

Extract of Executive Board Minutes relevant to the Children, Young Peoples and Families Policy and Performance Board

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2017

EXB77	HOME TO SCHOOL AND COLLEGE TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT POLICY FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) – KEY DECISION
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People, which sought approval for a revised assessment and eligibility criteria process for the Home to School and College Travel and Transport Policy (the Policy). The Policy applied to Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The Board was advised that the Local Authority had a statutory duty to ensure that suitable travel arrangements were made to facilitate a child's attendance at school. It was reported that currently, 385 pupils with SEND received support from the Local Authority to access educational provision, either in or out of Borough. The changes to the Policy would impact on new applications or at the point of transition.

Executive Board had approved a consultation process on a revised assessment and eligibility criteria process at its meeting on 14 July 2016. This report set out the details of the proposed changes which were consulted upon. It was reported that thirteen responses were received, and these were summarised at Appendix 1.

It was further noted that the Council's Internal Audit were currently undertaking a review of Sustainable School Travel. Any findings from that review would be implemented and included along with any agreed changes to the proposed assessment and eligibility criteria process. This would be submitted to the Board for approval at a later date.

Reason(s) for Decision

The decision was required to fulfil the Council's statutory duty to provide, where required, and promote the use of sustainable travel and transport.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Implementation Date

Any revised policy would be implemented for the September 2017 academic intake.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the revised assessment and eligibility criteria as set out in paragraphs 3.9 and 3.10 of the report, be approved for inclusion in the Home to School and College Travel and Transport Policy for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities; and
- 2) the implementation from September 2017 for new applications or applications at the point of transition be approved.

EXB78	CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2017-18 AND BASIC NEED – KEY DECISION
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People, which provided a summary of the Capital Programmes for 2017/18 for the People Directorate.

The Board was advised that in February 2015, the Department for Education (DfE) announced the schools capital grant allocations for 2015/16, as well as indicative allocations for the two year period 2016/17 and 2017/18. By introducing three year allocations, the DfE was enabling those responsible for the school estate, to plan effectively and make strategic investment decisions. The report contained details on the indicative funding notified for 2017/18, as well as how the School Condition Allocation and Capital Expenditure Revenue Account funding would be allocated. It was noted that schools were required to make a contribution, and it was estimated that this contribution would be in the region of £35,358, based on current budget costs for the works.

It was reported that to ease capacity issues at Lunts Heath Primary School, and to provide additional places going forward in east Widnes, the provision of an additional classroom was recommended. This would assist with current school organisation issues and allow for an increase in the School's overall capacity once the building works were complete. It was noted that if agreed, the School's Published Admission Number would increase from 50 places to 60 places per year group.

Reason(s) for Decision

To deliver and implement the Capital Programmes.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Implementation Date

Capital Programmes for 2017/18 would be implemented from 1 April 2017. If the proposed works at Lunts Heath Primary School were approved, and planning permission agreed, it was anticipated that any works undertaken would be completed in the 2017/18 academic year.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Capital Funding available for 2017/18 be noted;
- 2) the proposals to be funded from the School Condition Capital Allocation be approved;
- 3) Council be recommended to approve the Capital Programme 2017/18; and
- 4) the proposal for the provision of an additional classroom at Lunts Health Primary School be approved.

EXB79	REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY UPDATE
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People, which provided a progress report on the development of a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA). It also provided information on decisions taken under delegated authority by the Strategic Director, People, and the Lead Member for Children, Young People and Families.

It was reported that the RAA was being developed in the context of Government policy to regionalise adoption. The RAA project had been granted £639k by the Department for Education to establish the RAA by 1 June 2017. The five local authorities, named in the report included Halton, Wigan, and Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC) Councils, had agreed that the RAA would be a shared local authority service. Wigan Council would provide the service and CWAC would act as the lead commissioner. It was noted that staff in scope for the service would be seconded to Wigan with a formal review after one year of operation.

The report provided Members with information on the following aspect of the proposals:-

- the reasons for change;
- the scope of the RAA;
- the services offered by the RAA;
- partnership, governance and funding arrangements;
- the organisational structure;
- premises under consideration;
- systems and IT requirements;
- costs associated with the adoption service, with Halton's contribution being approximately 15% of the total budget;
- the expected benefits identified; and
- a timeline of the next steps in the process.

RESOLVED: That Members note the summary report for the full and detailed business case and inter-authority agreement, and in particular, the following points:-

- 1) The inter-authority agreement which sets out the legal and governance arrangements for the RAA, the role of the Lead Member in the partnership board which would oversee the RAA, how future finance and budgets would be agreed and the notice period if any partner wishes to withdraw (Section 5).
- 2) The current basis for funding the RAA being based on levels of activity directly relating to numbers of children with a confirmed plan for adoption (Section 9).

Halton's contribution of 15% of the overall budget would be £318,114 which was slightly below the current budget. Any efficiencies identified would be used to invest in the RAA as it transitions to its new partnership.

- 3) The service would be named Adopt Together and Wigan would be the delivery Local Authority. There would be a "hub" based in Warrington but social workers would still use Halton as a base on a regular basis.
- 4) The service offer is outlined in Section 4 and staff would be consulted on the detail in the New Year.

EXB80

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY CONTRACT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People, which sought authorisation to commence a joint tender process for the Children and Young People's Speech and Language Therapy Contract by Halton Borough Council (HBC) and Halton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

The Board was advised that HBC and the CCG currently commissioned speech and language therapy provision for children and young people separately, with each contract delivering different service elements. It was reported that the proposal to jointly commission the service would confer a number of benefits and enhance seamless and effective provision for clients, with anticipated cost savings and align with the Government's focus and joint commissioning arrangements across health, education and social care.

Details of the business case were set out in the report for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the request for authorisation.

EXB81

SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2018 – KEY DECISION

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, People, on school admission arrangements for the September 2018 academic intake into Halton's schools.

The Board was advised that in October 2016, Halton Local Authority issued a statutorily required consultation paper on the proposed admission arrangements and co-ordinated admission schemes for the September 2018 intake. It was noted that the consultation ran until 11 November 2016, with no changes proposed to the current oversubscription criteria for Local Authority schools. It was reported that no responses to the consultation had been received.

As commissioner of school places, the Local Authority must ensure that the admission arrangements were fair, clear and objective and complied fully with all statutory requirements.

Reason(s) for Decision

The decision was statutorily required and any revision to the proposed arrangements may adversely affect school place planning as detailed in paragraph 7.1 of the report.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Other options considered and rejected included the allocation of places through random allocation (lottery) as this method could be seen as arbitrary and random.

Implementation Date

The Policy would apply for the September 2018 academic intake.

RESOLVED: That the School Admissions Policy, Admission Arrangements and Coordinated Schemes for admission to primary and secondary schools for the 2018/19 academic year, be approved.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 16 MARCH 2017

EXB105	SHARED FOSTERING SERVICE – KEY DECISION
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People, which sought approval to develop a shared fostering service.

It was reported that there had been an unprecedented national rise in the number of children coming into care, which had resulted in local authority fostering services unable to meet demand. In Halton, the capacity of the in-house fostering service was severely stretched with a reduction in the number of fostering households.

The Board was advised that, operating as a single entity, each of the four Cheshire local authorities, were competing with their neighbours as well as with a strong independent fostering agency (IFA) market. The report set out details of the key aims, objectives and benefits of a proposed shared fostering service across Cheshire.

Reason(s) for Decision

In order for Halton Borough Council to meet its statutory duty to provide sufficient foster placements for children coming into care or those already in care, it was necessary for a new model/approach to be delivered. Current demand outstripped provision and there was a heavy reliance on costly IFA placements which placed a financial pressure on the Council.

A shared fostering service was a model that offered economies of scale that should lead to a more operationally efficient and cost effective service.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Halton could continue as it was but there was not the capacity to undertake the level of marketing, recruitment and assessment required to meet the demand for foster carers. Over the short term, additional resource would be required to bolster our local recruitment but at the moment the lack of capacity of staff and poor market supply was having an impact on the services' ability to match children appropriately for the far fewer number of foster carers and providing the right level of support to our current foster carers; this was increasing the risk of placement breakdown and the consequent higher costs with increased use of IFAs and residential provision. The matching of children with foster carers was an area to improve, highlighted by the Ofsted Inspection in 2014.

Implementation Date

October 2017.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board approves

- 1) the proposal for a shared fostering service should be developed between Warrington, Halton, Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East;
- 2) that one of the partner authorities will be the single local authority acting as the provider of the shared service;
- 3) that further decisions regarding the development and establishment of the shared fostering services are delegated to the Strategic Director, People, in consultation with the Lead Member for Children, Young People and Families; and
- 4) authority to sign off an inter-authority agreement is delegated to the Strategic Director, People.

EXB106	PROCUREMENT OF A NEW 0-19 HEALTHY CHILD SERVICE FOR HALTON – KEY DECISION
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The Board considered a report of the Director of Public Health, on the procurement of a new 0-19 Healthy Child Service for Halton.

Halton Borough Council was responsible for commissioning services to promote the health and wellbeing of children and young people resident in Halton, with the aim of improving public health outcomes and reducing health inequalities across the life course.

The report set out the proposal to secure a provider to deliver the integrated 0-19 Public Health Service to deliver the Healthy Child Programme, providing both universal and targeted support services to help improve the health and wellbeing of children, young people and families in the Borough.

Reason(s) for Decision

A decision was required to enable the procurement exercise to commence. As the value of the proposed contract would exceed the EU threshold for services of this type, Executive Board approval was sought.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Implementation Date

The new procurement process would commence immediately, with the new service in place by September 2017.

RESOLVED: That the proposal to tender for the 0-19 Healthy Child Service for children, young people and families in Halton, be approved.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 20 APRIL 2017

EXB124	HOME TO SCHOOL AND COLLEGE TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT POLICY FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) AND HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT POLICY (STATUTORY SCHOOL AGE) – KEY DECISION
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People, which sought approval for two policies relating to school travel and transport.

The Board was advised that the Local Authority had a statutory duty to ensure suitable travel arrangements were made, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school. At the meeting of Executive Board on 19 January 2017, the Board approved revised criteria and an application process for inclusion in the Home to School and College Travel and Transport Policy for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Following this, two separate policy documents were finalised and presented for the Board's approval.

Reason(s) for Decision

The decision was required to fulfil the Council's statutory duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Implementation Date

The two policies would be implemented for the September 2017 academic intake.

RESOLVED: That the revised Home to School and College Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and the Home to School Travel and Transport Policy (Statutory School Age), be approved.