

## **LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND SAFEGUARDING**

A record of decisions made by the Executive Member with responsibility for Looked After Children and Safeguarding on:-

**MONDAY, 26<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2009**

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

Councillor Murray	Executive Member for Looked After Children and Safeguarding
Councillor Mrs Brierley	Major Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor Mrs Rothwell	Minor Opposition Spokesperson
Ms M. Asquith	Director of Children's Services
Mr J. Daly	Assistant Director, Staying Safe
Mr J. Livesey	Assistant Director, Performance Planning and Resources
Mr D. Smith	Policy Accountant, Children's Services
Mrs K. Smith	Senior Performance and Improvement Officer

### **18. MONITORING OF EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISIONS**

The Director of the 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 Looked After Children NOTED the progress on decisions previously taken.**

### **19. TONGE CHILDREN'S CENTRE PARTNERSHIP**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which requested the Executive Member's approval to enter into a revised partnership agreement with Tonge United Reform Church in relation to the use of the Tonge Children's Centre.

By way of background information, the report advised that the council had purchased the land from Tonge United Reformed Church at market value in order to build a Children's Centre. The original partnership agreement allowed for the church to have access to all facilities within the Centre. At the time of drafting the partnership agreement, consideration was not given to the contractual arrangements relating to the provision of the nursery within the children's centre. These contractual arrangements gave sole use of the nursery area to the nursery provider.

The report advised that in light of these circumstances an amendment to the existing contract arrangements with the nursery provider had been agreed. The area currently occupied by the nursery within the Children's Centre was to be significantly reduced. The area released by the reduction would become available to other users of the centre including the church. This would enable the church to considerably improve its arrangements which it has in place to provide a crèche for its congregation.

Consultation had been undertaken with the Assistant Director for Staying Safe, Legal Services and Corporate Property Services and there were no legal or policy impediments to this proposal. Consultation and negotiation had also taken place with representatives of the church, Preschool Learning Alliance and the managers of the Children's Centre.

**The Executive Member AGREED -**

**That the Council enter into a revised partnership with Tonge United Reformed Church, as detailed in the report.**

## **20. INTEGRATED CHILDREN'S SYSTEM**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which updated the Executive Member on the progress of the Integrated Children's System (ICS) in Bolton and requested that an alternative ICS system was procured.

**The Executive Member AGREED-**

**That the report be DEFERRED to a future meeting.**

## **21. RENT FOR USE OF SPACE IN CHILDREN'S CENTRE**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which requested the Executive Member's agreement to nurseries, Hospital Trusts and PCTs within Children's Centres not paying rent charges.

By way of background information the report advised that, six Phase 1 Children's Centres had been built in areas where there were insufficient child care places. The Centres were required to include full day care for 0-5s operating from 8am till 6pm, 50 weeks of the year minimum.

At present Alexander and Grosvenor Nursery Schools were not charged rent for the space they occupied in the Children's Centres to deliver full daycare with Grosvenor Nursery not being charged rent for the nursery school. They were both supposed to pay a service charge but they had yet to be invoiced. With regard to Harvey Nursery, rent for space in the Children's Centre had not been charged as expenditure had been higher than the income to date. The remaining three voluntary sector nurseries were originally informed that there would be charge for rent in addition to the service charge. However, Estates had yet to invoice the nurseries for rent or the service charge. The finances of these nurseries showed that the Pre-school Learning Alliance was covering a substantial loss and Great Lever was breaking even.

The report went on to state that, in terms of the conditions of the Children's Centre Capital Grant given to Bolton, the DCSF stated that services which were delivering the core offer and were co-located in the centres could not be charged rent. The guidance also stated that agencies delivering services to the same group of children and families should be integrated. One of the key features of integration was co-location.

The report advised that the six nurseries were serving families living in the most disadvantaged areas of Bolton. Working with families who were returning to employment or working for low pay presented additional challenges for child care providers

because their customer base was constantly changing, requiring more flexible provision and needing the support of a wide range of services. As a result these providers were contributing to a number of priorities. The report went on to state that if Estates were to invoice the nurseries for the rent and service charges for previous years it would probably lead to their closure.

The report advised that, in terms of co-location of health partners, 14 of the 18 Children's Centres had office space for the use of outreach staff from any agency. Integrated working in the Centres where health partners were located was more effective than others. The Children's Centre multi-agency resource management panels, currently being rolled out, were proving to be an effective way of pooling early intervention resources at a local level. The Children's Centre Accommodation Strategy was being drafted by the Working Together Sub Group of the Early Years Strategic Partnership. To enable its adoption by Children's Services, the Hospital Trust and the PCT would need to set out clearly what the financial responsibilities of each partner would be. The recommendation would give that clarity and support the further co-location leading to integration of teams at locality level.

**The Executive Member AGREED –**

- (i) That the nurseries within Children's Centre buildings are not charged rent but pay a service charge; and**
- (ii) That the Hospital Trust and PCT are not charged rent for office space for midwives and health visitors but pay a service charge.**