

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 6 November 2008 in the Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors McDermott (Chairman), D. Cargill, Gerrard, Harris, McInerney, Polhill and Swain

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Nelson

Absence declared on Council business: Councillors Wharton and Wright

Officers present: L. Cairns, M. Reaney, G. Cook, J. Kirk, D. Tregoe, S. Clough, B. Dodd, D. Johnson, A. Jones, I. Leivesley, A. McIntyre, G. Meehan and D. Parr

Also in attendance: 1 Member of the Public

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

EXB67 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16th October 2008 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

EXB68 POST 16 EDUCATION WITHIN A 14-19 CONTEXT - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Children and Young People providing an outline of the proposed plan for the delivery of Post 16 education within a 14 to 19 context.

It was advised that Halton Borough Council (HBC) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) were required to ensure that plans were in place for the effective delivery of 14 – 19 education. Both organisations were responsible for securing sufficient provision in the Borough to meet the new educational entitlements and the ambition to raise the participation age in education. There were a number of key drivers of this new planning framework and these were outlined within the report for Members' information.

Action

It was proposed that a Collegiate model be developed for the delivery of Post 16 education, which would be sited within the 14 – 19 framework. The Local Authority would commission provision through the Collegiate model. The partnership of Riverside College, secondary schools, work based learning providers, together with Halton Council, would then be in a position by 2013 to deliver the national entitlement. This would include vocational elements, AS/A Levels, International Baccalaureate and the new Diplomas.

The Collegiate would oversee the strategic development of the Borough-wide offer for Post 16 education within the 14 – 19 framework and two Collaboratives, one in Widnes and one in Runcorn, would be formed to oversee specific developments of Post 16 education within each learning community.

Delivery was based on the assumption that Riverside College, all secondary schools, special schools, and work-based learning providers would be centres for 14-19 learning, carrying equal status and working within a collaborative to deliver the “Halton offer” to young people.

Further information was provided in the report regarding the fundamental framework, the national context, the local context, the consultation process that had been undertaken, and the role of the Local Authority and relationships with stakeholders. It was advised that the Collegiate approach required alignment of LSC and Building Schools for the Future (BSF) capital investment, and the Collegiate would critically inform the Council in its future Commissioning role under the Machinery of Government transferred LSC responsibilities to the Council in 2010.

The Board noted the work that had gone into establishing this model, which would build on the excellent attainment levels achieved by schools in the Borough in recent years, and extended thanks to all those involved including head teachers, the College and Principal, and relevant officers within the Borough Council.

Reason for the Decision

There was a pressing requirement to agree provision for Post 16 education with a 14 – 19 context in Halton. As part of the developing BSF programme, and the Primary Capital Programme, a review of Post 16 education within a 14 to 19 context had to be undertaken.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None. This was a requirement for the BSF and Machinery of Government programmes.

Implementation Date

The Collegiate and two Collaboratives would form as soon as approval was granted, building on the preparatory meetings to date. Implementation of the full model would commence September 2010.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Collegiate model be approved as the delivery mechanism for Post 16 education within the 14 – 19 curriculum in Halton;
- (2) the Widnes and Runcorn Collaborations within the Collegiate Model be approved; and
- (3) the design of the model be delegated to the Collegiate Strategic Board.

EXB69 SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS REVIEW - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Children and Young People which completed the review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision in Halton.

It was noted that the Local Authority had been undertaking a review of SEN provision within the Borough for a variety of reasons, which were outlined in detail within the report. A number of stages to this review had taken place which included:

- 2005 Review of SEN Unit Provision;
- strategic review of Autistic Spectrum Disorder Provision in Halton (28th August 2008); and
- a local analysis of need.

The present provision of units in Primary and Secondary mainstream schools was outlined in Appendix 1 to the report.

Halton's aim was to ensure that "Pathways" for learning for SEN pupils would be personalised to meet individual and family needs. This would involve the current SEN Unit Provision across all key stages being re-designed

to provide flexible provision within a mainstream school, or early years setting, that enabled the learner to spend as much time as possible in the mainstream part of the school, depending on the needs of the individual pupil. When it had been shown through assessment that the pupil's needs could not be met in a mainstream school, alternative provision would be sought. Prior to this decision there would be an expectation that "reasonable adjustments" would be made using the totality of resources made available to the mainstream school.

Members were provided with information regarding the proposed consultation to take place with primary and secondary schools. Within both primary and secondary provision, joint working with all areas of Children's Services, including health, would provide a wrap-around provision for children and families.

The Board noted that provision for SEN within mainstream units did not currently match the needs of the Borough and young people: the present provision for units within schools did not provide value for money due to the number of surplus places. This proposal meant that money would be prioritised in the right direction to ensure everyone in SEN had their needs met; ie this was not about a reduction in resources, they would simply be re-distributed to better reflect/match current and emerging need.

Reason for Decision

At present, there were surplus places within mainstream units. Mainstream SEN units were not matching the present and future requirements of the Borough. As part of the developing Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme and the Primary Capital Programme a review of SEN unit provision needed to be undertaken.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

An alternative option was to leave the provision as it was. However, this would potentially leave the Council vulnerable to challenge.

Implementation Date

The Secondary SEN Unit Provision Review must be agreed by December 2008 and implemented during the development of the BSF programme. The Primary SEN unit provision review would be agreed February 2009 and implemented by September 2010.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) consultation on the provision for SEN units within secondary mainstream schools commence; and
- (2) consultation on the provision for SEN units within primary mainstream schools commence.

Strategic Director-
Children & Young
People

MINUTES ISSUED: 13th November 2008

CALL IN: 20th November 2008

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 20th November 2008

Meeting ended at 2.15 p.m.