

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 5 November 2009 in the Marketing Suite, Municipal Building*

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

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: Councillor Wright

Officers present: M. Reaney, M. Noone, B. Dodd, I. Leivesley, G. Meehan, D. Parr, C. Taylor, S. Wallace-Bonner and A. Scott

Also in attendance: Councillor Hodgkinson

### ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

#### EXB51 MINUTES

The Minutes of 15 October 2009 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

#### EXB52 PLACEMENT STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE - KEY DECISION

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director, Children and Young People which set out the background to the Placement Strategy Review.

As of 9 October 2009, Halton had 158 Children in Care. The overall trend showed a reduction in the Looked After population from a high in 2004 of 169. In December 2004, a detailed analysis of the Children in Care population identified some trends and useful information, which was outlined in the report.

In recent years, there had been significant difficulty in recruiting sufficient foster carers to meet both the demand for placements and to provide a choice of placement. An additional 20 carers would be needed to provide for the

*Action*

current Children in Care population. The Ofsted Inspection in October 2009 identified that Halton, as a fostering provider, was unable to meet the standard required of sufficient number of foster carers to allow for placement choice.

The report outlined a number of proposed actions that would address the shortfall in the number of foster carers; this included increased levels of allowance, building capacity of the Foster Service team to provide placement support, an increase in the range of essential support services available to children and carers and use of a revised and more intensive marketing campaign to recruit more carers.

Members noted that an Invest to Save approach to developing foster care provision had been successfully taken by St Helen's Council; their number of foster care places had risen from 59 to 103 in three years, which meant a significant reduction in the number of expensive purchased placements and improved retention of their existing carers.

The Board wished to place on record their thanks to Christine Taylor for her hard work in developing the strategy.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Executive Board endorse the approach identified in the Placement Strategy and the further work required to develop it; and
- (2) support be given to an Invest to Save Bid.

Strategic Director-  
Children & Young  
People

#### EXB53 JOINT CARERS COMMISSIONING STRATEGY 2009-12

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Health and Community, on the Joint Carers Commissioning Strategy 2009/12.

The Strategy built upon the aims, objectives and activities outlined in the 2008/9 Carers Strategy, including an action plan, to support services in Halton move toward a more focused way of commissioning services for Carers over the next three years. It had been developed as a result of research carried out in terms of other local authority plans and ongoing consultations and contributions from stakeholders.

The Board were advised that the format of the commissioning strategy followed a similar one adopted with

other Joint Commissioning Strategies within the Directorate and took account of the contents of the National Carers Strategy which had been published in June 2008.

The objectives of the Commissioning Strategy were to move towards a process for the commissioning of services, to continue to assist in the identification of hidden carers and improve information and access to support services. The Board were advised that the Care Quality Commission closely monitors the Council's performance on carer's services and had judged that Halton delivered a good service. The introduction of the Strategy would assist in maintaining that judgement.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the Joint Carers Commissioning Strategy 2009/12 and associated action plan.

Strategic Director  
- Health and  
Community

EXB54 HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL - VOLUNTEER STRATEGY

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Health and Community on the Council Volunteer Strategy.

The Strategy would promote volunteering within Halton Borough Council as an activity quite distinct from paid employment, and in certain situations, volunteers would work alongside other volunteers towards carefully defined goals. In other cases, they may work alongside paid staff providing an additional value to the work of Council employees. Volunteers would represent an additional resource that could bring a fresh perspective, focus and stamina to a department, office or group. In addition volunteers may provide a means of accessibility for service users who otherwise would feel or remain excluded from local or Council activity.

Members were reminded that, as part of the development of the Strategy, a 'Building Common Ground' workshop was held that involved staff across the Council and both statutory and voluntary sectors. The workshop looked at the vision for volunteering that they felt Halton should adopt and the way in which an effective volunteering service could be created and ways to improve current activities.

Halton Voluntary Action (HVA) had been commissioned to undertake a six month project to identify ways to increase volunteering activity within the Adult Social

Care Service. It was noted that the cost of the project had been funded from within existing Health and Community Directorate Resources.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the Halton Borough Council Volunteer Strategy as attached to the report.

Strategic Director  
- Health and  
Community

EXB55 PROPOSED AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREAS,  
WIDNES TOWN CENTRE

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Environment, on the proposed Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in Widnes Town Centre.

Members were advised that Part IV of the Environment Act (1995) required local authorities to regularly review and assess air quality in their areas. The Expert Panel on Air Quality set objective levels (targets) for seven pollutants that local authorities were responsible for monitoring against. Where potential exceedances were identified, the local authority must declare an AQMA area and prepare an action plan setting out measures to improve air quality in that area.

The report contained details of the proposed AQMA's in Widnes and an outline of the proposed AQMA Action Plan which would develop in more detail as the consultation process evolved. It was noted that within the proposed Action Plan area, a review of the contributory factors and traffic patterns would be undertaken to determine if traffic, which was the major contributory factor to elevated levels of pollution, could be diverted away from the AQMA and thus improve air quality. It was noted that the Action Plan was not limited to a specific area.

RESOLVED : That

- (1) the Air Quality Management Areas be declared;
- (2) the Operational Director – Environmental and Regulatory Services, be authorised to determine the precise details of public consultation; and
- (3) the results of the consultation exercise and the fully developed details of the proposed Action Plans be reported back to Executive Board.

Strategic Director  
- Environment

**MINUTES ISSUED: 11 November 2009**

**CALL IN: 18 November 2009**

**Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 18 November 2009.**

*Meeting ended at 2.20 p.m.*