

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, 25 January 2021 held remotely

Present: Councillors Dennett (Chair), Logan (Vice-Chair), M. Bradshaw, Carlin, P. Hignett, P. Lloyd Jones, J. Stockton and Teeling

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Leck and Whitley

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Vasic, A. McIntyre, A. Jones, S. Williams and A. Leach

Also in attendance: One member of the press

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

	<i>Action</i>
CYP18 MINUTES	
The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2020 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
CYP19 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
CYP20 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
The minutes relating to the Children, Education and Social Care Portfolio, that had been considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of this Board, were attached at Appendix 1 for information.	
Further to an enquiry regarding 'the Venus Project' information on this would be circulated to the Board – in the meantime Members were advised of their website address https://www.venuscharity.org/	
RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.	

CYP21 SSP MINUTES

The draft minutes relating to the Halton Children's Trust meeting held on 3 December 2020 were presented to the Board for information.

One member queried the support in place / being planned for teachers with regards to pupil behaviour for when the children return to school after the current lockdown. Members were advised that schools had already amended their behaviour policies, which was a statutory requirement before schools returned in September 2021. Officers received feedback from headteachers saying that most children responded well to going back to school following the last lockdown. Their behaviour was better than expected and they were happy to work in 'bubbles'. It was noted that schools would be contacted again to plan and offer support for the return of pupils following this lockdown. There would also be training offered to school staff around behaviour support.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.

CYP22 HALTON LOCAL AREA SEND STRATEGY 2021-25

The Board received a report and accompanying presentation on the consultation and scope of the proposed local area SEND Strategy for 2021-24.

The Board was advised that *The Children and Families Act 2014* and *SEND Code of Practice 2015* set out the statutory requirements and practice required from local areas to meet the needs of children and young people (0-25 years) with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The code stated that statutory bodies in these local areas must work together to meet these requirements, so the SEND Strategy for 2021-25 would be a joint strategy under the governance of the Halton Health and Wellbeing Board; the Children's Trust and Halton Borough Council and be delivered by all three.

It was noted that the draft strategy had also been produced in partnership with other statutory bodies from education and health, including schools, the CCG, and parent carer and young people's representatives.

The presentation outlined the vision of the Strategy, its principles, its four priorities and Governance. The one page Strategy document was also presented which would be a single page living document. It was noted that the next

steps would be to start the consultation – to which Members would be invited to contribute; this would lead to the development of actions plans for each of the priority areas and agreement of KPI's and milestones.

Members queried:

Considering there were so many priorities how would the KPI's be assessed – it was important to measure each outcome to know whether they were successful or not, so the significant priorities would be measured. It was important to note that 17.5% of Halton's children were SEND and some of those were Children in Care; some outcomes would incorporate feedback from these children on a regular basis so that we could ensure they were heard.

Considering the cuts made to Youth Services how will this Strategy be funded – the Youth Service provision would not be reduced but it was proposed that it be delivered in a different way, allowing more local and community involvement. The Strategy was proposing better support and services to be able to identify SEND early so that support and education could be provided in the community, thus reducing the reliance on specialist out of borough provision. This in turn would alleviate pressures on the high needs budget.

Have you taken into consideration who the audience will be and the need for it to be understood by all – yes this had been raised and discussed and the language used would be taken into consideration, so that it was user friendly for professionals, parents and young people.

The Chair requested that an update be brought to the Board following the consultation, with progress of the action plans.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) considered the presentation and notes comments and questions made in relation the draft SEND Strategy; and
- 2) requests annual progress updates on the delivery of the SEND Strategy to ensure that leaders remain informed and able to enquire and intervene as deemed necessary.

Operational
Director -
Education, Inclusion and
Provision

CYP23 HEADTEACHER OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR HALTON CHILDREN IN CARE

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – People, which presented the Virtual School Headteacher's Annual Report for Halton Children in Care (CIC).

It was reported that due to the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic and the subsequent restrictions, the formal education of children in care was ceased on 23 March 2020. This resulted in the suspension of all Primary tests and a change to teacher assessment for the allocation of GCSE results. Further, the requirement to attend school from 23 March 2020 onwards was altered and was determined by individual risk assessment. As a result of all of the above, Members were advised that there could be no meaningful comparison between previous years and this year's educational outcomes for Children in Care.

Despite the above however, the work of the Virtual School had continued throughout the academic year and the Annual Report provided details of how Halton Children in Care were supported to mitigate against the impacts of the Covid Restrictions. The report also provided detailed data, analysis; a summary of the work of the School during the academic year 2019-20; and a summary of the School's progress towards its identified key priorities and those priorities identified for 2020-21.

Members queried:

Following the ILACS inspection in March 2020, what was the strategy for apprenticeships – it was recognised that improvement was needed in the Post 16 area, one staff member left during the first lockdown and the young people that had apprenticeships were forced to suspend these due to the Pandemic. The Strategic Director now chaired a group that was addressing this via the apprenticeship hub and funding had since been identified to recruit a replacement member of staff, who would focus on Post 16 NEET 16-19 year old young people in care and care leavers obtaining apprenticeships.

The rise in nursery aged children going into care was a concern – this could be attributed to the Covid outbreak resulting in some young families struggling without the support of health visitors / children's centres due to lockdowns. It was likely that children of this age would be adopted, nevertheless, once this spike was identified it was

agreed to appoint an early years staff member who would work on identifying the needs, support and funding required going forward.

The Chair suggested a more focussed report on the nursery aged increases be submitted to the Board at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report and information be noted.

Director of
Children's
Services

Meeting ended at 8.10 p.m.