

APPENDIX 1

Extract of Executive Board Committee Minutes Relevant to the Children, Young People and Family's Policy and Performance Board

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2011

EXB78 - SANDYMOOR FREE SCHOOL PROPOSAL - KEY DECISION

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise on the proposed development of a Free School at Sandymoor.

The Board was advised that an application to establish a non-denominational, 11-18 age mixed Secondary School at Sandymoor was submitted to the Department for Education in May 2011. The school would open in 2012 and have a maximum intake of 900 places.

The Secretary of State had approved the application to proceed to the next stage of the process. Statutory consultation would take place from January 2012 for ten weeks, seeking the views of the Local Authority, schools and other stakeholders.

The Board noted that the Secretary of State had the duty to consider the impact of any new school on existing schools in the area. Appendix A, attached to the report provided a summary of the impact the Free School would have on the current provision in Halton. The Free School was likely to have an adverse impact on other Halton schools. The report contained details of the financial implications for Members' consideration.

The Board further considered representations in writing from Councillor John Bradshaw with regard to the matters raised in the report.

Reason(s) for Decision

The report seeks to gain the views of Executive Board to the proposal to establish a Free School on Sandymoor so that a response can be made to the statutory consultation.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable

Implementation Date

The Free School are looking to open in September 2012.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Council respond to the Sandymoor Free School Proposals as set out in the Appendix attached to the report; and
- 2) should the Sandymoor Free School proposals progress, the Council shall services to the Free School on a full recovery cost basis.

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB MEETING HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2011

ES64 – FOSTER CARE ALLOWANC 2012-13

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise which sought agreement to the proposed revised level of allowances to be paid to Foster Carers in 2012–13.

As part of the department's Placement Strategy for Children in Care, the level of allowance paid to Halton Foster Carers was increased in September 2010. This was done for a number of reasons, but was ultimately aimed at increasing the number of Foster Carers available within the Borough and supporting their retention. Improved finance was just one component of the investment in the service which also included an improved range of support to carers, more training opportunities and improved engagement in service developments.

It was noted that whilst the number of carers remained a challenge, the quality of the pool of carers available was now better than in previous years and was better able to meet the needs of our children. It therefore remained important that the allowances paid to carers were appropriate, competitive and attractive. In addition, it was important that the allowances paid to carers were increased to reflect actual costs incurred by them and it was therefore proposed that all allowances were increased by 4% (rounded down to the nearest pound).

Members were advised that the proposal to raise allowances by 4% would cost approximately £64,541. However, the failure to recruit and retain carers may result in the purchase of expensive Independent Fostering Agencies placements, where just one placement would cost on average £44,000.

RESOLVED: That the recommended level of increase in allowances is agreed.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 12 JANUARY 2012

EXB86 - HALTON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

The Board considered a report of the Chair of Halton Safeguarding Children and the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, on the Halton Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2010/11.

The Board was advised that the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 set out a statutory requirement for Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs), to produce and publish an Annual Report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area.

The report highlighted the considerable amount of work undertaken by Halton LSCB and the developments that had taken place over the past twelve months.

Five priority areas were identified, managed through its Business Plan. The Board noted that these were in line with the core functions of the LSCB and included:

- Maintaining structures to enable the Board to fulfil its statutory duty and respond to local and national change;
- Policies and procedures;
- Development of a safer workforce;
- Scrutiny;
- Communicating and raising awareness;
- Functions relating to child deaths; and
- Serious Case Reviews

RESOLVED: That the Halton Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2010/11 be endorsed.

EXB87 - STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING STATEMENT FOR 14-19 EDUCATION AND TRAINING- KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, on the Strategic Commissioning Statement for 14-19 education and training.

The Board was advised that the 14-19 Strategic Commissioning Statement would enable the authority to carry out its statutory duty under the Education Act 1996, to secure sufficient suitable education and training opportunities to meet the reasonable needs of all young people in the area. The Statement provided an overview of provision and needs in the area.

The Board noted that to inform the production of the Statement, and to identify key priorities for 14-19 year olds in Halton, a detailed review had been undertaken and analysed, which resulted in the six priorities detailed in the report. These priorities had been consulted on with partners in specific task

groups across the 14-19 partnership, and ratified by the 14-19 Strategic Partnership and the Children's Trust Commissioning Partnership.

Reason(s) for Decision

To ratify the 14-19 Strategic Commissioning Statement to ensure that Halton Borough Council fulfilled its statutory duties under Sections 15ZA and 19A of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by the ASCL Act 2009).

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The 14-19 Strategic Commissioning Statement provided a strategic overview of provision and needs in the area. An alternative option would be not to have produced a 14-19 Strategic Commissioning Statement for the Borough. This was rejected as the Borough would not have had a strategic overview of the provision in order to secure sufficient suitable education and training opportunities to meet the reasonable needs of all young people in their area.

Implementation Date

With immediate effect following the January 2012 Executive Board.

RESOLVED: That the 14-19 Strategic Commissioning Statement 2012-13 be endorsed.

EXB88 - SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

The Board considered:

- (1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board during consideration of the following item of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and
- (2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information will be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

EXB89 - INFORMATION ADVICE & GUIDANCE SERVICES (CONNEXIONS) UPDATE - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which updated Members on the progress on procurement options for securing information, advice and guidance (IAG) services for young people for 2012/13, and the contractual implications between the six Liverpool City Region Authorities and the Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership Limited (GMCP).

The report contained details of the arrangements to secure service delivery, details of the service specification offered by GMCP and an evaluation of the offer. In addition, the Board received an update on the current position on contractual arrangements with the other five authorities within the Liverpool City Region.

Reason(s) for Decision

Local Authorities' statutory responsibilities had changed.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Consideration was given to continuing with the current service level. This would exceed the budget available, would not represent value for money or reflect the change in Local Authorities' statutory responsibilities.

Implementation Date

The revised IAG and tracking service must be in place by April 2012.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) negotiations to secure a one year agreement with GMCP within each local authorities' available budget be noted;
- 2) the update on the final GMCP position at the end of December 2011, tabled alongside this report be noted;

- 3) notice be served on GMCP on 31st January 2012 if agreement cannot be reached with a majority of authorities;
- 4) the parallel procurement process be continued; and
- 5) responsibility for procuring IAG provision be delegated to the Director of Children's Services (or other designated budget holder) in consultation with the Lead Member for Children's Services.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2012

EXB91 - TACKLING 'TROUBLED FAMILIES' - INITIAL PLANS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which outlined Government proposals for tackling troubled families and the Council's initial plans for delivering this new initiative in Halton.

The Board was advised that the Government had made £450 million available in a cross-government drive to turn around the lives of 120,000 troubled families. The money would be made available to local authorities to fund a national network of Troubled Family 'Trouble Shooters' and family intervention projects.

The Board noted that the criteria for defining a family as 'troubled', was still under development, but information available so far would suggest such a family would have the following characteristics:

- Not be in work;
- Children not attending school; and
- Children involved in crime and/or anti social behaviour

The 375 families calculated for Halton were based on an analysis from the 2005 Family and Children Survey, using the child welfare index and indicators of multiple deprivation, which were detailed in the report. An analysis would be undertaken to convert this indicative estimate into verified figures of 'real' troubled families in Halton.

It was further noted that this analysis would need to be involve multiple agencies and be informed by Government criteria currently under formulation. Details of the Council's initial response, discussed by the Board, were contained in the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Government's initiative for troubled families be noted;
- 2) the Council's initial response to troubled families listed in paragraph 4 of the report be endorsed;
- 3) the Lead Member for Children, Young People and Families be authorised to lead the initiative on behalf of the Council; and
- 4) a further report be brought to the Board, once consultation had been undertaken with key partners on the delivery of the 'Troubled Families' programme, and after the initial analysis of the 375 troubled families calculated by Government as living in Halton.

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB MEETING HELD ON 12 JANUARY 2012

ES69 - PURCHASE OF U-EXPLORE SOFTWARE LICENCES FOR RE-SALE TO SCHOOLS AND PROVIDERS

The Sub-Committee considered a report which sought approval for the purchase of U-Explore software licences for re-sale to Schools and providers. U-Explore was a unique innovative, on-line teaching and learning resource that was accessible 24/7 by learners, teachers and parents. It would support schools to deliver their new duty to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance for pupils in years 9 to 11. The duty would come into effect from September 2012, however, it was proposed that U-Explore would be implemented from January 2012 to support the transition following the end of the current Connexions contract on 31st March 2012.

It was noted that the software was web-based and was therefore accessible from anywhere by learners of all abilities. In addition, U-Explore was exceptional in that Council would own all the search details and management information and would be able to analyse the jobs and sector areas of interest of young people. This would inform the direction of careers guidance and the planning and commissioning of educational services in the future.

Members were advised that the local authorities within the Liverpool City Region were working in partnership with a collective proposal to implement U-Explore across the City Region. This had already brought economies of scale to the price of an annual U-Explore licence which had reduced from £1800 to £1000 and which would, in this first year, be sold onto schools in Halton for £1200.

It was proposed that the Council purchase a Halton Commercial Licence for U-Explore. This would provide the opportunity to explore further the potential of U-Explore as an income generator. Gaining the commercial licence would ensure that any provider wanting to use U-Explore in the Borough would have to

purchase the system through the Council bringing with it the prospect of a future income stream.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Operational Director for Children, Organisation and Provision be authorised to award the contract for 10 U-Explore software licences to the contractor U-Explore Limited for the sum of £11,000; and
- 2) in light of the exceptional circumstances namely there being only one possible supplier of the service and in accordance with Procurement SO 1.8.2 Standing Orders 3.1 – 3.7 and 3.9 be waived on this occasion. In view of U-Explore being the only supplier of the service and agreement within the Liverpool City Region to collectively implement this software package which will support schools in delivering their new Careers Education, Information Advice and Guidance responsibilities under the duties of the Education Act 2011.