

REPORT TO: Children & Young People Policy and Performance Board

DATE: January 6th 2011

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Children & Young People

SUBJECT: Children's Trust Developments

WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report seeks to update Members on the latest developments within Halton's Children's Trust

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

(1) Members note the contents of the report

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 set out the duties that require local authorities and their relevant partners to co-operate to improve the well-being of children and young people in the following areas:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well-being.

3.2 Halton's Children's Trust Board was established in 2008 in line with national requirements that became statutory on April 1st 2010. The Trust builds upon the Children and Young People's Alliance Board that was developed in 2006 in line with Children Act 2004 requirements. The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act 2009, together with the Children's Trust Statutory Guidance 2010, increased the Trust's powers in a number of ways, in terms of widening the number of statutory partners on the Trust, and designating responsibility for producing, implementing and reviewing the Children & Young People's Plan to all partners on the Trust jointly.

3.3 The Coalition Government announced in July 2010 its intention to reform Children's Trusts. The proposals came into force from October 31st 2010 and included:

- removing the duty on schools to co-operate through Children's Trusts

- removing the requirement on local authorities to set up Children's Trust Boards and the requirement on those Boards to prepare and publish a joint Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP)
- revoking the regulations underpinning the CYPP and withdrawing the statutory guidance on Children's Trusts.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Although the Coalition Government removed the statutory footing for Children's Trusts, it has reconfirmed its commitment to working in partnership to improve outcomes for children and young people through locally agreed partnerships. The reforms allow each local authority area to agree its own way forward in terms of delivering children and young people's services. The duty for partners to co-operate will continue, but the list of statutory partners reduced to remove the bureaucracy surrounding Children's Trusts or similar local partnerships for partners, and in particular schools.
- 4.2 Children's Trusts became statutory in April 2010 through the ASCL Act 2009 and Children's Trust Statutory Guidance 2010 and so the announcement is in essence a reversal to the pre-April status of Children's Trusts.
- 4.3 Following the announcement in July the future of Halton's Children's Trust was discussed at both the Children's Trust Board and Executive Group. At both there was universal agreement across partners for the Trust to continue in its current format, as the overarching multi agency body that all children & young people's services in Halton sit within. This reflects the breadth and strength of partnership working across the children & young people's agenda in Halton, as well as the need to look to increase the level of work done in partnership in the challenging economic climate currently faced.
- 4.4 The reforms have removed the requirement on Halton to produce a CYPP. Halton's current Plan runs until March 2011. With agreement that Halton's Children's Trust will continue in its current format comes a need for a CYPP to provide strategic direction and so a third CYPP for Halton will be in place from April 2011.
- 4.6 Work began on this CYPP following a Children's Trust Development Day on December 6th 2010. The event was used to reflect on the progress achieved by the Trust since 2008 in terms of its' priorities, the key initiatives facing the Trust at present and also to agree the priorities for the Trust for the next two years. The priorities that were set in 2008 for the Trust were:
- Children and young people are physically, emotionally and sexually healthy
 - Young people are successful when they leave school

- Children and young people do well wherever they live and whatever their needs
 - Children and young people feel safe at home, in school and in their communities
- 4.7 These priorities remain in place until April 2011. Following discussions at the Trust's Development Day and at the Children's Trust Executive Group, it is proposed that the priorities and the structures within the Children's Trust will be amended from April 2011. These new priorities maintain strong links to the existing priorities outlined in 4.6, but reflect the progress made by the Trust and its current agenda. The proposed priorities are:
- Strengthen partnership working to effect better joint commissioning in order to improve outcomes for children and young people
 - Improved outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people by targeting services effectively
 - Use effective integrated processes to intervene early for improved outcomes for all children and young people
- 4.8 The focus on Safeguarding will continue to be a key theme for the Trust across these priorities.
- 4.9 As part of work around developing new priorities for the partnership and working on a new CYPP, there will be a review of the membership of each group within the Trust to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- 4.10 It has been agreed to keep the name 'Children's Trust' in place for the partnership in order to keep continuity and the awareness of the name for the partnership as a brand. It has been proposed to amend the strapline for the Trust to recognise the importance of participation of young people within the structures at all levels and within all work.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 With confirmation of the commitment of partners to continuing the Children's Trust arrangements in Halton, the partnership will remain as the Specialist Strategic Partnership (SSP) for the Children & Young People priority within the Local Strategic Partnership arrangements in Halton.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

All work to improve outcomes for Children & Young People in Halton will continue to be channelled through Halton's Children's Trust and be informed by the aims and objectives contained within the overarching Children & Young People's Plan for Halton.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

The continuation of the Children's Trust arrangements will mean that the Trust will still work closely with the Employment, Learning & Skills SSP on issues such as NEET, 16-19 provision and Child & Family Poverty, a Strategy for which is being developed to be in place by April 2011.

6.3 Healthy Halton

Health colleagues are key members of the Children's Trust and work will continue on issues such as emotional health, teenage pregnancy, obesity and infant mortality and on areas of collaboration such as the newly established Joint Commissioning Unit.

6.4 Safer Halton

The Safer Halton Partnership is represented on the Children's Trust through the co-chair and Cheshire Police. The two priorities work closely together on issues such as anti-social behaviour and road safety.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Opportunities for play in open spaces and transport are two of the highest priorities for our children and young people and work around these issues promote links with partners within Urban Renewal.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Although there are risks that partner agencies will withdraw from the Children's Trust as resources within their own agency are reduced and the Trust has lost its statutory status, all partners have reaffirmed their commitment to the Trust and so it is expected to continue in the same format. It should be noted that the Children's Trust was a successful multi-agency partnership for several years prior to becoming statutory in April 2010.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 As the Children's Trust will continue with a presence from all current partners there will be no equality and diversity issues. The Trust works in partnership to meet the aims and objectives of the Children & Young People's Plan 2009-11 and the 2010 Annual Review, both of which have been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Children Act 2004	2 nd Floor, Runcorn Town Hall	Mark Grady
Children's Trust Statutory Guidance 2010	2 nd Floor, Runcorn Town Hall	Mark Grady
Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act 2009	2 nd Floor, Runcorn Town Hall	Mark Grady
Children & Young People's Plan 2009-11	2 nd Floor, Runcorn Town Hall	Mark Grady
Children & Young People's Plan Annual Review	2 nd Floor, Runcorn Town Hall	Mark Grady