

Extract of Executive Board Minutes Relevant to the Children and Young People's Policy and Performance Board

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 15TH MARCH 2007

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PORTFOLIO

EXB91 CHILDREN'S DISABILITY SERVICES

The Board considered a report of the Acting Strategic Director, Children and Young People which outlined the progress made in the Children's Disability Services in Halton and sought agreement to the expansion of the Pooled Budget for Disabled Children and revised 'Building Bridges' Multi Agency Strategic Plan for Disabled Children.

It was noted that the plans for the Children's Disability Services in Halton were regarded as an example of good practice and had been praised by representatives of the Department for Education & Skills, HM Treasury and the Department of Health. The significant progress of the plans would also positively contribute to the Joint Area Review planned in March 2008.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the expansion of the pooled budget as set out in the report be approved; and
- (2) the Building Bridges' Multi Agency Strategic Plan for Disabled Children be approved.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 29TH MARCH 2007

EXB100 SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2008/09

The Board considered a report of the Acting Strategic Director – Children and Young People which had been prepared in accordance with relevant statutory framework to determine Halton Local Authority's (LA's) School Admissions Policy for LA Maintained Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, and Co-ordinated Admission Schemes, for all primary and secondary schools for September 2008 following statutory consultation.

It was noted that Halton LA had issued a statutorily required consultation paper on the proposed admission arrangements and co-ordinated admission

schemes in January 2007 proposing no changes to the current over-subscription criteria for admission to LA Maintained Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools. These criteria followed Department for Education and Schools (DfES) recommendations contained within the revised School Admissions Code of Practice. However, the revised School Admissions Code of Practice, which came into force on 28th February 2007, precluded the use of the first preference first system, which had previously been operated in Halton. Steps would therefore be taken in future years to address this and the process was outlined for information.

The Board was advised that the Halton Admissions Forum had agreed targets of 96% (for primary) and 94% (for secondary) first preferences met. Members noted that actual preferences met were 92% for primary and 95% for secondary. A target of 5% had also been set by the (then) Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in respect of on-line applications for secondary schools; 6.5% had been achieved.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Admissions Policy and Co-ordinated Schemes for primary and secondary admissions for the 2008/09 academic year be approved; and
- (2) the National and Local Performance Indicator targets set/achieved for meeting first preference applications and on-line applications be noted.

EXECUTIVE SUB BOARD MEETING HELD ON 8TH FEBRUARY 2007

ES76 NATIONAL DAY NURSERIES ASSOCIATION NURSERY WITHIN KINGSWAY LEARNING CENTRE

The Sub-Committee considered a report which set out the current situation in relation to the National Day Nurseries Association Day Care (NDNA) Provision in Kingsway Learning Centre, and provided information on the proposed sale of the NDNA to a third party.

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committee endorses the proposed sale of the National Day Nursery Association (NDNA) Nursery to a reputable third party.

EXECUTIVE SUB BOARD MEETING HELD ON 15TH MARCH 2007

ES 93 CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND SHORT BREAK CONTRACTS

The Sub-Committee considered a report which outlined a number of contracts which provided a range of short breaks for disabled children and their families in Halton commissioned by the Council from the voluntary sector.

In 2006 quotations were sought from providers and contracts awarded based on this process. Contracts were awarded to provide these services for one year due to the annual nature of the funding (Carers Grant).

The exception to the above was the Crossroads contract awarded in 2004 for three years at a cost of £12,333, ending on 31st March 2007. Renewal of the Contract was sought at an increased value. Additional contracts to fund additional carers within the clubs was awarded in 2006 bringing the total value to £17,555. The cost of running the clubs however, exceeded the contract value, the balance having been funded by charitable funding which Crossroads had been able to secure. This charitable funding had now ended and Crossroads therefore required the full cost of the service provision to be provided by the Council in order to continue to provide the service.

The cost of the Contract for 2007-08 would therefore be £29,367. This price level was consistent with the pricing of other contractors and takes into account additional staffing and transport costs.

The report sought a waiver of the Council's Standing Orders to enable the extension of the existing contracts until 31st March 2008 due to the specialist services provided to meet the needs of disabled children and their families and as there were limited providers delivering these services in the Halton area.

In order to fulfil the requirements and comply with Standing Orders the existing providers would be required to submit a written quotation to provide the same service for 2007-08 as they have provided in 2006-07. Each of the existing service contracts had been monitored on a quarterly basis and all perform to a satisfactory standard or above.

RESOLVED: That the waiver of Council Standing Orders (S4.1) and a one-year extension for each of the contracts outlined in the report be agreed.

ES94 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The Sub-Committee was advised that the Education and Inspections Act 2006 placed new duties on local authorities. Within these duties, the local authorities powers of intervention were strengthened. It was reported that these duties placed considerable challenges upon the existing structures within the Council for improving standards in schools.

Following initial work which had been undertaken with Steve Turnbull, EM Direct, it was proposed that there were a number of areas which required further development to deliver aspects of the Education and Inspection Act and expectations of the Joint Area Review.

It was proposed that specialist consultancy support was now required to

remodel the service. Specifically, the consulting support would be required to undertake developmental work whilst also bringing forward specific recommendations on service configuration. Specialist support had been sourced from SERCO.

RESOLVED: That Standing Order 4.1 be waived in respect of the contract for securing the services of a consultant to undertake key development work relating to the remodelling of how the local authority undertakes its statutory function in relation to school improvement.