

EXECUTIVE

18TH OCTOBER 2016

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC FOR WRITTEN REPLY

1. From Sue Sulis, Secretary, Community Care Protection Group to the Leader of the Council

2012 MERGER OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEPARTMENT WITH ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

(a) On which dates, and Council Committees was the proposal to merge Children, Young People and Education Services with Adult and Community Services reported?

(b) Were these reports on the public agenda, and if so, how were they publicised?

(c) What Public Consultation took place, and when?

Reply:

The proposal did not require committee approval, but the issue was referred to at the following meetings -

Urgency Committee on 23 January 2012

Council on 20th February 2012

Council on 26th March 2012

These reports were all on the public agenda, and were available on the Council's website in the normal way. There was no additional public consultation.

2. From Sue Sulis, Secretary, Community Care Protection Group to the Leader of the Council

ASSURANCE OF THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SAFETY OF THE DISCHARGE OF THE STATUTORY ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES.

The Council decided to disregard Government Guidance against expanding/merging the role of the Director of Children's Services, and agreed to institute an "Assurance Test" to safeguard the Statutory Role, which would be repeated and reported bi-annually.

Please list the dates and committees when these tests were reported.

Reply:

The reports were considered at joint meetings of the Care Services and Education PDS Committees on 7th May 2013 and 25th February 2015. Please note that these reports were intended to be biennial (every two years) not biannual (twice a year).

3. From Sue Sulis, Secretary, Community Care Protection Group to the Leader of the Council

COUNCIL COMMITMENT TO OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY

- (a) What is the Council's Policy on officers providing the list of Background Documents when writing Committee Reports?
- (b) What is the Council's Policy on answering Written Questions from the public – can it ignore these without giving reasons?
- (c) What remedies are available when this happens?

Reply:

The Council's report template includes a box for officers to list background documents.

Where a question is rejected the reason will be explained. Under the Council's Constitution, the proper officer may reject a question from the public if it –

- is not about a matter for which the Local Authority has a responsibility or which affects the borough;
- is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or
- requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

The Council has a three stage complaints procedure; if a complainant is still not satisfied they can ask the Local Government Ombudsman to investigate.