

## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

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

**TUESDAY 31<sup>st</sup> AUGUST, 2010**

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

Councillor Adia	Executive Member Children's Services
Councillor Ashcroft	Major Opposition Spokesperson
Councillor Swarbrick	Minor Opposition Spokesperson
Ms M. Asquith	Director of Children's Services
Mr. J. Livesey	Assistant Director
Mr. J. Daly	Assistant Director
Mr. T. Birch	Assistant Director
Ms. J. Thompson	Assistant Director
Mr. D. Smith	Policy Accountant
Mr. A. Jennings	Democratic Services

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

The Director of Chief Executive's Department submitted a report which monitored the progress of decisions within the portfolio of the Executive Member Children's Services.

**The Executive Member NOTED the progress of the decisions taken.**

## **19. CHILDREN'S SERVICES – FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2010/11 – QUARTER ONE**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which provided the Executive Member with information relating to the financial position for the Children's Services portfolio for the first quarter of the 2010/11 financial year.

The report indicated that revenue projection for the year at quarter one for the local authority block exceeded the available budget by £1,468,000 due mainly to pressures arising from child protection and looked after children.

The revenue expenditure for the centrally held block was projected to be less than available grant by £127,000.

Furthermore, revenue expenditure for the delegated dedicated schools grant was projected to exceed the in year available grant by £1,141,000 due to a planned use of balances brought forward.

The programme for 2010/11 was currently £48,362,000 which was an increase of £15,706,000 from the original programme approved in February, 2010.

Balances were expected to be £6,566,000 at the 31 March, 2011 which was a reduction of £5,694,000 due to planned use of school balances, support of the current year's capital programme and the estimated revenue position.

**The Executive Member NOTED the financial position of the Department as at the end of quarter one for the 2010/11 financial year and AGREED the adjustments to the capital programme as outlined at paragraph 4 of the report.**

## **20. CHILDREN'S SERVICES DRAFT PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT DASHBOARD QUARTER ONE 2010/11**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report that provided the Executive Member with the latest available 2010-11 performance information for the Department

**The Executive Member AGREED the improvement actions identified against the indicator-by indicator breakdown of performance in the report.**

## **21. REQUEST TO ESTABLISH A POST IN THE YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which requested the establishment of a new post within the Youth Offending Team (YOT) service as part of the planned YOT reorganisation.

The YOT reviewed its structure after a HMI Inspection in 2009. The Inspection report suggested that a greater scrutiny of case management would improve outcomes in terms of managing risk and in terms of safeguarding young people. Consequently, the proposed post would be used to assist in the closer oversight of case management.

The establishment of the post would rely on the conversion of an existing YOT Officer grade 8 post into a "Specialist Interventions Coordinator" post. The additional costs were £,1036 in year 1; an additional £853 in year 2 and an additional £879 in the third year. The overall costs outlined would be maintained in the longer term and the YOT had capacity in its current budget to absorb these costs.

**The Executive Member AGREED, subject to the approval of the Executive Member Human Resources, the establishment of the post, now detailed, within the YOT.**

## **22. STARTING POINT REVIEW**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report that considered options for the future of Starting Point.

The Executive Member was reminded that Starting Point was a unique provision in Bolton for children who had recently arrived in Bolton from outside the UK and were new to the British educational system. Many children were refugees or asylum seekers, sometimes unaccompanied. Other children arrived from countries within the European community.

As Starting Point was registered as a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) it fell under the Ofsted inspection framework, which viewed all PRUs as short stay schools and pupils were expected to make progress which could be measured and evidenced in the same way as other children in PRUs.

In January 2010, Starting Point was inspected and received a judgement of Notice to Improve. Although inspectors found that the Unit was strong in areas of pastoral care, engagement and development, they identified significant weaknesses in assessment, teaching and learning and leadership.

Consequently, it was evident that Starting Point could not continue in its current form as a designated PRU and the Executive Member was requested to consider alternatives.

It was proposed that the Council could either close the facility or apply to the DfE to de-register Starting Point as a PRU and reconfigure the support services offered to children and families. The name/brand Starting Point could be retained but its function would be different, with the focus on care, support and integration rather than education, which should be the responsibility of a mainstream school as soon as possible.

Other key functions concerned with helping children to succeed in learning would be carried out in schools, where the expertise, resources and staffing existed to deliver the sort of broad and balanced curriculum children needed.

If the de-registration option was agreed the following would need to take place:-

1. de-registration as a PRU.
2. re-set the objectives of Starting Point which would include:
  - induction, settlement and integration of newly arrived children and families;
  - transition to mainstream school; and
  - signposting, advice and guidance for children, families and schools.
3. agree the assessment process for children to provide consistent information to schools.
4. agree the teaching and learning activities to be carried out at Starting Point with a focus on 'accessing learning', particularly for older pupils.
5. agree transition timescales for entry to mainstream school with a range of 1-2 weeks (usual) and a maximum of 6 weeks (exceptional where complex needs were identified) in order to comply with legislation.
6. agree transition, transfer arrangements and post transfer, support activities to be delivered from Starting Point.

It was explained that closure would have implications for staff currently employed at Starting Point and that de-registration and re-designation would also have implications for the current staff group, as there would be a move away from teaching and learning to support.

The Children's Services PDG had recommended option 2 which concerned deregulation/redesignation.

**The Executive Member for Children's Services AGREED the deregistration/redesignation (option 2) of Starting Point as proposed by the Children's Services PDG.**

### **23. CONVERSION OF SCHOOLS TO ACADEMIES**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report that updated the Executive Member with regards to the Academies Act 2010 and of the implications of two schools in Bolton wishing to convert to Academy status.

The Act allowed all maintained schools to apply to the Secretary of State to become an Academy. Schools which were judged to be outstanding would be allowed to convert under a 'fast track' procedure, unless there were legal or other imperatives which prevented this. Other schools would be allowed to convert at the Secretary of State's discretion.

The Act gave the Secretary of State wide ranging powers to establish Academies and to appoint sponsors to run them. The Governing Body needed to make the appropriate resolution and thereafter, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State, the school could convert to an Academy.

Academies had freedom from Local Authority control, which meant they had autonomy over the decisions they made and the curriculum. The Government expected the conversion process to take a minimum of three months and were hopeful that some schools could convert by 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2010.

The report informed the Executive Member that two Bolton schools, St Bede's C.E. Primary and Lever Edge Primary had received approval to convert to Academy Status. St Bede's was a voluntary aided school and as such employed staff directly. The Governing Body would therefore be responsible for consulting on and implementing the TUPE transfer arrangement. The Governing Body also owned the majority of the site. However, there was a small area of land owned by the Council and this land would not have to transfer to the school. The school also uses Council land for Sports etc activity.

Lever Edge was a community school and as such the staff were employed by the Council. The Council would need to work closely with the school regarding the TUPE transfer and ensure that no liabilities fell to the Council after the transfer. The school occupied the site and it was anticipated that this would transfer to the Academy Trust on a 125 year lease from the Council.

The conversion would involve the Council incurring some modest costs for which there were no budgets. It was therefore suggested that the Council recovered the costs from the schools.

**The Executive Member NOTED the contents of the report and AGREED that the Council should seek to recover any costs incurred in effecting the TUPE and land transfer agreements where appropriate from the transferring school, regardless of whether they consult the Council or not.**

**CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

**The background papers and reports in relation to the following items were considered confidential as defined in paragraphs 1, 3 and 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and that it be deemed that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in their exemption outweighs the public interest in their disclosure.**

#### **24. ICS IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT UPDATE**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which informed the Executive Member of the progress of the project to procure and implement a new integrated children's system (ICS) for Staying Safe Division.

Three of the four organisations that responded to the capability statement had also responded to the invitation to tender and an assessment of written responses to the tender specification in the areas of usability, reporting, information management and technical had been undertaken.

**The Executive Member AGREED to the completion of the tender process to procure the Liquid Logic ICS system.**

#### **25. CESSATION OF BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE AND ACADEMIES – STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report that identified the staffing implications for Bolton of the decision by the Government to stop the Building Schools for the Future Programme.

The Executive Member was reminded that the Government had cancelled the national Building Schools for the Future programme. Only schemes which had reached "financial close" would be allowed to continue and although Bolton had reached "financial close" for the creation of the joint Local Education Partnership (LEP) with Blackburn with Darwen and Balfour



Beatty Education the programme was stopped.

Consequently, as Bolton's BSF programme had been stopped a number of posts associated with the work of the BSF Team were technically at risk. However the following was highlighted:-

- a) there would be a period of protracted negotiations to extricate the Council from its LEP partners and to untangle the intricate legal agreements involved;
- b) the Assistant Director continued to be responsible for the procurement of three academies at Essa, Kearsley and St Catherine's and Firwood Special School with a total capital value in excess of £70m and linked responsibilities into the delivery of the Primary Capital Programme, which needed an ongoing relationship with corporate property services; and
- c) the Government was expected to announce a significant schools capital programme as part of the autumn spending review and it was anticipated that Bolton's stopped schemes may benefit from this investment.

Although it was considered important that capacity was retained it was unlikely that the Council would know about any future capital until after the Comprehensive Spending Review and therefore it was necessary to put the 3 substantive BSF post holders (2.5 fte) at risk of redundancy. The staff with secondments or fixed term contracts would either return to their substantive posts or a suitable alternative post, or be served notice on their contracts as appropriate.

**The Executive Member AGREED, subject to the approval of the Executive Member Human Resources that, pending confirmation of the actions needed to mitigate against the Bolton BSF Programme being stopped, the members of the**

**BSF Academies Team be issued with “at risk” letters.**

## **26. ENRICHMENT FOR LEARNING (FIND YOUR TALENT, STUDY SUPPORT AND INSPIRING COMMUNITIES)**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report that set out the findings of a review of the Enrichment for Learning Service to take into account the early closure of the Find Your Talent and Inspiring Communities programmes and the cessation of Area Based Grant to the Study Support Programme and consequently proposals for consultation.

The Enrichment for Learning Team within Children's Services was responsible for the delivery of three grant funded areas of work, the Find Your Talent and Inspiring Communities Pilot projects and the Study Support programme which was funded through Area Based Grant. The Government had announced the in year cessation of the Find Your Talent and Inspiring Communities projects and funding for Study Support would stop in April 2011 following reductions in Area Based Grant.

The Council had been allowed to retain £91,744 of unspent Find Your Talent Grant from 2009/10. This funding would be used to manage the closure of the project and the associated support functions provided by the Enrichment for Learning Team and to support the exploration of opportunities to enable the continuation of a cultural offer for children and young people in the town. Updates would be provided to the Children's PDG.

The Council had been informed that the Inspiring Communities Pilot project was being cancelled in year during 2010/11.

**The Executive Member AGREED, subject to the approval of the Executive Member Human Resources, the proposed restructuring of the Enrichment for Learning Team for**

**consultation purposes with staff and trade unions.**

## **27. INTEGRATION OF SPORT, HEALTH AND INCLUSION, PLAY AND YOUTH**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report that set out the proposed efficiencies and savings as a result of the integration of services, a reduction in core provision and to take into account a reduction in funding from 2011/12 onwards.

As part of the overall Council/Children's Services departmental budget reductions the Positive Contribution Division had been set a target to find budgets saving and efficiencies of £405,500 for 2011/12 and the report explained how £355,5000 savings could be achieved.

Staffing costs formed the majority of the Division's controllable revenue operating costs and, as such, no significant savings could be made without reviewing and reducing the Division's staffing establishment.

In the previous review of the Play and Youth Service (December 2009) it was identified that integration of management arrangements would provide economies of scale and so the proposal now detailed brought together the management functions of the Council's 5 – 19 and Sport, Health and Inclusion Services into one single management structure.

Additionally some aspects of the Youth/Connexions Service would be reviewed to help meet the 2011/12 savings and efficiencies target.

**The Executive Member AGREED, subject to the approval of the Executive Member Human Resources, that the proposals, now detailed in the report submitted, be subject to consultation with staff and trade unions.**

## **28. CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES – SAVINGS AND EFFICIENCIES**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report that set out the findings of a review of the Children with Disabilities Service to identify potential savings and efficiencies in the 2011/12 budget.

The Children with Disabilities Service was one of the services that made up the Staying Safe Division of the Children's Services Department. At the present time the service was benefiting from a significant uplift in resources from grant funding of £911,200 per year which was due to end in March, 2011. This enabled the service to commission a range of short breaks across holidays and out of school as well as providing some uplift to core services.

An additional report would be submitted to the Executive Member later in the year to reflect the implications of the grant cessation, following the budget announcement in October 2010.

The report detailed proposals to create £150,000 savings and efficiencies in line with the strategic aims of Children's Services and the wider strategic objectives of the Council.

The proposals would have no impact on the level of service provision being offered. However, it was likely that there would be less flexibility for staff rotas.

**The Executive Member AGREED, subject to the approval of the Executive Member Human Resources, that the proposals, now detailed in the report submitted, be subject to consultation with staff and trade unions.**

## **29. BOLTON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CENTRE REVIEW**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report that set out proposals regarding savings relating to the Bolton Science and Technology Centre.

It was proposed that the teaching and learning facility should cease to deliver provision beyond 31 March, 2011 and that no SLA should be offered to schools for 2011-2012 which in the main was driven by the need to significantly reduce the spend at the BSTC which in 2009-2010 ran at a loss of £251,000.

However, there remained a commitment to the Science & Technology agenda which would be addressed through the Educational Improvement "Market Place" offer.

The Centre would continue to provide conferencing facilities and also provide accommodation for the reconfigured School Improvement Team and would deliver the 'market place' for schools.

This temporary proposed structure would enable the conference facility to continue delivering a service to its stakeholders.

The Executive Member was recommended to approve the report for consultation purposes with staff and trade unions and specifically to remove the teaching and learning function at the BSTC and reduce the current establishment within the team.

**The Executive Member AGREED, subject to the approval of the Executive Member Human Resources, the report for consultation purposes with staff and trade unions and specifically agreed the removal of the teaching and learning function at the BSTC.**