

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10

REPORT TO: Halton Strategic Partnership Board

DATE: 18 May 2005

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Children and Young People,
Halton Borough Council

SUBJECT: Integration of Children's Services

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide information to the Board in relation to action taken to date in relation to Halton's response to the Integration agenda contained within the Children Act.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS: That the Board note the contents of the report

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 On the 8 December 2004, a report was presented to the board which outlined the initial response, by the council, in relation to the requirements placed upon us by the Children Act 2004 and the proposals for our approach to the national agenda of Integration of Children's Services.

3.2 The minimum requirements placed upon us by the Children Act (2004) are those of:

- The appointment of a Director of Children's Services
- The designation of an associated lead member for children's services
- The establishment of a Children's Trust within which agencies will pool budgets, integrate commissioning and delivery of children's services
- Integrated external inspection of Children's Social Care and Education with all Local Authorities to be inspected between 2005 – 2008
- The CPA rating for the council in November 2005 will include a joint rating/score for Children's Social Care and Education

3.3 In order to meet the requirements and timescales required by government it was agreed that there would be 4 Phases within the Halton Integration Programme:

- Phase 1 Consultation (October 2004 – December 2004)
- Phase 2 Analysis and Project Plan Development (January 2005 – March 2005)
- Phase 3 Preparation for Implementation (April 2005 – July 2005)

Phase 4 Implementation (September 2005 – March 2006)

4.0 UPDATE INFORMATION

- 4.1 Since the project formally commenced on 01.10 .04 we have completed Phase One, which was the Consultation phase of the project, and are in Phase Two, which is the Analysis & Project Plan Development phase.
- 4.2 The consultation process has been completed and included:
- A total of 1616 hits on the 'Every Child Matters in Halton' section of the council website (Staff = 281 hits; Children and Young People = 476; Parents and Carers = 859 hits)
 - 10 x Consultation Events held with attendance by 500 staff from across the agencies and elected members attending the sessions. Feedback on the events has been positive
 - Street Survey work undertaken by market research agency. In total 243 interviews were undertaken
 - Consultation undertaken by members of Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership by distribution of questionnaires, discussion within existing forums, 1:1 sessions and focus groups with their service users. Over 150 participants were involved in this process
 - Programme of consultation events with approximately 500 young people by a group of workers across the agencies and the voluntary sector
- 4.3 The first Newsletter went out in early March and provided the above information to all agencies and groups. A second Newsletter is planned for mid April. This will be circulated borough wide to all households and will set out how Halton Children & Young Peoples Strategic Partnership is responding to the specific priorities identified through the consultation process
- 4.4 Phase Two – Consultation findings analysis and Project Plan Development has now commenced. The headlines from the consultation process are now available. Key recommendations are divided into two sections and include:
- i) Actions required to continue progress towards realisation of integrated Children and Young People's services in Halton
- The development of a Workforce Development Plan across the Children's Services providers including specific Human Resource issues plan (to include professional development opportunities/training, aligning of terms and conditions, mentoring/buddying and work-shadowing scheme)
 - The development of a Multi-agency Training and Briefing Plan – including a suggestion that agencies represented on Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership

commit to single agency training as an exception not the norm

- Multi-agency sign up and commitment to development and delivery of Common Assessment Framework and Information Sharing and Assessment protocols
- The development of Halton Direct Link to become a focus for information sharing and dissemination (for both professionals and service users)
- The development of a range of consultation tools for internal and external communication
- The establishment of a commitment to pooling of resources and to provision of resources to meet service users need
- The establishment of a commitment to the provision of extra resources to enable ICT improvements – namely development of a shared ICT system and database

ii) Service development issues identified as key areas for action:

- The development of an improved offer for young people (those over 10 years) including better co-ordination of services to deliver:
 - Places to meet up
 - Improved access during evenings, weekends and school holidays
 - Open, safe spaces for pursuit of leisure activities
 - Improved access to personal learning opportunities
 - Innovative learning offer including increased support for apprenticeships and vocational qualifications
- The development of creative and innovative marketing campaigns targeting children and young people including text messaging, personalised letters/mail shots and emails
- The development of improved access to facilities for children and young people with disabilities
- The development of improved access to mental health and emotional support – services being both preventative and acute support in nature
- A need to prioritise action on delivery of parental and family support services by establishing a true continuum of support services by:
 - Ensuring targeted parental support is delivered (Tiers 1 and 2)
 - Improving access to information regarding available support services
 - Delivery of a continuum of support services which reflect the needs of the Halton population

- The development of a commitment to involve and listen to the needs of children and young people in a coordinated manner. Recommendation to develop a borough wide forum to facilitate the participation of children and young people.
 - The development of a strategy to overcome access issues including provision of improved public transport and environmental improvements (better street lighting, street cleaning etc.)
- 4.5 This information will now be considered in detail and clear proposals as to how each issue is to be addressed will be included in the Every Child Matters in Halton Project Plan.
- 4.6 All agencies represented on the Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership have been invited to contribute to the development of the Integration Project Plan. Work is ongoing in terms of its development, but we plan for this to be completed in early April 2005.
- 4.7 In addition, two meetings have been held with Commission for Social Care Inspection, Government Office North West, and the Department for Education and Skills as part of a national programme. The first meeting on the 14th December 2004 and focused upon an 'intelligence gathering matrix' and 'initial conversation process' in relation to Integration. From this meeting the Department for Education and Skills assigned a rating of 'Mature' in relation to their assessment of Halton's progress on integration. The second meeting held on the 8th March 2005 focused on the identification of the Priorities for Children's Services over the next 12 months.
- 4.8 The six priorities which were agreed with the Commission for Social Care Inspection, Government Office North West, and the Department for Education and Skills were as follows:
- To improve outcomes for Looked After Children.
 - To improve levels of school attendance, particularly in secondary schools
 - To raise standards of achievement, including attainment, at all Key Stages, particularly for Vulnerable Groups and all Learners.
 - To improve the engagement of Young People
 - To reduce the conception rate amongst women under 18
 - To reduce the number of children/young people requiring special educational statements and, in particular, in segregated provision, i.e. Special Schools.
- 4.9 This information will now be considered in detail and clear proposals as to how each issue is to be addressed will be included in the Every Child Matters in Halton Project Plan.

5.0 NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 The next period will focus upon the completion in the development of the Every Child Matters in Halton Project Plan. This plan will guide and steer the work of the programme over the next three years and will be amended and further developed as the range of expected guidance becomes available from the Department for Education and Skills and Ofsted. This will include issues from the expected Youth Green Paper.
- 5.2 The main delivery vehicle for integrated service delivery across the borough will be the Children's Centres initiative within which 9 centres are to be developed in phase one and a further programme of development is expected with a financial allocation from government for phase 2.
- 5.3 However, we also plan to utilise existing service delivery sites for services to Children and young people as bases for the co-location of staff and the delivery of integrated service delivery. For example, Glendale Family Centre which we plan to develop over the next few months.
- 5.4 In addition the Extended Schools initiative will also provide opportunities for the co-location of staff and the integrated delivery of services to children and young people.