

## 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, 22 January 2024 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Logan (Chair), Begg, Goodall, Jones, P. Lloyd Jones, McDermott, Rowe and Ryan

Apologies for Absence: Councillors C. Plumpton Walsh and Baker

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: J. Farrell, A. Jones, K. Bazley, J. Gallagher, V. Armor and A. Hindhaugh

Also in attendance: None

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

|  | <i>Action</i> |
|--|---------------|
| CYP21 MINUTES  |               |
| The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2023 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.   |               |
| CYP22 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME   |               |
| The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.  |               |
| CYP23 THE CORPORATE PLAN - THE BIG CONVERSATION ANALYSIS AND THE WAY FORWARD   |               |
| The Board received a report of the Corporate Director, Chief Executive's Delivery Unit, which gave an update on 'The Big Conversation', since it was presented at the last meeting in November 2023.   |               |
| The consultation closed on 30 November 2023. The report outlined the engagement results of the consultation, broken down into age groups and presented the methods used and areas the consultation had reached, which included many stakeholders and partners. |               |

It was reported that there was a high level of agreement to the suggested themes within the consultation. It was evident however that the addition of a 6<sup>th</sup> theme was required to encompass areas such as: environment, open and green spaces and the protection of these, litter, overgrowth and weeds, regeneration, business, economy, growth support and town centres, housing and supported living. It was proposed that these would come under '*Place and Community*'.

The timeline for the new Corporate Plan was provided and its launch was scheduled for April 2024. All Elected Members of the Council had been emailed to advise of the qualifying statements devised for each priority/theme. These would also be made available to the public, employees and residents, who would now be given the opportunity to provide feedback on these statements, which set out what each priority would aim to achieve over the next 5 years.

The public consultation was open from 19 January to 26 January and was being shared via social media and drop-in sessions in the libraries and Direct Links in Runcorn and Widnes.

Members made the following comments:

- It was felt that the priorities were similar to the original priorities the Council has now;
- One week for a public consultation on the qualifying statements was not very long and there was the potential for criticism;
- A 1% response from 16–19-year-olds was skewing the figures – the efforts made with this age group were reiterated; and
- Funding for the new Corporate Plan was queried – this would be confirmed at a later date.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) the Board continues to endorse the approach to facilitate the implementation of a new Corporate Plan.

#### CYP24 SUMMARY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING UPDATE

The Board received a report from the Executive Director Children, which provided a summary of the key

work taking place locally and at a regional level, to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

An accompanying presentation was provided which gave an overview of work taking place in Halton by a variety of organisations and teams. It also included an overview of preventative work that aimed to keep children and young people mentally well, and services that provided direct interventions and support when children and young people were struggling.

Members were also provided with details of the *The Resilience Framework* and details of the core/statutory services available in Halton. It was noted that this was not a definitive list of support that was available, as there were many other services that had a positive impact on children and young people's mental health – these examples were listed.

The following additional information was provided in response to Members questions:

- The nurturing agenda was connected to this as all services were encouraged to be part of the network of support, as they all complimented each other;
- Training was a rolling programme as staff members changed all the time;
- Not all schools were using the service, as they chose not to. Some felt they did not need the support; some were doing their own work in the mental health area; and some were dependent upon the availability of funding;
- It was thought that 1 in 6 children had a probable mental health disorder;
- Outcomes of services were measured but varied across organisations/teams and were dependent on the intervention utilised;
- The remedial role of the service was understood and it was commented that schools and mental health services approach was also prevention, as outlined in the presentation;
- It was recognised that teachers leaving and joining different schools could be unsettling for children; and the same could be said for the staff members losing colleagues;
- It was commented by one Member that a simple way of encouraging good mental health in students was to encourage sports – it was felt that extra-curricular activities were becoming exclusive due to the costs involved. It was noted that all schools' curriculums

did include sports and HBC employed a Schools Games Officer, who worked with schools to encourage sporting activities, events, competitions and support for children and young people with disabilities;

- Access to the Baby Infant Bonding Service was explained;
- The main transition period for pupils dealt with by the Team was children transferring from primary to secondary school; any other significant periods would be checked and reported after the meeting; and
- The number of Educational Psychologists in Halton would also be reported back.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) receive the presentation; and
- 2) note the key work and services contributing to the positive mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

Executive Director  
of Children's  
Services

## CYP25 HALTON FAMILY HUBS

The Board received a report from the Executive Director, Children, which gave an update on the progress of Halton's Family Hubs and the next steps.

The Government's 2019 Manifesto pledged to champion Family Hubs across England. In December 2020, the Minister for Children outlined plans to create a national Centre of Excellence for Family Hubs, funded by the Department for Education (DfE). The *Best Start for Life Review: A Vision for the 1001 Critical days*, outlined a programme of work to ensure the best support during those crucial first 1001 days, setting babies up to maximise their potential for lifelong emotional and physical wellbeing.

It was announced in April 2022 that 75 local authorities would become pilot areas for the Family Hubs and Best Start for Life schemes and Halton had been selected for this.

The Board was advised that since December 2022 the Council had been working hard to develop the Family Hub Model and the presentation outlined the journey so far in the development of these, as well as the challenges faced over the past year; achievements reached; and how they were making a difference.

In response to questions the following additional information was provided:

- The Family Hubs were a universal offer for children and young people in the Borough aged 0-19 or 25 with SEND;
- It was commented that the benefits of the Programme could be long term as it would help with the prevention of children entering the care system for example – officers had already seen results as referrals to specialist targeted parenting programmes had reduced, as a result of more people accessing at a lower level;
- The costs of capital projects had increased recently and these would be raised with the North West delivery lead this week;
- 25,000 young people had used the Hubs so far, and 130 new referrals were being seen each month across the Borough;
- Outcomes of the Family Hubs were reported back to a control group in Government, to demonstrate the programmes were working;
- The demographics of the Family Hubs was not a barrier to residents as they could visit any, and all residents had the same opportunity to access the services offered – if the demand for a service existed in a particular Hub it would be provided there;
- The digital offer would be improved as a new system was being procured; and
- The Family Hubs were also focussing on increasing access for fathers so that all family members could benefit from the services.

The Family Hubs were located in Runcorn at Halton Lodge Children's Centre, Windmill Hill Children's Centre and Brookvale Community Centre, with a satellite site at Halton Brook Learning Centre. Widnes Family Hubs were located at Kingsway Community Centre, Ditton Community Centre and Warrington Road Children's Centre, with a satellite site at Upton Community Centre.

Overall Members were pleased to hear the success of the Family Hubs to date and would welcome a further update as the Programme develops.

**RESOLVED:** That the Board receives the presentation.

CYP26 SUMMARY OF VALIDATED HALTON EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE, SUMMER 2023

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Children, which presented a summary on the validated outcomes for Halton's Children and Young Peoples' educational performance from summer 2023, in comparison to validated national, regional and statistical neighbour data.

Members were referred to Paper One, appended to the report, which included attainment and progress outcomes from the summer 2023 statutory assessment and exam period for all pupils – cohorts of children and young people with SEND; cohorts of children and young people who were eligible for Free School Meals; Early Years Foundation Stage Good Level of Development (GLD); phonics outcomes; end of Key Stage One outcomes; end of Key Stage Two outcomes; and End of Key Stage Four outcomes (GCSE English and Maths). Explanations on the outcomes for each of the above cohorts were provided in the report.

Members discussed the implications of Local Authority funding cuts (Schools Improvement Monitoring and Brokering Grants, SIMB Grant) and how this had led to the offer of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) that schools could purchase going forwards, due to the removal of funding for the SIMB Grant. The extent of what schools had bought into this year would become clear at the end of January 2024.

One member suggested writing to schools' governors to ensure they were informed of the situation. It was noted that this information was shared with headteachers at headteacher meetings and would be shared with other stakeholders, including Governors at the Governor termly briefing on 30 January 2024.

Following a question regarding the Council's position on academisation, it was noted that advice was given to schools thinking of converting but a neutral view was maintained. Schools were advised of the risks/disadvantages, eg, Local Authority services that could be lost by converting.

**RESOLVED:** That the report and comments/feedback received be noted.

CYP27 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT - QUARTER 2  
OF 2023-24

The Board received the performance management reports for quarter 2 of 2023-24 (1 July 2023 to 30 September 2023).

The key priorities for development or improvement in 2023-24 were agreed by Members and included in the Local Authority's Business Plan for the following Departments:

- Education, Inclusion and Provision Services; and
- Children and Families Services.

The reports detailed progress made against objectives, milestones and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period. Members were requested to consider the progress and performance information and highlight any areas of interest and/or concern, where further information could be reported at a future meeting of the Board.

The Chair commented that these were now out of date but invited questions from Members. The Board queried the overspend that existed in Children's Services, around residential and educational placements and out of Borough placements provision for some children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), requiring specialist provision. They discussed the possibilities of this being reduced both in the short term and long term.

RESOLVED: That the quarter two 2023-24 performance management reports be received.

*Meeting ended at 8.55 p.m.*