

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2025

EXB 72	SCHOOLS ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS 2026-27 – KEY DECISION
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The Board received a report of the Executive Director – Children’s Services, which requested the approval of the School Admissions Policy, Admission Arrangements and Co-ordinated Schemes, for admission to primary and secondary schools, including Academy, Free School and Voluntary Controlled schools for the September 2026 intake.

The Board was advised that on 1 October 2024, the Local Authority issued a statutorily required consultation on the proposed admission arrangements and co-ordinated admission schemes for the September 2026 intake for primary and secondary schools (attached as appendices 1 and 2 respectively). The primary scheme also included the proposed oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled schools for whom the Local Authority was the admission authority.

The report provided details of the consultation, which ran until 12 November 2024. It was noted that no amendments to the oversubscription criteria were suggested, as these reflected the criteria worked well and met the requirements of the Department for Education’s School Admissions Code.

It was noted that all Halton’s secondary schools were either academies, free schools or voluntary aided and were therefore their own admission authorities, with responsibility for consulting and determining their own admissions criteria and their own Published Admission Number (PAN).

Reason(s) for Decision

Local Authorities as the admission authority for community and voluntary schools are required to consult and then determine their admission arrangements annually, and are also required to determine coordinated schemes for primary and secondary admission rounds that apply to all schools.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

Implementation Date

The implementation date is September 2025 which is when the timetabled process for the September 2026 intake commences.

RESOLVED: That the Board approves the Coordinated Scheme for Admission to Primary Schools – which also contains the Local Authority's admissions criteria to community and voluntary controlled schools, and approves the Co-ordinated Scheme for admission to secondary schools, both of which will apply to the September 2026 intake.

EXB73	CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025-26 – KEY DECISION
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The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Children's Services, which provided a summary of the capital funding received by the Council from central Government to support capital works and programmes within schools for 2025/26.

The Board was advised that the Department for Education (DfE) had not announced the School Condition Allocation Capital Grant for 2025/26 however, given the timescales for some of the proposed capital projects, there was a requirement to present this report, so it was compiled using the 2024/25 allocation, which was £704,785.

The report set out details of the indicative funding available to support capital projects across the schools estate and also explained how the School Condition Allocation would be utilised.

Reason(s) for Decision

The Council was required to demonstrate appropriate identification of need against spend from the School Condition Allocation Grant. The work would provide schools with a suitable learning environment and manage the condition of the educational buildings we are responsible for.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Implementation Date

It is intended that all works would be completed by March 2026.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the position regarding capital funding from the Department for Education for 2025/26 be noted;
- 2) the proposals to be funded from the School Condition Capital Allocation and Basic Need Funding be approved; and
- 3) the capital allocations are put forward for inclusion in the budget report to full Council.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 20 FEBRUARY 2025

EXB 89	PERMISSION TO CONSULT – HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITIES – KEY DECISION
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The Board considered a report which sought approval to commence a consultation with stakeholders and partners with a view to determining a new policy on sustainable travel and transport for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. In accordance with the DfE Statutory Guidance, provision of assisted home to school transport is for eligible SEND pupils of statutory school age, 5-16 years of age. The Council currently provides a transport service to early years children and post 16 SEND students, which falls outside of their statutory duties.

The Board was advised that the number of SEND pupils requiring specialist transport had significantly increased over the past number of years. This was a trend that appeared to be replicated in every other local authority across the country. A comparison in Halton was provided in the report for between 2012 and 2024 for in Borough and out of Borough transport.

It was proposed that the Local Authority consults with parents/carers, educational establishments and other interested parties on revised travel solutions. The consultation would take the form of two parts:

Part A: Flexible travel arrangements and increasing independence

This would include, personal travel budgets, escalation of independent travel training, centralised picks ups and mobility vehicles.

Part B: Reviewing discretionary transport

This would include distance criteria, provision of transport for pupils under the age of 5 years, post 16 transport and governance changes.

Reason(s) for Decision

The report seeks the Board approval to commence a consultation with stakeholders and partners with a view to determining a new policy on sustainable travel and transport for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The alternative option would be to not consult on Home to School Transport provision and continue with the current policy.

Implementation Date

June 2025 report back to Executive Board.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) note the report;
- 2) approve the commencement of a consultation with stakeholders and partners with regard to implementing a new Home to School and College Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities from September 2025; and
- 3) confirm they support the overall process.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 13 March 2025

EXB110	SERVICES FOR MISSING FROM HOME AND CARE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS CHESHIRE FOR HALTON, CHESHIRE WEST & CHESTER AND WARRINGTON: REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STANDING ORDERS
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The Board considered a request for a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 iv of part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders to allow the continuation of a contract with We are With You to deliver on behalf of the Council, the Tri-Party Missing from Home and Care Service, for a period of one year from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026. We are With You was commissioned to deliver the Pan Cheshire Missing from Home and Care Service across Warrington, Cheshire West and Halton.

RESOLVED: The Board approve that the contract with We are With You should be extended for a further twelve months without going through the Procurement process, in pursuance of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (non-emergency procedures – exceeding a value threshold of £100,000), seeking to waive part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 17 APRIL 2025

EXB122	RECRUITMENT OF TWO SPECIALIST FOSTER CARERS
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The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Children's Services, which sought approval to the invest to save proposal of recruiting 2 Specialist Foster Carer's as an additional care option for our Children and Young People with complex needs in Care. The report set out the benefits to the child and to the Council of a Specialist Foster Carers Scheme.

RESOLVED: The Board approve the recruitment of 2 Specialist Foster Carers as part of a scheme that aims to move children and/or young people from high cost residential placements into a foster care, family environment.

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Children's Services, that outlined the background and current position of the supported accommodation contract and proposed options around re-procurement of the Service.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted and options appraised;
- 2) approval is granted to the recommendation that the contract with People, Potential, Possibilities (P3) should be extended for a further twelve months without going through the Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (non-emergency procedures – exceeding a value threshold of £100,000), seeking to waive part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders;
- 3) a 12 month extension of the internal Supported Accommodation Contract, inclusive of the inflationary uplift be approved;
- 4) permission is granted for the Head of Commissioning and Placement, and the Head of Children in Care and Care Leavers, to implement the building transfer; and
- 5) the re-commissioning of the service, via open competitive tender by March 2026, and delegation of responsibility to the Head of Commissioning to undertake any further necessary steps be approved.