

REPORT OF THE  
Executive Lead Member for Childrens Services  
PART II

**24. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP FOR THE DELIVERY OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES FOR THE ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL**

1. On the 12 June 2013, the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services approved the agreement of a strategic partnership between Hampshire County Council (HCC) and Isle of Wight Council (IWC) for the delivery of Isle of Wight children's services by the County Council from 1 July 2013. The decision followed a report to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services, which was agreed on the 25 March 2013.

2. The development of the Agreement came about following an Ofsted inspection of the IWC's Children's Social Services in November 2012, which found weaknesses in child protection services. In addition, the Department for Education expressed concern about school and educational problems including a disproportionate number of secondary schools which require significant improvement or special measures. Hampshire County Council was subsequently approached to consider assistance.

3. Consequently, and under the auspices of a Government Direction to IWC, the two councils are entering into a strategic partnership which involves HCC delivering the full scope of IWC's children's services functions, in accordance with Children Act 2004, on behalf of IWC. Political and financial responsibility remains with IWC, but managerial responsibility and authority transfers to HCC. The agreement, effective from 1st July 2013, will be initially for a term of up to five years. Whilst it was considered unlikely to be required, both councils retain the right to terminate the agreement at any time, by giving a specified number of months notice.

4. In preparation of this agreement, the Director of Children's Services and the Departmental Management Team (together with key representatives of other corporate areas and services) undertook detailed discussions with IWC to establish the nature of the challenges and areas of priority which lay ahead. The formal agreement is in line with Hampshire County Council's developing business strategy and its focus is on improving outcomes for the island's children. This is a unique development and a credit to the County Council, but will require careful monitoring not least on behalf of Hampshire's own children's services.

5. A Joint Operational Board has been established between HCC and IWC. The Joint Operational Board receives reports on project activity, enabling decisions to be made on the progress and direction of the Partnership, as well as shaping the development of the Agreement. Although there are no political or financial accountabilities falling on Hampshire, this board and the agreement will be overseen by a joint member board alongside the respective individual council political governance arrangements.

Further details can be found at <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings.htm> by typing in the relevant reference number:

- Strategic Partnership for the Delivery of Children's Services for Isle of Wight Council (4876)

**COUNCILLOR MANS**  
**Executive Lead Member for Childrens Services**