

CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Children Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 23 February 2015 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Dennett (Chairman), Logan (Vice-Chairman), P. Hignett, Horabin, A. McInerney, June Roberts, A. Wall and Woolfall

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Cassidy

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: S. Clough, A. Scott, T. Coffey, M. Grady, C. Johnson, A. Parkinson, M. West and V. Wright

Also in attendance: Thomas Norris and Mrs C Alonso

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

CYP46 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 January 2015 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CYP47 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Board was advised that there were no public questions.

CYP48 SSP MINUTES

The minutes of the Children's Trust meetings held on 4 November 2014 and 16 December 2014 were attached at Appendix 1 for information.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.

CYP49 DIRECTORATE BUSINESS PLAN

Members were presented with the final draft Children and Enterprise Directorate Business Plan for approval; this was appended to the report.

It was noted that each Directorate of the Council was required to develop a medium term business plan, in parallel

with the budget, that was subject to annual review and refresh. It was noted that the plans could only be finalised once budget decisions had been confirmed in March and that some target information may need to be reviewed as a result of final outturn data becoming available post March 2015.

The key priorities for development or improvement for the various functional areas reporting to this Policy and Performance Board were considered by the Board at a special meeting held on 16 December 2014. Following this the proposed priorities for the Business Plan 2015-18 were:

- 1) Integrated Commissioning of services to meet the needs of children, young people and families in Halton;
- 2) Effectively supporting the child through the Halton Levels of Need Framework when additional needs arose;
- 3) Improving achievement and opportunities for all, through closing the gap for the most vulnerable children and young people; and
- 4) Driving the economic prosperity of Halton to the benefit of residents and the workforce.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) notes the contents of the report; and
- 2) approves the Children, Young People and Families elements of the Directorate Business Plan.

CYP50 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which set out the position with regard to the Governor Support Services, delivered via Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWAC), to support Halton's governors, and confirmed the residual role of the Local Authority.

It was noted that on 26 June 2014, the Council's Executive Board endorsed and approved Halton's School Governance Strategy. This was launched to all Halton's Governors via the Autumn 2014 Director's termly report to Governors, and set out the support available to Halton's governors through its Clerking Service which, was delivered by CWAC, and through its Training and Development Service delivered through Cheshire East Local Authority, to ensure that Halton's governors were equipped to undertake their role as strategic leaders.

The Board was advised that within the Strategy were comprehensive details regarding Governing Body Self-Evaluation and recommendations for each governing body to also undertake an External Review of Governance.

Members were advised that the School Governance Strategy was available on the Council's website along with a dedicated page for School Governors which provided information, support and advice, and links to training modules and much more.

The report continued to present more detailed information on the Training and Development Programme and the responses and feedback following governors' participation in this. Some of this information was presented in tables and charts in the following appendices:

- Appendix A – Overall evaluation summary for Halton training for September 2013/14;
- Appendix B – More detailed summary of the above feedback;
- Appendix C – An evaluation summary from the Annual Governor Conference 2014; and
- Appendix D – An analysis of the CWAC clerking survey.

Following consideration of the report, Members raised the following queries:

How was the schedule of training established?

Training needs were identified in a number of ways, either by request or in response to a specific training need. Members were advised that bespoke and/or individual training could be provided.

Was there any structure for spiritual input (not religious) and how could that be included in training on offer? The spiritual aspect of education was not measured by Ofsted, and we could be missing an important part of a child's education. Requests for training provision in this area should be submitted to Martin West, Divisional Manager, Provision and Performance.

Was there a recognised qualification for clerks to attain? Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC) used the Hampshire model which provided for accreditation for clerks. It was reported that CWAC now provided dedicated clerks.

What's the best way to increase the number of Governors attending training?

The Chair suggested ways of publicising training as an annual event. Other suggestions should be submitted to Martin West (as above) for consideration.

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

CYP51 CHILDREN'S CENTRES

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, on the performance of Children's Centres, particularly with regard to the reach and engagement of the most vulnerable families.

Members were reminded that the 8 children's centres in Halton were managed in groups of two, with one principal manager and one team of staff working across each pair of centres. Each group of two Centres offered a full spectrum of services across a defined reach area, primarily targeting services at children under 5 and their families, but also offered some services to children up to 11 years old.

It was noted that the core purpose of Sure Start Children's Centres was to improve outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on those in greatest need. They worked to make sure all children were properly prepared for school, regardless of background or family circumstances. They also offered support to parents and parents-to-be with parenting and readiness for work. The Children's Centres acted as hubs within the communities and provided delivery bases for partner agency services, such as health visitors and midwives. They were also a key element in the early identification of children and families who needed additional help and support.

The report discussed the key areas of performance for Children's Centres and how they were structured and managed. Information was also provided on attendance figures and the categories of attendees since 2011/12.

Future challenges of the Children's Centres was also discussed and from Members discussions the following comments were made:-

Can you explain why the report states that it wasn't appropriate or possible for those on child protection plans or who had a Child in Need Plan to engage with facilities at Children's Centres? This is more about those families not being able to access the specialist services they most needed at a Children's Centre – it was not to say that a Centre could not provide them with their services or to

discourage attendance. Very often, early intervention teams carried out home visits.

If Children's Centres did not engage with children until age 2 or 3, how can you provide the help they may need and which they may have 'missed' at a very early age? How successful are we at making contact with those families that were hard to reach? There were a number of professionals that could help – for example, we were working closely with midwives and health visitors, who encouraged families to use facilities. They were often seen as non-threatening (as opposed to a Social Worker). Also the Family Nurse Partnership targeted those first time mothers under age 19.

Two issues with school age children were regularly mentioned by teaching staff – a child's speech and language abilities and their ability to concentrate in class. How could this be improved upon? The speech and language service was currently out for re-commissioning and was a key priority in the Directorate Plan. This could also be a social issue rather than an issue with speech and language and was closely linked with adult learning skills. Children's Centres had a big part to play in a child's stimulation and development.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the report.

CYP52 INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS

The Strategic Director – Children and Enterprise, presented a report which reviewed the provision for teaching and enhancing Independent Living Skills for Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in the Borough.

The Board was reminded that a review of the local provision for Independent Living Skills in the Borough took place in 2013. A report was produced following this that recommended that Inglefields be developed to provide a base for the students in Ashley School 6th form to be given an opportunity to develop skills in this area. The report also recommended that the reviewing of this area of provision be continued.

It was noted that since this last report, the main focus of work for the Division had been to implement the Duty of the Local Authority for SEND Reform under the Children and Families Act 2014.

Following this, a number of developments that had occurred and which were set out in paragraph 3.4 of the report, were discussed at the meeting. Nominations for involvement by Members of the Board to contribute to the further review were invited; details should be submitted via email to Anita Parkinson, Divisional Manager, Inclusion.

Members also welcomed Thomas Norris to the meeting, who briefed the Board on his experiences of Ashley 6th form and facilities he had been able to use at Inglefield.

Following consideration of the report, Members raised the following queries:

Councillors Hodge and June Roberts had visited Inglefields and considered the facilities on offer to be excellent. However, they had noted a couple of concerns in the kitchen which they asked should be considered from a safety viewpoint. These related to the location of the microwave oven which they considered may be at an inaccessible height for wheelchair users and the opening and proximity to the floor of the main oven door. Officers agreed to review these concerns and carry out a safety inspection with staff at the premises.

The Board wished to place on record their thanks to Thomas Norris for attending the meeting and giving Members an insight into the facilities on offer.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Members approve the latest developments at Inglefields; and
- 2) Members support the next steps in the review process.

CYP53 SCRUTINY TOPIC GROUP - HOW WE ARE WORKING WITH OUR FAMILIES OF SCHOOLS (VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN)

The Chairman, Councillor Mark Dennett, provided Members with an update on the Scrutiny Topic Group '*How we are working with our Families of Schools*'.

It was reported that the Group had met on two occasions and were looking at how Members/the local authority could influence the schools' agenda, address barriers to learning, the new national primary curriculum standard, establish what was on offer in the Borough and

how specialist leadership could be offered to support schools. The Chair made reference to how Officers could adapt the Hartlepool model and the work of the teaching schools alliance.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Group was set for 20 May 2015.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

CYP54 ADOPTION SCORECARD

The Board was presented with Halton's position in relation to the Adoption Scorecard, which was published in December 2014 by the Department of Education (DfE).

It was reported that the document covered a three year period to March 2014 and therefore shifted the three year average forward from 2010-13 to 2011-14. The report discussed the threshold indicators and Halton's performance in relation to these and comparisons nationally.

Following consideration of the report, Members raised the following queries:

Was there any requirement for Adopters to be advised not to use e-cigarettes in front of children they had adopted? There was no blanket ban on the use of e-cigarettes as there was with cigarette smoking, which was forbidden in Halton. However, their use was still giving a psychological message to young people about the acceptability of smoking.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the report.

CYP55 PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 3 2014-15

The Board received the Performance Management Reports for Quarter 3 of 2014-15 and were requested to consider them and raise any questions or points of clarification required.

It was noted that the key priorities for development or improvement in 2014-17 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to the Board as follows:

- Children and Families Services;
- Learning and Achievement; and
- Children's Organisation and Provision

The report detailed progress against service objectives and milestones and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period.

Members were advised to submit any questions they had on performance to the Chair, who would pass them on to the relevant Officers that were unable to be at the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Policy and Performance Board receive the third quarter performance management reports.

Meeting ended at 8.20 p.m.