

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Children and Young People Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 8 January 2007 at the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Dennett (Chairman), Horabin (Vice-Chairman), Gilligan, Higginson, Parker, Philbin, M Ratcliffe, Stockton and A. Brothers

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Fraser and Marlow

Absence declared on Council business: (none)

Officers present: L. Derbyshire, T. Crane, A. McIntyre, N. Moorhouse, C. Taylor and A. Villiers

Also in attendance: Councillors McInerney and Wright, A Baldwin, D Bellfield, N Howe, J Pickering, J Slater and L Platt

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

WELCOME

As this was the first meeting of the Board since the Festive Season, the Chairman extended his best wishes to the Members of the Board and Officers for a prosperous New Year.

The Chairman took the opportunity to welcome and introduce two observers from the Parent/Carers Forum and the young people from the Youthbank Project.

In this respect, he reported that he would be engaging with the young people in between Board meetings. Their questions would be videod and presented to the Board for consideration. At the end of the meeting, he indicated, that he would meet with the young people again to give them feedback on their questions.

The Chairman also took the opportunity to invite Members to the Halton High Achievers Award which would take place on Wednesday 10th January 2007 at 6.30 pm in the stadium.

Action

CYP32 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th October 2006, having been printed and circulated were signed as a correct record.

CYP33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)

There were no declarations of interest.

CYP34 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.

CYP35 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.

CYP36 SCRUTINY TOPIC UPDATE - OUT OF BOROUGH SCRUTINY TOPIC UPDATE

The Board considered a report of the Acting Strategic Director, Children and Young People which gave Members an update of the work undertaken by the Out-Borough School Admissions Scrutiny Topic Group and outlined the next key tasks.

The Board was advised that, at its second meeting, the following data had been provided to the group for information and consideration:-

- Parental preferences for Halton Secondary Schools;
- Parental preferences for Out-of-Borough Schools;
- The total numbers of pupils imported to the authority across phase;
- The total numbers of pupils exported to other authorities;
- Ethnic minority details; and
- Geographical data identifying those Halton resident pupils attending Out-of-Borough Schools.

In this respect, it was agreed that a questionnaire would need to be drafted and circulated to the group for

comments. This would enable the views of parents seeking out of borough provision to be collected.

During discussions, it was noted that previously research had been undertaken in connection with the closure of Norton Priory school and it was suggested that this data could be used as a benchmark. However, it was also noted that the previous research had not investigated the financial impact, the impact on performance and had not been specific or detailed.

Acting Strategic
Director-Children
& Young People

RESOLVED: That the report and comment made be noted.

CYP37 SCRUTINY TOPIC UPDATE - WORK PROGRAMME
2007/2008

The Board considered a report of the Acting Strategic Director of Children and Young People which requested that Members consider a work programme for the Board for the coming year and make suggestions on how the programme should be taken forward.

The Chairman, reported that two topics had been identified during the year, but due to Members commitments one had been deferred. Taking this into account, he indicated that he would like Members to consider items for the 2007/08 work programme. He added that the overview and scrutiny training at West Lancashire District Council, had highlighted that external organisations could be looked at and considered within the meeting of the Board. In this respect he indicated that he would like to allocate time within future Board meetings to consider the YOT and Youth Justice.

In closing, he requested that Members email him within the next two weeks with suggestions for future topic items.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the comments raised above be noted: and
- (2) Members, in the next two weeks, email the Chairman suggestions for future topic items.

CYP38 YOUTH BANK PRESENTATION

The Board received a presentation from the

representatives from the Youthbank project, Amy Baldwin, Daniel Belfield, Nicola Howe, Johanna Pickering and Jack Slater which:-

- Explained the role of the Youthbank Project;
- Outlined why they had become involved in the project and how they were recruited;
- Set out what they had done so far; and
- Outlined what was planned for the future.

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

- That the project comprised of five members and it was hoped that fifteen more young people would be recruited in the future. This was subject to the availability of funding and there was also a possibility of forming sub groups within the project;
- The project was currently funded for twelve months, ending March 2008, and the young people would be approaching the Authority at that time for further funding. When the project had demonstrated how successful it has been other funding may also become available;
- Young people interested in becoming involved in the project would need to have basic skills i.e. confidence, the ability to work under pressure, presentation skills and the ability to make decisions etc;
- The Decision Team would comprise of three members. The decisions were based on a criteria and scoring system out of 100. There was also a maximum limit of £55 for each bid unless it was for a building; and
- the young people be congratulated on their excellent presentation and work undertaken to date.

RESOLVED: That the presentation and comments raised be noted.

CYP39 FINDINGS OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE YOUTH SERVICE UNDERTAKEN BY THE NATIONAL YOUTH AGENCY IN SEPTEMBER 2006

The Board considered a report of the Acting Strategic Director, Children and Young People which provided

information on the quality of the Youth Service being delivered to the young people of Halton and the value for money this service represented to the Authority.

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

- That there was more detail in the action plan and it represented the Nyomi model, which was a simple systematic intervention; and
- That a lot of work had been undertaken increasing standards and credit should be given to youth workers and staff who had worked hard to build up the service. However, there were still gaps in the service in respect of some young people who were not aware of the services available in the Borough.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the information in the report and the comments raised be noted; and
- (2) the action plan be presented to the next meeting of the PPB (26th February 2006).

Acting Strategic
Director-Children
& Young People

CYP40 COMMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS RELATING MAINLY TO CHILD CARE SERVICES

The Board considered a report of the Acting Strategic Director, Children and Young People Services which provided:-

- A report on the Directorate's process for managing complaints and compliments during 2004/05 and 2005/06;
- A brief on the key issues and implications of the revised regulations and guidelines for the Social Services Complaints Procedure for Children and Young People; and
- An outline of the opportunities available to initiate a comprehensive complaints service across the Children & Young People's Directorate.

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

- That the members of a Review Panel were required

to be independent of the Council and were paid to undertake the various stages. The cost for this service would be in the region of £1800. Ways of reducing the costs were also under review;

- In respect of practice and procedure changing as a result of the outcome of a complaint - if there were numerous complaints regarding a particular policy, this policy could be reviewed by management. Various compliments on a particular service could also indicate the result of a new policy being implemented or additional resources being allocated to that service;
- That every effort was made to ensure that the complaints process was as simple and effective as possible. The information on forms was clear and in plain English. The Authority were also working on developing one source document for all complaints/compliments policies and procedures; and
- That the number of complaints received at Stage 1 in 2005/06 was lower than comparable neighbouring authorities. At Stage 2 and 3 all three neighbouring authorities were very similar.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the initiatives leading to an integrated complaints service across the Directorate be supported;
- (2) a cycle of reporting on a six monthly basis, which would include the annual report be agreed; and
- (3) the comments raised be noted.

Acting Strategic
Director-Children
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CYP41 CLIMBIE VISITS

The Board considered a report of the Acting Strategic Director, Children and Young People which reviewed the procedure and impact of Climbie visits to the three child care teams. The visits had been undertaken by Elected Members in accordance with recommendation 41 of Lord Laming's Inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbie, known locally as 'Climbie Visits'. The report also recommended changes to the Climbie Visit Procedure and record of visit proforma which was attached to the report.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Climbie visits continue to be undertaken by Elected Members and Senior Managers, but at a reduced frequency of quarterly (12 visits per year across the three childcare teams, or one visit each month), in order to reflect the progress made in establishing Climbie visits since July 2004. This would lead to a more sustainable level of visiting and allow the adoption of a more inspectoral approach;
- (2) Climbie visits maintain the focus on the key aspects of the findings of Lord Laming Inquiry; staffing, workloads and referral management in intake teams, but also to widen the focus to include: a review of team quarterly performance, and the impact the teams are having on outcomes for children, including the shift to holding electronic records (Integrated Children System);
- (3) Climbie visits are only undertaken by Elected Members who have a current enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Check and have received specific training in the key aspects and requirements of Climbie visits; and
- (4) the current pool of Elected Members undertaking Climbie visits is increased from five to nine, in order to ensure the visits are undertaken regularly and in accordance with the agreed frequency.

Acting Strategic
Director-Children
& Young People

CYP42 ADOPTION INSPECTION

The Board considered a report of the Acting Strategic Director, Children and Young People which outlined the proposed action plan as a result of the inspection.

The Board was advised that the Inspection report was available at the meeting. The Board was also advised that only one of the eleven requirements were outstanding (item five) and this had been agreed with the Inspector for completion in March 2007.

The Board was advised that a Peer Review would be commissioned in order to enable the authority to benchmark services against external organisations. Members requested that an update report be presented to a future meeting;

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report, action plan be noted; and
- (2) an update report be presented to a future meeting of the Board.

Acting Strategic
Director-Children
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CYP43 FOSTERING AND PRIVATE FOSTERING INSPECTION

The Board considered a report of the Acting Strategic Director, Children and Young People which outlined the final reports and proposed action plan.

The Board was advised that the inspection had received a positive outcome. The three requirements had been addressed and action on the recommendations was underway.

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

- Resources within adoption and fostering have to be carefully allocated across the two services;
- In respect of appointing a Principal Manager of the Fostering Team, there had been two national adverts placed for the post, but to date it had not been filled. It was not clear why suitable applicants were not applying, but the post would be reviewed and re-advertised. Members requested to be kept informed of progress on this matter; and
- That generally across the service there was a shortage of staff. It was recognised that staff were doing an excellent job.

Acting Strategic
Director-Children
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RESOLVED: That the report, action plan and comments raised be noted.

CYP44 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR 2006/07

The Board considered a report of the Acting Strategic Director, Children and Young People which invited Members to raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of the half-year to 30th September performance management reports. The reports outlined the progress against service plan objectives and performance targets, performance trends/comparisons, factors affecting the service etc for:-

- a) Children's Services;
- b) School Support & Advisory Services; and
- c) Student Services & Lifelong Learning.

The Chairman reported that discussions had taken place to re-design the reports to make them more user friendly. A training session was also being arranged and would take place before next years' cycle of meetings.

Acting Strategic
Director-Children
& Young People

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

Children's Services

- There needed to be a synergy between the Boards meeting cycle and the Performance Monitoring cycle;
- During discussions regarding the stability of placements in the Borough, it was noted that there was a public service agreement in place to strengthen performance in this area; and
- That Quarter 3 monitoring reports would be on the information bulletin around the middle of February 2007.

Student Services and Lifelong Learning

- That there has been an increase in the demand from people undertaking English as a second language in the Borough. This matter was being looked into. Members suggested that this information could be incorporated within the monitoring reports;
- Attendance performance had improved. However, more improvement was required and further details provided to the next meeting;
- Re Fair Access – An update report on this matter be presented to the next meeting of the Board;
- In respect of a suggestion that video conferencing be used to monitor absenteeism, it was highlighted that the 14-19 provision gave pupils an lots of benefits including the opportunity to learn in a virtual learning environment; and
- There was a skill shortage in the North West and high unemployment. It was acknowledged that this was due to a combination of reasons, some of which were historical. It was also recognised that

there would need to be a collective multi agency approach to addressing this issue and strategies put in place for young people from the age of 12 onwards. Basic skills would also need to be improved in order to ensure that the demand for unskilled work was met. It was also recognised that employers in the Borough had a role to play by recruiting more young people within their organisation.

School Support & Advisory Service

The Board was advised that the issues relating to this service had been identified at the last meeting and the key areas were represented by an amber traffic light.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the second quarter performance management reports be received;
- (2) the comments raised above be noted;
- (3) more details be provided on attendance performance at the next meeting; and
- (4) an update report on Fair Access be presented to the next meeting.

Acting Strategic
Director-Children
& Young People

Meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.