

WIRRAL COUNCIL

WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM 29th September 2010

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Update on Review of Service Level Agreements with Schools

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks to update Schools Forum on the further progress to date of the review of traded services offered to schools by Wirral Council. These services are all due for renewal on the 1st April 2011, having extended the agreement period for a number of services by one year.

BACKGROUND

A panel of Primary Headteacher representatives from the five Primary Cluster groups in operation in Wirral together with representation from voluntary aided schools and governors was convened to act as a conduit between schools and Authority service providers in order to consult on the renewal of Service Level Agreements. The panel meets on a half termly basis and is chaired by a Primary School Headteacher. All service providers have presented proposals for the new Service Level Agreements and this information has been shared with all Primary Schools.

The services involved are:

- Facilities Management
- Risk Assessment & Insurance
- Grounds Maintenance
- Wirral Community Patrol
- Metro Catering
- Metro Caretaking & Cleaning
- Cash to Bank
- Human Resources
- Financial Support
- Employee Administration
- Payroll & Pensions
- Technical Support Services (TSS)
- School Library Service.

CURRENT POSITION

It has been agreed that Service Level Agreements defining the service and charges will be circulated to schools in week commencing the 1st November 2010.

Schools will be asked to make decisions on which services they wish to procure, and at what level where there are options available, by January 2011. This will enable service providers to make the appropriate arrangements for service delivery and consider the implications for service if the number of schools choosing not to purchase impacts significantly on service costs.

A report to Cabinet in September by the Head of Corporate Human Resources and Organisational Development outlined the benefits of providing a centralised HR & OD service to the Council. It suggested there should be a three staged approach over six months to coordinate the move to centralisation in terms of departmental personnel and budgets involved and the type of service delivery in the future. In recognition of the Service Level Agreement for HR and the need to consult with schools the report stated that the position of schools would be assessed in Phase Three which is April 2011. A large number of schools wrote to the Leader of the Council to express their concern at the possible implications a centralised HR service may have on schools ability to deliver on the Standards Agenda if the direct link to Children & Young People's Department, with the service memory and knowledge of schools, was not retained. The organisational structure and service delivery for the newly formed Corporate HR & OD has yet to be defined.

In a further report to Cabinet a decision has been made to outsource the Grounds Maintenance service alongside a number of other services currently delivered through what was formerly known as the Regeneration Department to a single provider. This process anticipates a contract will commence in 2012. A Project Manager will be appointed to oversee the process and consult with users of the services involved. A number of schools currently purchase a Grounds Maintenance service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Schools Forum note this report.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services