges rested with Ofsted.

RESOLVED: That the Board agrees the recommendations.

CYP10 SCRUTINY TOPIC 2018-19

The Board were requested to select a topic they would like to explore during 2018-19. The Chair suggested that Children's Mental Health Provision be taken forward as the topic for 2018-19; this was agreed by the Board.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) agrees that the scrutiny topic group for 2018-19 will be Children's Mental Health Provision; and
- 2) that the membership of the group be open to all Members of the Board.

CYP11 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT - QUARTER 3 2017-18

The Board received the Performance Management reports for quarter 3 of 2017-18 (1 October to 31 December 2017) and were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of these.

It was noted that the key priorities for development or improvement in 2017-18 were agreed by Members and included in the Local Authority's Business Plan, for the various functional areas reported to the Board as follows:

- Education, Inclusion and Provision Services; and
- Children and Families Services.

The reports detailed progress made against objectives and milestones and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period.

It was commented that this information was now out of date, so Officers provided the Board with some up to date information in relation to quarter 4; however this was still to be verified. Once the quarter 4 performance management reports had been finalised, they would be sent to Members in advance of the next agenda.

RESOLVED: That the performance management reports for quarter 3 of 2017-18 be received.

Meeting ended at 8.50 p.m.