

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND SPORT  
POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

MEETING, 13<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2007

Present – Councillors Ashcroft, Hornby, Murray, Mrs. Rothwell, Rushton, Swarbrick, Mrs Thomas and A. Wilkinson.

Also in attendance

Ms. M. Asquith	Director of Children's Services
Ms L. Jones	Assistant Director Children and Families
Mr T. Sinkinson	Manager, Policy and Resources Division
Ms C. Davies	Head of Finance
Ms J. Thompson	Assistant Director, Positive Contribution
Miss K. Treadwell	Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Brierley and J. Byrne.

**1. APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR**

It was agreed that Councillor Mrs Thomas be appointed as Chairman of the Policy Development Group for the Municipal Year.

Councillor Mrs Thomas here took the Chair.

**2. APPOINTMENT OF THE VICE CHAIR**

It was agreed that Councillor Murray be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Policy Development Group for the Municipal Year.

**3. MINUTES**

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Policy Development Group held on 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2007 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

**4. STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which outlined the Children's Services Strategic Plan for the next three years.

The report advised that the Strategic Plan was a component of the Council's Corporate Business Planning Process (CPBB) and was drafted to have corresponding aims and outcomes. The purpose of the Three Year Strategic Plan was to identify how Children's Services would:

- deliver the Council's priority themes within the Bolton Plan;
- respond to the corporate and departmental Big Issues Papers;
- deliver a set of strategic service priorities over the following three years; and
- ensure financial decisions were rooted in strategy by informing the Strategic Resource Option papers in November, 2007.

The Strategic Plan was appended to the report.

During the course of their discussions, members discussed the following issues:-

- the importance of departments working together and sharing information, when necessary, regarding young people; and
- the Direct Payments Scheme and its popularity amongst those caring for children.

It was agreed that the Executive Member for Children's Services be recommended-

To approve the Draft Children's Services Strategic Plan, 2008-11.

## **5. CHILDREN'S SERVICES BIG ISSUES**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which identified the big issues for the Children's Services Department for the next three years.

The report advised that it responded to the Corporate big issues approved by the Executive on 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2007 and also set out the issues specific to Children's Services

The report advised that some of the following positive opportunities were available to the Department to enhance over the next three years:

- commissioning;
- service remodelling;
- better use of knowledge and data;
- external funding through working with the voluntary sector;
- exploration of charging policies;
- integrated Youth Support Services; and
- new legislation and guidance.

The report also referred to the budget guidance which set savings targets for all services at 5%. The report outlined the most significant financial challenges facing the department as follows:

- underlying funding shortfall;
- savings targets;
- Pay and Grading Review;
- uncertain external or time limited funding streams;
- Building Schools for the Future;
- Information Technology requirements;
- cost of school meals;
- schools transport;
- increase in demand for foster care;
- pay allowance for foster carers;

- Early Years education;
- new Diplomas 14 - 19;
- adoption support; and
- implementation of care matters.

During the course of their discussions, members discussed the following issues:-

- where funding would be found if children were required to continue their education until they were eighteen;
- the importance of persisting with the 14 -19 strategy particularly with youngsters not in mainstream education;
- the importance of health inequalities being a major part of the Strategy; and
- that publicity for being a Foster Carer in Bolton was continued to maintain the current momentum of new foster carers joining the Council's scheme.

It was agreed that the Executive Member for Children's Services be recommended -

To approve the Children's Services Big Issues 2008 to 2011.