

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

A record of decisions made by the Executive Member with responsibility for Children's Services on:-

MONDAY, 16 NOVEMBER, 2009

following consideration of the matters detailed below in the presence of:-

Councillor Adia	Executive Member for Children's Services
Councillor Ashcroft	Major Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor Mrs Swarbrick	Minor Opposition Spokesperson
Ms. M. Asquith	Director of Children's Services
Ms D. Luczka	Head of Connexions Service
Mr J. Livesey	Assistant Director, Performance, Planning and Resources.
Mr D. Smith	Policy Accountant
Mr S. Fazal	Assistant Director, Access and Inclusion
Mrs K. Smith	Senior Performance and Improvement Officer

37. MONITORING OF EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISIONS

The Director of Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which contained monitoring information related to decisions taken at the Executive Member's previous meetings.

The Executive Member for Children's Services NOTED the progress on decisions previously taken.

38. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT UNIT RESTRUCTURE

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which requested the Executive Member's approval to restructure the Children's Services Information Management Unit (IMU).

By way of background information the report advised that the function of the IMU was to provide strategic and operational support to the Information Systems used within the department together with the management of data within these systems. The Team also maintained systems and processes to ensure that the Department meets its statutory requirements in relation to Data Protection and Freedom of Information.

The report advised that the proposals for change to the IMU were as follows:-

- Creation of a scalable structure to create two groups of staff for Information Systems Support and Data and Records Management and Statutory Returns;
- Establishing Line management for the staff within the two areas. This would include the creation of a Grade 6 Senior management Officer and a Grade 9 Information Management Systems Post;
- Transferring data analysis post to the Strategy and Performance Team. This would involve transferring some posts with some changes to the posts concerned;
- Replacing in- house consultancy support with a new Grade 7 Systems Officer. This would give increased value for money. However it was proposed that the existing contract with PSP was continued until March, 2010.

The proposed IMU structure was attached to the report with the relevant job descriptions and person specifications also attached.

The Executive Member APPROVED the restructure to the Children's Services Information Management unit as detailed in the report subject to the approval of the Executive Member for Human Resources, Organisational Development and Diversity.

39. SKATE PARK PROVISION

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which updated the Executive Member on the possibility of providing

some form of limited skatepark provision in Egerton Park.

By way of background, the Executive Member was reminded that ,following receipt of a petition from young people in the Bromley Cross/Egerton area, a report on skate park provision had been submitted to his previous meeting, whereby it was agreed that officers in Environmental Services would be asked to investigate the development of some limited provision in Egerton Park and report back to a future meeting.

Consequently, the Executive Member was advised that, following investigations, an area in the park had been identified which could accommodate a piece of skate equipment. However, the cost of installing such a facility had been estimated at £30,000 and there would also be ongoing inspection and maintenance liability. It was stated that whilst the former could be absorbed within the existing inspection regime undertaken by Environmental Services, it was anticipated that an annual sum of at least £1,500 would need to be identified to the cover the cost of repairs.

In conclusion, the report advised that additional facilities had recently been provided in Egerton Park in the form of a Multi Use Games Area and as no capital or revenue funding could be identified it was felt that on balance it would not be appropriate to provide some form of limited skate provision in Egerton Park at the moment.

The Executive Member CONFIRMED that it is not appropriate to provide some form of limited skate provision in Egerton Park at the moment based on the reasons detailed in the report.

40. STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE TEAM RESTRUCTURE

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which sought the Executive Member's approval to proposals to restructure the Children's Services Strategy and Performance Team.

The Executive Member was advised that the primary function of the Strategy and Performance Team was to drive the strategic evaluation and planning processes within the department. The unit also carried out information analysis which included provision of statistical reports, spatial maps and supported the target setting process in schools.

It was explained that the structure currently in place was an historical model which had been established to meet the needs of the previous Education and Culture Department and had not been reviewed since the creation of Children's Services. As a result, it was recognised that the current structure was no longer fit for purpose and did not provide the most effective or efficient service possible.

The report put forward a number of proposals for restructuring the service to ensure that it focused on analysing the information held by the department to support effective strategy development and service planning. Additional capacity was also proposed to support the effective forecasting of school places and to provide support to Bolton's developing Children's Trust. Furthermore, the proposals removed the reliance on agency staffing, thereby improving business continuity and also created a scalable organisational structure that would support future integration of Strategy and Performance functions across the department.

With regard to the financial implications of the restructure, it was estimated that it would generate ongoing savings of £17,466.

The Executive Member AGREED subject to the approval of the Executive Member for Human Resources, Diversity and Organisational Development, the proposed restructure of the Strategy and Performance Team as detailed in the report.

**41. ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FOLLOWING
RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE NEET
SCRUTINY PANEL**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which informed the Executive Member of the actions identified and

progress made following the recommendations made by the NEET Scrutiny Panel.

The report outlined the recommendations and the actions taken to date in respect of the following areas, viz:-

- Involvement of elected members;
- Mobility factors/transport;
- Arrangements with other Council Departments/Outside Agencies;
- Relationship with schools; and
- Relationship with other agencies.

Information was also provided in relation to the initial progress against the actions identified and also on the new commissioning arrangements for Post 16 provision.

The Executive Member APPROVED the actions detailed in the report in response to the recommendations made by the NEET Scrutiny Panel and NOTED the progress made in relation to the key actions identified.

42. HMI PROBATION INSPECTION OF BOLTON YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which provided information in relation to the outcome of the Youth Offending Team (YOT) Inspection; detailed the action plan to improve systems and processes within YOT; and provided an update on the action taken so far.

The Executive Member was advised that YOT was inspected in July, 2009 by HMI Probation and the final report was received in September, 2009. The inspection focused on systems and processes and did not take into account the outcomes achieved by Bolton YOT.

The inspection looked at the three areas namely, Safeguarding; Risk of Harm to the Public; and Reoffending and substantial improvement was identified as being required in each of these areas. The improvements required were related to the provision of evidence in case records of the work undertaken by the staff and managers in the YOT; improving quality

assurance systems and management oversight; improving the quality of assessments; and improving case recording.

With regard to the progress made so far, line management responsibility for the YOT had been transferred to Children's Services Stating Safe since the inspection report had been received and the YOT would now be included in the rolling programme of audits undertaken with the division.

Furthermore, the majority of areas of work identified in the recommendations were now either completed or were in progress. The YOT Manager and Assistant Director had also met with the Youth Justice Board and they agreed to provide targeted support for Bolton through consultancy which would focus on the following areas, viz:-

- Case recording;
- Analysis;
- Engagement;
- Sequencing; and
- Escalation techniques.

In terms of the future, the Executive Member was advised that the inspection also revealed some systems issues relating to workflow in the YOT and there were structural issues which had impacted on the outcome of the inspection and these would need to be addressed in the near future.

The Executive Member NOTED the report and AGREED that a further report on the progress being made be submitted in six months.

43. CO-ORDINATION OF ADMISSIONS TO SCHOOLS

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which sought the following:-

1. To approve the consultation arrangements on the proposed scheme for the co-ordination of in year admissions in primary schools; and
2. To approve the consultation arrangements on the proposed amendments to the scheme for the co-ordination of in year admissions in secondary schools.

The Executive Member was advised that the revised School Admission Code, which came into force on 11th February, 2009 with immediate effect, required each local authority to formulate a scheme to co-ordinate admission arrangements in relation to each primary and secondary school and academy in their area.

The report stated that the current regulations only required Local Authorities to co-ordinate admission during the normal year of entry, however, in respect of the 2010/2011 school year, the Co-ordinated Regulations amended the existing regulations so that local authorities had to co-ordinate in year applications. The regulations would also enable parents applying for a primary school for admission in 2011/2012 to apply for a minimum of three schools. Furthermore, for 2011/2012 admission onwards the regulations also set out additional key dates in the admissions process, at a national level, than those which currently existed. It also allowed local authorities to consult on their co-ordination arrangements once every three years instead of every year as currently on the proviso that they had not changed significantly since the previous year.

In view of the above, the appendix to the report set out the proposed schemes to apply from September, 2010 to ensure that the in year admission schemes complied with the requirements set out in the Co-ordination Regulations. With regard to the current schemes in respect of admission into the normal years of entry into primary and secondary schools and academies these had been amended only to reflect the dates prescribed in the Co-ordination Regulations. It was stated that as there were no proposals to make any significant amendments to these schemes there was no requirement to consult on the updated schemes.

The Executive Member APPROVED –

- (i) Consultation on the proposed scheme for the co-ordination of in year admissions in primary schools; and**

(ii) Consultation on the proposed amendments to the scheme for the co-ordination of in year admissions in secondary schools.