

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Children and Young People Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 4 June 2007 at the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Dennett (Chairman), Horabin (Vice-Chairman), Higginson, J. Lowe, Parker and Stockton

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Drakeley, Fraser, Gilligan, D Inch and M Ratcliffe

Absence declared on Council business: (none)

Officers present: R. Bannigan, A. McIntyre, Scott S, Lynn Derbyshire and A. Villiers

Also in attendance: Councillor McInerney (in accordance with Standing Order No. 33).

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
CYP1	MINUTES	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 26th February 2007 having been printed and circulated were signed as a correct record subject to the following amendment:-</p> <p>Minute No: 50, Fourth bullet point to be recorded as "it was acknowledged that there was a small number of young people who would not participate in youth activities and some of which would subsequently become involved in anti-social behaviour."</p>	
CYP2	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	<p>The Board received a video presentation from a meeting with parents, carers and young people which took place on 23rd May 2007 and 31st May 2007 at the Grange City Learning Centre.</p> <p>The parent and carer representative and young people had raised a number of questions and concerns in relation to various items on the agenda and it was agreed that these</p>	

questions would be addressed during the relevant agenda item.

CYP3 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman, Councillor M Dennet welcomed all the Members to the first meeting in the municipal year. He also took the opportunity to welcome the new Member Councillor J Lowe to the meeting.

The Chairman also took the opportunity to thank Councillors Philbin and Marlowe for their contributions to the Board during the previous year.

CYP4 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The minutes of the Executive Board relating to the work of the Children and Young People's Policy Performance Board were submitted for information.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.

CYP5 REVIEW OF THE CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Children and Young People which gave Members information regarding the Review of the 2006/08 Children & Young People's Plan.

In this respect, a list of the revised priorities within the Children & Young People's Plan for 2007 – 2009 was circulated at the meeting.

The Board was advised that the Children & Young People's Plan had been published in April 2006 and there was a statutory duty to review the plan on an annual basis.

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

- The significance of the colour coding and how in the future they would be incorporated throughout the children and young people's agenda;
- The actions that were being taken in respect of the priorities, how the Board would monitor their progress, the role of the members group and how they fitted into the service plans and the performance indicators. It was suggested that the Council priorities could be colour coded and the

specific service plan identified and be presented to the members group for consideration. It was also noted that partners were linked to this process and closely monitored via the LAA's and through the LSP's;

- In respect of target EA3 – the importance of early intervention and young people being targeted for that intervention at a very early age was noted. It was also noted that the authority were seeking to reduce the number of young people on statements;
- How partner organisations had been involved in the Plan and the shared targets was noted; and
- It was suggested that a structure diagram be established outlining how the various Boards relate to each other.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents of the report be noted;
- (2) update monitoring reports on the actions taken on the priorities be presented to the Board on a regular basis;
- (3) the Members group be provided with a colour coded list of Council priorities which would also identify the relevant service plan; and
- (4) Members be provided with a structured diagram of how the various Boards relate to each other.

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N.B. Councillor Horabin declared a Personal Interest in the following item as a Member of the Governing Body of Simms Cross Primary School.

CYP6 SCHOOLS FACING CHALLENGING CIRCUMSTANCES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Children & Young People which gave information on the schools that had been identified by the School Improvement and Targets Unit of the DfES as being 'schools facing challenging circumstances'. The report also outlined the key actions that would be taken to secure improvements in each school's performance by 2008. The following schools were identified:-

- Hallwood Park Primary School;
- Oakfield Community Primary School;
- Palace Fields Primary Schools;
- Simms Cross Primary School; and
- Woodside Primary School.

The following questions were raised by the young people:-

- 1) What is the criteria for identifying schools facing challenging circumstances? and
- 2) What is the criteria for school closure?

In response the following answers were given:-

- 1) There is a base target that schools were expected to achieve at different key stages. In Key Stage 2 young people in any school should have reached Level 4 at the age of 11. The five schools that had been identified had not met their targets for three or more years; and
- 2) When a school is in special measures, it has twelve months to improve before closure is considered. Very intensive intervention strategies are provided to the school during that period. All schools have to provide a Raising Achievement Plan which has to be approved by the National Strategy Board. If the schools did not improve during that time, then closure would be considered.

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

- That the five identified schools were receiving very heavy intervention strategies to raise achievement and attainment;
- Simms Cross Primary school had now gone into 'Special Measures';
- Woodside has had their Raising Achievement Plan approved, the other schools plans were still under discussion;
- The authority had developed a trigger system and were constantly gathering data which was colour

coded and would identify when early intervention strategies were required before a major problem arose;

- It was noted that there could be a risk of pupils moving from schools that had been identified as having problems or were in special measures;
- It was suggested that good practice in schools could be shared and head teachers from outstanding schools could be twinned with head teachers of schools facing challenging circumstances to allow this to happen. It was noted that this was taking place currently in the authority and that some of the staff were also participating in sharing good practice;
- The importance of good leadership in schools was noted; and
- It was noted that the situation was not as bad as it seemed as the schools in Halton facing challenging circumstances were no worse than those in other authorities. It was also noted that a lot of dialogue and intervention was taking place to rectify the situation and all the schools shared a vision to improve. The funding to schools in Halton had also been better than in other authorities.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

CYP7 SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

The Board considered a report which represented a draft annual report of the activities of the Board during 2006/07 for comment/amendment. The report, subject to endorsement, would be presented with reports of other PPB's to a forthcoming meeting of the Council for adoption.

In this respect, a revised report had been circulated.

The Chairman, thanked all the Members of the Board and officers for their contributions during the last year. He also took the opportunity to thank the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, Councillor McInerney for his contributions and attendance at the meetings.

RESOLVED: That the Board endorse the Annual

Report for the purpose of its adoption at a forthcoming meeting of the full Council.

CYP8 RACIST INCIDENT ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children & Young People which detailed how the Local Authority and its schools would meet the requirements arising from the Macpherson Report (the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry). It had been previously agreed that progress reports would be presented to the Board each year.

The following questions were raised by the young people:-

- 1) What do schools do when there are a range of issues including racist incidents within a school?
- 2) Will people be encouraged to report incidents in schools or will they be afraid to do so? and
- 3) How do schools share good practice in terms of bullying and racist reporting?

In response the following answers were given:-

- 1) Schools were required to produce anti-bullying strategies and ensure all pupils are aware of what behaviour was appropriate within the school. Schools should encourage young people to report all incidents of bullying;
- 2) The authority promote a positive and diverse culture in schools and would encourage more schools to report incidents. However, work was required to publicise to young people that there would be a positive response if they reported incidents; and
- 3) Schools could be linked in order to share good practice.

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

- That a meeting would take place with the young people before the next Board meeting in order to give them feedback on their questions;

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- It was noted that the nature of all racial incidents were categorised, analysed and appropriate action taken wherever necessary. It was also noted that the action taken would depend on the nature of the incident;
- It was noted that there had been a slight increase in the number of incidents. However, it was unclear as to whether this was as a result of publicity and improved reporting procedures; and
- It was noted that during the last 12 months the population had become more diverse and the need to provide a service for English as a second language had increased significantly.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

CYP9 ANNUAL REPORT AND BUSINESS PLAN FOR SAFEGUARDING

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children & Young People which outlined the Halton Safeguarding Children Board's Annual Report and Business Plan for 2007/08.

The following questions were raised by the young people:-

- 1) What information and guidance is available for young people on safeguarding issues?

In response the following answer was given:-

- 1) During the first year of the Board it had made significant progress and had set out an agenda for the forthcoming year. In this respect the following had been provided/would be available in the near future:-
 - Bookmarks to all Year 5's with a message relating to safety and containing relevant contact numbers;
 - Mouse Mats which had been designed by the young people in the Borough via a competition and had been issued to Year 6 with a message relating to safety and containing relevant contact numbers;

- An event had taken place at Halton Stadium for all 9 and 10 year old children and over 1500 young people had attended over a period of two weeks. The young people were able to meet people from various agencies who were responsible for safeguarding issues;
- A leaflet would be produced in the summer targeted at older children and would highlight how to deal with abuse;
- A website was planned for the future which would be accessible to the young people, carers and parents;
- A newsletter is produced on a six monthly basis relating to safeguarding issues; and
- Consultation was currently taking place on the possibility of holding an event to give young people the opportunity to 'have their say' with a focus on safety. This event would be targeted at young people from the ages of 11 – 18 and it was proposed that two representatives from each school across the borough attend the event. This would help to improve the authorities services against the five Every Child Matters outcomes.

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

- It was noted that officers should be congratulated on the comprehensive report and the progress on the key objectives to date. It was suggested that an update on the objectives that did not contain comments on the progress in the report would be circulated to Members;
- It was suggested that the authority could consider using text messages to raise awareness on safeguarding issues;
- It was noted that the Membership of the Halton Safeguarding Children's Board did not include elected Members as guidance precluded them from having a seat on the Board. However, Councillor

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McInerney met with the Chair of the Safeguarding Board and the Strategic Director for a briefing and clarification regarding issues raised at the meeting; and

- It was noted that a lot more was being done in Halton to safeguard the young people than in other authorities.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents of the Annual Report and Business Plan be noted; and
- (2) an update on the objectives that did not contain comments on the progress would be circulated to Members.

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CYP10 ANNUAL REPORT FOR PRIVATE FOSTERING

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children & Young People which outlined the Private Fostering Annual Report 2006-2007 and action plans.

The following questions were raised by the young people:-

- 1) Why would people currently privately fostering want to register? and
- 2) Is this being promoted through schools and the Youth Service?

In response the following answers were given:-

- 1) Private Fostering usually involved young people, normally teenagers who move in with a friend. There is a legal requirement that these arrangements are monitored. It is important that these young people are able to access advice and support and be assured that the authority is adequately monitoring their placement in order that they remain safe and protected and all their needs are met; and
- 2) The Annual report addressed some of the multi agency training available about private fostering and the youth service, schools were invited to attend. Leaflets are also distributed

to venues where young people congregate such as youth clubs, schools and nurseries. There are also presentations undertaken to the head teachers of primary and secondary schools, radio and press releases and a safeguarding parenting handbook had been circulated widely around the borough, which included information about private fostering.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the Annual Report and Action Plans be noted.

N.B. Councillor J Lowe declared a personal interest in the following item as Trustee and Management Committee of West Runcorn Youth Club; and

Councillor Horabin declared a Personal Interest in the following item as a Member of the Governing Body of Simms Cross Primary School.

CYP11 PERFORMANCE MONITORING - QUARTER 4

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Young People which gave Members the opportunity to examine progress towards achieving the service objectives, milestones and performance targets contained in the 2006/07 service plans within the Boards remit.

The following points arose from the discussion:-

Children's Services (Social Care)

- The progress on BVP161 (Employment, education and training for care leavers ratio) was noted;
- The verbal update given on the proportion of looked after children in family placements was noted; and
- The stability of Looked After Children was considered and actions noted to support placements. It was also noted that this target would be abandoned next year and be replaced with the percentage of looked after children under 16 looked after for more than 2.5 years and in the same placement for two years.

School Support and Advisory Service

- The progress made against the key objectives and

milestones in relation to Building Schools for the Future and the verbal update was noted;

- The progress relating to each of the schools having a nominated EVC governor was noted; and
- The progress relating to how the Local Authority was proceeding to review how it undertakes its School Improvement Team was noted.

Student Services & Lifelong Learning

- The progress made against the key objectives/milestones relating to young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) was noted; and
- The key role of the SEN Team formed in January 2007 to support and challenge school's to improve their capacity to support pupils with a wider range of special educational needs was noted.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

CYP12 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman reported that Kath O'Dwyer (Operational Director, Children & Young People) would shortly be leaving the authority and he took the opportunity to pay tribute to her work during her time with Halton and in particular her contribution to the Board.

RESOLVED: That the Board place on record its thanks to Kath O'Dwyer and extend its best wishes to her for the future.

Meeting ended at 9.45 pm