

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 16 DECEMBER 2010

EXB77 TRADED SERVICES FOR LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT – KEY DECISION

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director Children and Young People on the proposal to develop a Joint Venture model for School Improvement.

The Board were advised that, since the establishment of the Coalition Government in May 2010, the emerging political landscape and economic constraints had begun to reshape the way in which local authorities were expected to deliver services to schools. This included the national policy position of devolving power from local authorities to Headteachers as commissioners of school improvement services.

The Schools White Paper – The Importance of Teaching – was published on 25 November 2010 and the report outlined the Government's stated commitment to:

- make clear that schools – governors, headteachers and teachers had responsibility for improvement. Also end the requirement for every school to have a local authority school improvement partner (SIP) and end the current centralised target-setting process;
- ensure that schools had access to evidence of best practice, high-quality materials and improvement services, which they could choose to use;
- as the National Strategies and other field forces come to an end, support of a new market of school improvement services with a much wider range of providers and services available for schools to choose from;
- free local authorities to provide whatever forms of improvement support they choose, with expectations that alternative business models would be explored by local authorities; and
- ensure that schools below the floor standard received support.

Senior officers from Halton and Warrington Borough Councils had worked together to develop a service proposal to deliver school improvement functions in partnership with a private provider. This would increase the volume of schools

potentially purchasing the service and therefore improve the viability. The report gave details of the options appraisals and the joint venture model timeline for Members' consideration.

Reason(s) for decision

The rationale for preferring a Joint Venture was due to the lack of contractual control of the income, i.e. the services would be procured via the school budgets and not the local authority budgets. In looking for this partner, the authorities should be able to mitigate the redundancy liability of school improvement staff whose funding would end on 31 March 2011. This was a significant saving to the Council, but also offered the employees concerned a continuity of their employment.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The alternative of Joint Venture had been considered as part of the option appraisal and this model demonstrated the best solution to the Council.

Implementation Date

The selected bidder would be formally announced on 12 July 2011 for mobilisation by 1 September 2011.

<1>RESOLVED: That

- 1) the development of the preferred approach of the Joint Venture Model for the delivery of school improvement services in conjunction with Warrington Borough Council and a private provider be agreed, subject to schools contributing funding to the delivery of the service between April and August 2011; and
- 2) the Joint Venture Model timeline, as set out in the report, be agreed.

EXB78 OFSTED'S ANNUAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES ASSESSMENT

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Young people on Ofsted's Annual Children's Services Assessment.

The Board were advised that in reaching the assessment of Children and Young People's Services, Ofsted had taken account of all inspected and regulated services, arrangements for Child Protection along with performance against national performance indicators. The overall judgement that Halton was performing well was derived from a wide ranging assessment of services, listed in the report. The letter from Ofsted, attached as Appendix 1, would be the

subject of detailed consideration and action by the Halton Safeguarding Children Board and Halton's Children's Trust.

<1>RESOLVED: That the Board note

- 1) Ofsted's judgement that Children and Young People's Services in Halton continue to perform well; and
- 2) the large majority of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are good or better.

EXB79 SHARED SERVICES

The Board was advised that Cheshire West and Chester Council had approached Halton Council to explore the possibility of having a Shared Service for Children and Young People. It was reported that this would be an opportunity for the Council to share skills and expertise it had as a Children and Young People's Directorate more widely. There was also the scope to explore a range of efficiencies over time.

It was anticipated that proposals for a Shared Service would develop on a stepped basis, where it was viewed by both Councils as meeting its needs. Each Council would remain sovereign in terms of its responsibilities for services to children and young people. Members would remain responsible and accountable for their own population. Further reports would follow detailing how the issues listed below would be taken forward:

- Legal Agreements;
- Accountability and Governance arrangements;
- Councillor involvement;
- Financial arrangements;
- Personnel matters;
- The scope for the arrangements and their timing;
- Reporting arrangements; and
- Risk Register.

Reason(s) for decision

The Council has the opportunity to provide expertise in Child Protection and Children and Young People's Services to a wider community.

The Shared Service is intended to provide a range of efficiencies for the Council in the medium term.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The Council does not take up Shared Service Opportunities. Given the current financial context this does not appear in the Council's best interests.

Implementation Date

The first step in agreeing the initial management arrangements is January 2011.

<1>RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Strategic Director of Children & Young People's Services, agree the first steps in having a Shared Service for children and young people with Cheshire West and Chester Council. This would initially only involve arrangements for the Strategic Director of Children's Services and the Safeguarding Unit Manager.
- 2) the stepped approach to shared arrangements beyond this, with reports at each stage of the process be agreed. This is with specific reference to items within Paragraph 3.5 contained in this report and other areas identified for shared arrangements.