

REPORT TO: Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 1 November 2010

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Resources

SUBJECT: Impact of the dissolution of QUANGOs and agencies on service delivery.

WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report seeks to update Members on the potential impact on service delivery within children and young people's services of the recent announcement of the Non-Departmental Public Bodies that have been dissolved following a review by the Coalition Government. The report also sets out the list of other 'QUANGOs' that relate directly to children and young people's services that have either been retained or remain under consideration before a final decision is made. Bodies which have been abolished will have their functions performed by the civil service.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

(1) Members consider the potential implications on service delivery in Halton caused by the dissolution of the 'QUANGOs' outlined in Section 3.6

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 On October 14th 2010 the Cabinet Office published the list of Non-Departmental Public Bodies (often referred to as QUANGOs – Quasi-Autonomous Non-Governmental Organisations) that have been under review by the Coalition Government. The list sets out whether each have been abolished, merged, retained or remain under consideration. Those that have been abolished will have their functions performed by the civil service.

3.2 The overall breakdown is as follows:

- 192 abolished
- 118 merged
- 380 retained
- 39 remain under consideration

3.3 Those being abolished include the Audit Commission, Standards Board for England and the Regional Development Agencies.

3.4 The breakdown of those Public Bodies directly linked to children and young people's services through the Department for Education is:

- 6 abolished
- 0 merged
- 3 retained
- 8 remain under consideration

3.5 The remit of these 17 Public Bodies and their fate as announced on October 14th is described below.

3.6 Abolished

- **British Educational Communications and Technology Agency**

BECTA has led a national drive to ensure the effective use of technology in learning, working with government to lead the delivery and development of e-strategy. Some functions of this Agency will be transferred to the Department for Education.

- **General Teaching Council for England**

The Council was the professional body for teaching in England, working to improve standards of teaching and learning. It is being abolished as part of wider plans already announced 'to streamline and improve arrangements for underperforming teachers'.

- **Independent Advisory Group on Teenage Pregnancy**

This Group has worked on recommendations to Government around implementing the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy. It will be abolished once its existing remit ends in December 2010. It is envisaged that arrangements will be put into place from 2011 to ensure the Government has access to expert advice as required.

- **Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency**

This Agency has responsibility for developing the curriculum, improving and delivering tests and assessments, and reviewing and reforming qualifications. Some functions, including National Curriculum Tests, will be transferred to the Department for Education.

- **School Food Trust**

The Trust will continue as a charity with the potential to become a community interest company, continuing to promote the education and health of children and young people by improving the quality of food supplied and consumed in schools.

- **Teachers TV Board of Governors**

This Board was established to uphold the independence and ensure best practice within Teachers TV to best meet the needs of the audience. Its functions are to be abolished

3.7 Retained

- **Ofqual**

Ofqual are responsible for regulating National Curriculum assessments (SATs) and for keeping Early Years Foundation Stages (EYFS) assessments under review, GCSEs, A levels, the Diploma, NVQs and vocational qualifications. It will be retained as it performs a technical function that requires impartiality. Legislation will be introduced to strengthen governance arrangements.

- **Ofsted**

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, providing regulation and inspection functions in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It is to continue as it provides a technical function requiring impartiality. Its' inspection functions will be reformed however to increase proportionality and reduce burdens.

- **School Teachers' Review Body**

The Review Body considers matters referred to it by the Secretary of State for the Department for Education in relation to the remuneration, professional duties or working time of school teachers. It reports to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Education. It will be retained to continue its functions that require political impartiality.

3.8 Under Consideration

- **Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)**

CAFCASS looks after the interests of children involved in family proceedings. They work with children and their families, and then advise the courts on what they consider to be in the best interests of individual children. CAFCASS is being considered by the Family Justice Review Panel as part of a full review of the Family Justice System, reporting in 2011.

- **Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC)**

CWDC joins up the way different agencies work, and brings consistency to the way children and young people are listened to and looked after. They provide a voice for employers and make sure their concerns, experiences and views directly influence workforce reform. An announcement on CWDC will be made by the end of 2010.

- **National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services**

The National College works to develop and support leaders of schools, early years settings and children's services. They do this by developing the next generation of headteachers and other senior leaders to ensure quality of leadership for schools, children's centres and children's services, and by

providing a range of leadership programmes and support. An announcement on the College's future will be made before the end of 2010.

- **Partnership for Schools**

This is a joint venture company that was set up to deliver the Building Schools for the Future programme, integrating this with delivery of the Academies programme where possible. This Partnership is subject to the overarching review of the Department for Education's capital expenditure, to be completed in December 2010.

- **School Support Staff Negotiating Body**

This Body was established in 2009 to negotiate school support staff pay and conditions of employment. Its future is subject to further discussions with employer and union representatives.

- **The Office of the Children's Commissioner**

Its role is to ensure that Children's Workforce considers the needs of children and young people and listens to their views, and also provide a voice for children and young people, especially those who are vulnerable. The Office is currently subject to a formal review that will be finalised in November 2010.

- **Training and Development Agency for Schools**

This is the recognised sector body responsible for the training and development of the school workforce. Options for the future have been considered and an announcement made later this year.

- **Young People's Learning Agency**

The YPLA was established by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and launched in April 2010 to provide financial support to young learners, by funding academies for all their provision and by supporting local authorities to commission suitable education and training opportunities for all 16-19 year olds. Its future is subject to education structure reforms.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The abolition of the six Public Bodies outlined in Section 3.6, together with the potential impact of the loss of those that remain under consideration, (see Section 3.8) will have a varying impact on delivery of children and young people's services in Halton. A number of the Public Bodies contained in this report have had little or no role to play in service delivery in Halton and so the changes to them outlined will not be felt. Others have informed service delivery and so the changes or potential changes to these will have a greater impact but the arrangements in place in Halton should minimise this and it should be noted that many of the functions will continue through the Civil Service.
- 4.2 In terms of those that have been abolished, the greatest potential for impact on service delivery is within elements of the health agenda and schools.

- 4.3 In particular, the removal of the Independent Advisory Group on Teenage Pregnancy could potentially affect the implementation of the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy in Halton. This however, is a key priority across both Children & Young People and Health, and the work done in partnership to implement the Strategy in Halton should ensure that its implementation and roll out continues.
- 4.4 The removal of the General Teaching Council could also be a concern but the retention of Ofsted and the School Teachers' Review Body, as well as local measures in place, should ensure that the standards of teaching and learning are not affected.
- 4.5 The retention of Ofsted at a time when many other inspectorates have been abolished should ensure some consistency between current and future assessments of children's services. The intention to reduce burdens and increase proportionality should bring benefits but how this will be achieved has yet to be outlined. Equally, the retention of Ofqual should allow for continuity in assessments for each age range.
- 4.6 The outcome of the reviews of those agencies under consideration will become apparent over the next twelve months. Those of particular importance for work in Halton are the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, Children's Workforce Development Council and Young People's Learning Agency. The review of each of these agencies will be monitored and the decisions reached communicated in due course.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are a number of additional agencies that have strong links with children and young people's service delivery but which are housed within other governmental departments that have been abolished, merged, or remain under consideration. The implications of these decisions made in terms of Public Bodies such as the Youth Justice Board and Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission also need to be considered in terms of future service delivery.
- 5.2 Members should also be aware that it was confirmed in mid-October that Government Office North West (GONW) is to be abolished. The intention for this was announced in July, subject to further consideration prior to the Spending Review. GONW has had a key role in offering support at a regional level, providing a more direct link to aid the implementation of Central Government initiatives locally in Halton. This support has been available for work within all priority themes, including Children & Young People. Within children's service delivery, this support has been utilised around areas such as safeguarding, as well as to aid the implementation of performance monitoring arrangements for the broad range of Children & Young People indicators within the Local Area

Agreement, which will continue until March 2011. The expectation will be on Halton to respond locally to Central Government announcements and initiatives, undertaking its own responsibilities without regional support.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 For each of the Council's priorities, the announcements around the abolition, merger or retention of the Non-Departmental Public Bodies that relate directly to that priority could have an affect on service delivery if robust measures are not in place. A number of the Public Bodies outlined in this report cut across Children & Young People and other priorities, in particular, Health, Employment, Learning & Skills, and Safer Halton.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Work will be done to ensure that impact on children and young people's service delivery is minimal.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 It is not envisaged at this stage that the announcements made will have any equality and diversity ramifications.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

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