



Cllr. Mark
Dennett
Chair
Children &
Young People
PPB

**ANNUAL REPORT
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD
APRIL 2017 – MARCH 2018**

“I normally look back over the previous year and then look forward to the forthcoming year. But, this year I would like to start by saying thank you to all of the people involved in providing Children’s Services whether in Education or Social Care. To continue to provide a good service while resources are continuously cut by the current government is a credit to the determination and professionalism of all involved.

It is not only Council, School, and Health resources that are being cut, so to cut to our residents' benefits which are biting deep, this, in turn, is creating increased demand for our services. But, against this backdrop, our staff, social workers, teachers and health workers are continuing to provide good support — albeit in diminishing amounts — to the children of the Borough.

I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate our students, and also thank the parents, carers and teachers who supported them. National changes to the curriculum and assessments have made this challenge even harder. To see how our students have performed against this changing landscape is inspiring, and I know that it will only continue to get better.

You will see, I think, from the “Review of the Year”, that it has been a good and varied twelfth year for the Board and I would like to thank all of the Members of the Board, as well as all of the Officers involved for their continued support and contribution.

Going forward we will continue to monitor how the new curriculum and assessment criteria are being implemented, to ensure that Halton is providing the best level of education for all of our children.

We will also continue to scrutinise our social care and safeguarding services, ensuring that we do everything we can to support our most vulnerable children and young people.

Finally, I would like to conclude this report by thanking all of the Officers and Members (of all parties) involved in all of the ‘additional duties’ that take place to make sure that the children and young people receive that best care and support. Duties such as being a school governor with all of the responsibilities that that entails, statutory inspections of our care homes (Regulation 44) or of our social worker teams (Climbié visits), membership of the Local Safeguarding Board, the Adoptions Panel, the Children and Young People’s Trust, to name but a few of the ‘extra duties’ that both Members and Officers perform to support and improve the lives of the children and young people of our Borough.”

Councillor Mark Dennett

Chair, Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2017/18 the Board comprised Eleven Councillors – Councillors M. Dennett (Chair) Cllr G. Logan (Vice Chair), L. Cassidy, S. Edge, C. Gerrard, P. Hignett, M. Horabin, P. Lloyd Jones, S. Parker, C. Rowe and J. Stockton.

The Board is responsible for scrutinising performance and formulating policy in relation to the work of the Council (and its partner agencies within Children’s Trust Arrangements) in seeking: to ensure that children and young people in Halton have the best possible start in life and opportunities to fulfil their potential and succeed; and to scrutinise progress against the Corporate Plan and the Children and Young People’s Plan.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met four times during the period June 2017 to March 2018, and detailed below are some of the main initiatives that the Board has worked on during the year.

Children and Social Work Act 2017

The Board received a report on the changes to statutory duties for children and young people and the reform of social work outlined in the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Members were advised that the act would strengthen the duties to children in care and the corporate responsibilities of the local authority and its partners and extend the duties to care leavers until 25, as well as introducing a requirement for the publication of a care leaver offer. The Act introduced compulsory relationship education in primary schools and compulsory relationship and sex education in secondary schools. Local Safeguarding Children Boards would be abolished and replaced by a safeguarding performance framework agreed by the Local Authority, the Police and the Clinical Commissioning Group in consultation with the relevant partners. It was also reported that a new regulator for social work would be established, called Social Work England. The Board discussed the implications of the Act and expressed concern about the additional cost pressures for the LA and schools in implementing the changes.

Reducing Child Poverty and Improving Life Chances

A report providing an update on the work of Halton’s Child and Family Poverty Strategic Group and its links to the Liverpool City regions was considered by the Board. The report highlighted that the most disadvantaged children were less likely to achieve their academic potential, secure employment and gain a sense of future financial security. They could be also more likely to suffer from poor health, live in poor quality housing and unsafe environments.

Joint Local Area Inspection of Special Education Needs and Disability for Halton

The Board received a report summarising the outcome of the Joint Local Area Inspection of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in Halton. It was

Members discussed the agreed priorities from the Strategic Group and the Action Plan.

Joint Local Area Inspection of Special Education Needs and Disability for Halton

The Board received a report summarising the outcome of the Joint Local Area Inspection of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in Halton. It was reported that the inspection had been undertaken by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission between 27th and 31st March 2017. The aim of the inspection was to assess the effectiveness of the Local area in implementing the SEND reforms. The report outlined the key strengths identified in the inspection and the areas for development. To address any areas of development it was agreed that a Joint Action Plan would be developed. Members discussed the increase of pupils with social emotional and mental health, the rise in exclusions and the financial implications of the rise in demand.

Neglect Strategy

A report was received on the Halton's Neglect Strategy, developed under Halton Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB). This multi-agency document outlined the definitions and responses to neglect and the background and prevalence. The Action Plan linked to the Strategy detailed how agencies and partners should identify and respond to neglect and how the HSCB would scrutinise and monitor the impact and effectiveness of the Strategy. The Board discussed the six classifications of neglect and the fact that is affected children of all ages. Discussions were also held on training and awareness of schools in recognising neglect.

Early Years Strategy and Action Plan

The Board received a report on the Early Years Strategy and Action Plan. An overview was presented on the vision and priorities along with the details of the key actions proposed to improve outcomes. Members were also advised that a Guide to Parents had been produced to support parents to understand how to prepare their child for school. Discussion was held on identifying and sharing good practice and the opportunity for links to other authorities.

New Social Care Inspection Framework

A report was presented to inform the members of the requirement of the new inspection framework for children's social care services. Members that the inspections of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) is a 'system' of inspection that is proportionate, flexible, and bespoke to each and every local area inspected. Halton's current Ofsted grade, 'Requires Improvement' determines the kind of inspection we have next time, and the contact and support received in-between visits.

The framework would include an annual self evaluation of the social work practice by local authorities and an annual conversation between Ofsted and the local authority to review the self evaluation. Focused visits looking at a specific area of service or cohort of children. As Halton was previously judged as Requiring Improvement at its previous inspection there would be a two week standard

inspection every three years. A Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) could also take place which investigated the multi agency arrangements and response to a range of key priorities such as child abuse. Members discussed their role in the inspection process.

Scrutiny Topic

In 2017 The Board agreed a Scrutiny topic titled: Further developing links between Halton's Businesses and Schools. Councillor G. Logan was nominated as the Chair of the Scrutiny topic group and three lines of enquiry were agreed, those being:

- Employer engagement
- Careers education information
- Business Needs

Four meetings of the Scrutiny topic group took place between August 2017 and January 2018, each of the first three meetings reviewing a different line of enquiry from the above list and the final meeting reviewing the result of further actions/investigations agreed during the Scrutiny topic meetings.

Whilst the scrutiny topic work was being carried out the Government released its new Careers Strategy titled: Making the most of everyone's skills and talents. Following this strategy the statutory guidance for schools and for colleges about the requirements for delivering careers guidance and links to employers was also updated. These documents were reviewed by the Scrutiny topic group during their final meeting and influenced the final recommendations from the group.

Other Matters

The Board also considered a range of reports on; attainment outcomes for children and young people and their performance in comparison to national data and north west regional data; that annual Headteacher report on the educational outcomes of children in care; the process for determining school term and holiday dates; the National Funding formula and the revised approach to funding High Needs and the annual report on comments, complaints and compliments relation to children's social care services.

As part of its overview, the Policy and Performance Board also considers the Council's Executive Board minutes and Children's Trust minutes as well as the Quarterly Performance Monitoring Reports.

Members of the Public are welcome at the meetings of the Board. If you would like to know where and when meetings are to be held or if you would like any more information about the Board or its work, please contact Ann McIntyre on 0151 511 7332 ann.mcintyre@halton.gov.uk