

Public Document Pack

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Children and Young People Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 3 November 2008 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Dennett (Chairman), Horabin (Vice-Chairman), Browne, Drakeley, Fraser, Gilligan, J. Lowe and Stockton

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Higginson, Parker, M. Ratcliffe and Mr. C. Chorley

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: P.Boyce, L. Butcher, L. Derbyshire, J. Kirk, A. McIntyre, G. Meehan and A. Villiers

Also in attendance: In accordance with Standing Order 33 Councillor McInerney – Portfolio Holder, Children and Young People

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

CYP18 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th September 2008 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CYP19 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.

CYP20 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The Minutes of the Executive Board and the Executive Board Sub-Committee relating to the work of the Children and Young People Policy and Performance Board were submitted for information.

In respect of Minute No: EXB37, Members commended Officers for the excellent Joint Area Review.

In respect of Minute No: EXB57 – Play Builder Project

– Clarity was sought on whether the new playgrounds had been identified.

In response it was reported that the Executive Board had approved the Year 1 projects and options for Years 2 and 3. It was anticipated that the funding, £1m over three years for the Play Builder Project would fund up to 24 play areas in the Borough. It was suggested that the Executive Board be circulated to all Members of the Board for information.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Minutes and comment raised be noted; and
- (2) the report relating to Minute No: EXB57 – the Play Builder Project be circulated to all Members of the Board.

Strategic Director-
Children & Young
People

CYP21 QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORTS

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive on progress against service plan objectives and performance targets, performance trends / comparisons and factors affecting the services for:

- Specialist Services;
- Universal and Learning Services;
- Preventative Services; and
- Business Planning and Resources.

The Chairman reported that a Special Meeting of the Board had been arranged on 26th November 2008, at 6.30 pm in the Civic Suite, Runcorn Town Hall. He also gave an update on the Working Groups as follows:-

- Oral Health Working Group – Ongoing
- Access To Services for the Homeless – a new Lead Officer is to be identified; and
- The Youth Justice Board - a meeting would be arranged in the near future.

Universal & Learning Services

- The key areas of developments were noted;
- ULS3 – To improve Educational Outcomes for all Children at Primary Level – clarity was sought on the

amber light. In response it was reported that in this area of work there would always be areas that could be improved resulting in the amber light. This enabled the Authority to stay alert and ensure that firm controls were in place and action taken when and if required;

- ULS6 – To reduce health inequalities by promoting healthy lifestyles in schools – clarity was sought on what was being done to increase the percentage of young people between the ages of 4 – 18 participating in at least two hours of high quality PE school sport. In response it was reported that work was continually being undertaken with schools to improve this indicator. However, it was also highlighted that it was a difficult indicator to monitor and it was probable that the percentage was higher than the recorded 86%;
- It was noted that the Building Schools for the Future Programme would map out the provision of PE, Sports, Arts and Culture and how to extend their use and increase facilities. It was also noted that the National Health School Status included participation in exercise;
- The revised funding for SEN Units implemented in April 2008 was noted;
- Leadership and Management Hub – The issues and actions being taken to address the potential shortfall in the number of headteachers available to replace headteachers leaving their posts because of retirement etc in the next few years was noted;
- It was noted that there had been a 7% rise in KS3 results this year . It was also noted that the press had reported that there would not be SATS or report cards in the future. However, the Authority would put appropriate mechanisms in place to check and monitor progress at KS3;
- In respect of the issue of boys underachieving, it was noted that an analysis of this group would be undertaken and solutions formulated; and
- Standard School Year – It was noted that consultation was being undertaken by a number of Greater Merseyside Authorities on whether to move to a Standard School Year, splitting the school year into

six terms of roughly equal lengths and fixing this pattern regardless of the Easter Celebration. It was also noted that with the exception of Liverpool, the Authorities were consulting at the same time with the same consultation principles.

Preventative Services

- It was noted that work was being undertaken to progress the co-ordination and delivery of services to children, young people and families on a locality basis across the Borough. It was also noted that Working within the Children's Trust arrangements, a Project Plan was being compiled which would over time see the join up of services across the 0-19 age range across a locality footprint. It was suggested the project plan be presented to a future meeting of the Board in order to obtain Members views;
- My Place Bid – It was noted that the Authority had submitted a radical and innovative bid to secure an investment of £2.5m to redesign and refurbish the Kingsway Health Building into a Youth Hub to be called 'The Buzz';
- PRU's / Alternative Provision - It was noted that DCSF had published a white paper 'Back on Track' in response to the perception of the poor quality of alternative provision nationally;
- Child Poverty – Innovation Pilots – It was noted that the bid had been unsuccessful and this was being discussed with Government Office, North West as it was felt to have been a strong bid;
- The challenges relating to Sexual Health Services were noted. It was also noted that the National Support Team for teenage pregnancy had visited Halton on the 22nd September 2008 to review Halton's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy. It was suggested that the Board receive the feedback from the visit and this be combined with the review being undertaken on sexual health services in conjunction with the PCT;
- The increase in the number of young people contracting Sexually Transmitted Diseases from unprotected sex was noted. The actions being taken to address this issue were also noted;

- The importance of the emphasis being on relationships and self esteem rather than sex and the targeted work being undertaken to achieve this was noted; and
- The Integrated Youth Agenda which integrated and maximised support mechanisms for teenage services was noted.

Specialist Services

- The key developments in respect of the Safeguarding Unit were noted:
- It was noted that an update on the issues in respect of Halton's Safeguarding Board would be included in Quarter 3's performance monitoring report;
- It was noted that there had been a significant increase in demand for specialist services along with an increase in costs for placements for Children in Care, which was subject to a detailed review. It was also noted that the increase in demand over the last 18 months had been in two key areas, children in need cases and the cost of placements for children in care, particularly the out of borough placements;
- It was noted that a Placement Strategy was currently being developed and this would look at ways of improving the local supply of foster care. It was suggested that a detailed report on the Placement Strategy and the cost of Out of Borough Placements be presented to a future meeting of the Board;
- The improvements in respect of SS L12 – the percentage of Care Leavers living in temporary accommodation was noted;
- SS L13 – the percentage of Social Care referrals with neglect as the primary factor – the reasons for the Authority being unlikely to hit the yearly target was noted;
- NI 63 – Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement – it was noted that this was a critical indicator and had significantly improved and was higher than the national target;
- The mechanisms for tracking young people in the Council's care when they move to another area was

noted;

- It was agreed that the Board would receive a regular report on the number of jobs being created by the Council and its key partners, for Children in Care;
- It was noted that in the north west 21 authorities had formed and approved a collective residential provider list which allowed a comparison of standards between the private residential providers. This list was also published; and
- It was suggested that the Board receive a report on the Placement Strategy and the quality of Section 33 reports and training requirements.

Business Support and Commissioning

- It was noted that the Alliance Board meeting on the 3rd September 2008 considered proposals for a new structure to replace existing arrangements and establish a Children's Trust;
- It was noted that the BSF Strategy Part 1 outlining the vision for BSF in Halton had now been approved. It was also noted that The Strategy for Change Part 2 had to be completed by 19th November 2008. This detailed document was available to view on the Council's website;
- BSC 2 – To deploy resources effectively and efficiently – Implement medium term Financial Plan Sept 2008 – it was noted that to date this had not been developed;
- BSC 5 – To recruit and retain a fully staffed trained and motivated workforce – it was noted that there were some outstanding issues relating to Job Evaluation that was currently being addressed. It was also noted that recruitment was proving to be more difficult as some posts had been evaluated below the market rate;
- It was noted that CRB checks were only required when there would be direct access to young people;
- BPR L121 – The number of service areas subject to strategic needs analysis – The complexity of the Strategic Needs Analysis which had lead to capacity issues was noted;

- Concern was raised that a considerable number of capital projects had not commenced. It was noted that a report outlining all capital projects would be considered by the Executive Board in December and a carry over would be possible; and
- It was suggested that future performance reports include a reference to financial issues including staff shortages and recruitment issues.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the quarterly performance management reports be received;
- (2) the Board consider and respond to the consultation on the Standard School Year before its presentation to the Executive Board;
- (3) the Board consider a report on sexual health and related services that would also include feedback from the National Support Team;
- (4) a report on the number of jobs created within the Council and key partners, for Children in Care in the Borough be presented to the Board on a regular basis;
- (5) the Project Plan within the Children's Trust arrangements be considered at a future meeting of the Board; and
- (6) a detailed report on the Placement Strategy and the cost of Out of Borough placements be presented to a future meeting of the Board.

Strategic Director-
Children & Young
People

CYP22 SPECIALIST STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP MINUTES

The Chairman requested that this item be deferred for consideration at the next meeting. He indicated that Members could email any concerns that would not wait for the next meeting to the Committee Administrator for action.

RESOLVED: That consideration of this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Board.

CYP23 QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION - COUNCILLOR MCINERNEY

The Chairman requested that this item be deferred to the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That consideration of this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Board.

CYP24 TRANSITION FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Young people which provided Members with an overview of the issues that impact on Children in Care and their experience of transition from care into adult life.

The Board was advised that there were 148 Children in Care in Halton and 78 Care Leavers. The population of Children in Care had remained consistent over a number of years as a result of the emphasis placed on supporting families and seeing care as a final positive choice for children and young people.

The Board was further advised that all children who came into care had a clear plan, which considered the needs of the individual child and how these needs could be matched to an alternative carer and other service provision. The care planning process was driven by the health and well being of the child.

It was reported that the Authority would need to improve the continuity of planning for children as they leave care and delay the 'event' until the young person was ready to leave home. This could be achieved by extending the offer for young people to stay with their carer until they were 21 years of age. It was highlighted that this would have funding implications and could have an impact on the availability of placements for other children, but it was an essential first step to improving outcomes for Children in Care.

The actions and the next steps as set out in paragraphs 4.3 (i-v), 4.4 and 4.5 of the report were also highlighted for consideration by the Board.

Arising from the discussion, the following comments were noted:-

- It was noted that Appendix 1 to the Children in Care Strategy was not attached to the report. It was agreed that this be circulated to Members;

- It was suggested that a report be presented to the Board on the quality of the Section 33 and Climbē visits before the Corporate Parenting Conference was rerun in February 2009. It was also suggested that information on the visits be sent to all Members asking that they receive training and participate in the visits;
- Concern was raised regarding the quality of the reports in respect of Section 33 visits and ensuring that actions were followed up. It was suggested that the form be amended to include a date for any actions that had been taken. It was suggested that the reports, be anonymised and reported back to the Board;
- The Board supported the actions set out in paragraphs 4.3 (i-v) and the next steps set out in paragraph 4.5 of the report.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Appendix 1 to the Children in Care Strategy be circulated to all Members of the Board;
- (2) a report detailing the quality of Section 33 and Climbē visits be presented to the January meeting of the Board;
- (3) the Section 33 and Climbē visit reports be anonymised and reported back to the Board as good practice; and
- (4) the actions set out in paragraphs 4.3 (i-v) and the next steps set out in paragraph 4.5 of the report, as attached to the minutes, be approved.

Strategic Director-
Children & Young
People

Meeting ended at 9.05 p.m.

APPENDIX

4.3 ACTIONS

- i). The Children in Care Strategy (Appendix 1) and JAR improvement plan identify the actions required to address the areas for improvement identified in the JAR and in the Care Matters Change for Children program. Care Matters sets out a new deal for Children in Care and for care leavers. This new deal provides many challenges for the Council and the Children's Trust but in many ways provides us with a real opportunity to get things right.
- ii). We will need to improve the continuity of planning for children as they leave care and delay the "event" until the young person is ready to leave home. Extending the offer for young people to stay with their carer until they are 21 is the beginning of this process. Whilst this will cost money and may impact on the availability of placements for other children this is an essential first step to improving outcomes for Children in Care. A feasibility exercise is currently being undertaken in social care as part of the development of a placement strategy for Children in Care.
- iii). Social care teams will need to be reconfigured to avoid the transfer of case management when a young person reaches the age of 16. A more suitable age would be 13/14 as this is a time when all young people start to consider their futures as they decide on the Key Stage 4 options.
- iv). The Council and Children's trust will need to fully implement the Care Leavers employment policy, which guarantees care leavers a job or an entitlement to ongoing training and learning. All Directorates in the Council, the LSP and Children's Trust will need to commit to this policy. The support services required to enable young people to engage with this offer are managed by social care.
- v). The Council, LSP and Children's Trust will need to secure from local housing trusts and registered social landlords a range of accommodation sufficient to give a choice to care leavers about where they live.

4.5 NEXT STEPS

- The Corporate Parenting conference is rerun in February 2009 for all Members, Senior Officers in the Council, LSP and Children's Trust, Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors. This event would ensure that all these key people are made aware of their role and responsibilities with regard to Children in Care, and are able to explicitly identify how they intend to take forward their Corporate Parenting responsibilities.

- Members scrutinize the implementation of the Children in Care Employment Policy to ensure that care leavers are given every opportunity to find employment in the Council, LSP and Children's Trust partner agencies.
- Members scrutinize the provision of accommodation for care leavers and in particular the reasons why care leavers live in temporary accommodation.
- Members scrutinize the implementation of the Children in Care Strategy and JAR improvement plan.