

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD
06/03/2018 at 6.00 pm



Present: Councillor McLaren (Chair)
Councillors Dean, Goodwin (Vice-Chair), Toor, Williams and Harkness

Also in Attendance:

Lori Hughes	Constitutional Services
Neil Crabtree	Head of Service - Public Protection
Merlin Joseph	Interim Director of Childrens Services
Maggie Kufeldt	Executive Director - Health and Wellbeing
Andrew Sutherland	Director of Education and Early Years
Joe Davies	Interim Assistant Director - Commercial

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Hussain, Larkin and Williamson.

2 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions received.

5 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 16th January 2018 be approved as a correct record.

6 **MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY SELECT COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Performance and Value For Money Select Committee held on 14th December 2017 be noted.

7 **MINUTES OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY (GMCA) ECONOMY, BUSINESS GROWTH AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED that minutes of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Economy, Business Growth and Skills Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 10th November 2017, 8th December 2017 and 19th January 2018 be noted.

8 **MINUTES OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY (GMCA) HOUSING, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED that the minutes the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Housing, Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committees held on 16th November 2017, 13th December 2017 and 15th January 2018 be noted.

9 **MINUTES OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY (GMCA) CORPORATE ISSUES AND REFORM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Corporate Issues and Reform Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 21st November 2017, 19th December 2017 and 16th January 2018 be noted.

10 **REVIEW OF VIRTUAL SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT AND AUTUMN TERM UPDATE**

The Board gave consideration to an overview and update on the role of the Virtual School and recent educational outcomes for Oldham's Looked After Children.

The role of the Virtual School was to promote the educational achievement of Oldham's Looked After Children (LAC) whether they were educated in Oldham or elsewhere in Great Britain. Following amendments made to the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the statutory duty of the Virtual School was expanded to cover 'previously Looked After Children'. The changes would become statutory at some point in 2018. Under the new guidance there was a greater emphasis on supporting emotional wellbeing and mental health and understanding attachment needs and the impact of trauma. The Virtual School worked collaboratively with a range of professionals and agencies involved in supporting the needs of Looked After Children ensuring that education needs remained a high priority as a proven link to improving life chances.

The Corporate Parent Panel acted as the governing body and critical friend of the Virtual School to promote high standards of educational achievement and supported the challenge to schools.

The outcomes in 2016 varied across the key stages and were outlined in the report.

Members were informed of Personal Educational Plans (PEPs) which formed part of every Looked After Child's care plan and was completed every term. Oldham had moved to an electronic PEP (ePEP). This was completed by the Designated Teacher and Social Worker. The benefits and challenges of the ePEP were outlined in the report.

Members were informed that the Virtual School Headteacher had redesigned work, set a comprehensive plan which had demonstrated a significant impact and was building strong relationships with the schools. The Corporate Parent Panel was strong and support was continually improving. The increase in the number of Looked After Children (LAC) was noted. Performance around areas of development had improved. Key Stage 4 was still a challenge but this related to all data and not just LAC. Reallocation of resources was highlighted. From April 2018, the funds were increasing, negotiations would be made with the schools for the distribution of resources to allow targeted support and interventions where it had the biggest impact.

Members asked about the challenge at Key Stage 4 and it was clarified that performance was across the piece. There was a cultural challenge across the borough. Other challenges included engagement and attendance. Personalised support was offered and was key. Supplementary curriculums were being added as well as opportunities around mental health support and health and wellbeing. Three mental health officers were being recruited to help schools as well as additional training for teachers to provide an understanding of the physiological impact and identify social emotional challenges. Another element being developed was around a sporting/physical offer to improve health and wellbeing.

Members asked when the next inspection was due and the number of exclusions compared to other authorities. It was explained that the next inspection was due soon and lot of work was ongoing to prepare. The number of exclusions were not far from the Greater Manchester average and permanent exclusions had reduced.

Members asked about concerns with the growing number of Looked After Children, if there was a solution to get to a reasonable level or would it grow. It was explained that the increase was due to the local authority identifying support, if it reduced there would be concerns if the authority was focussed enough. It was complicated as to how targets could be set.

Members asked about intervention with families with the level of austerity. It was explained that Children's Services was being resourced and partners carried out interventions which the Council had recognised as investments had been made.

Members sought and received clarification on how the ePEP worked and an app would be developed in the future. Members asked about additional support to children from BME communities and languages and it was confirmed that funding had been received to support work across the borough in that area. The detail was still being developed.

RESOLVED that:

1. The report and update on the Virtual School be noted.
2. An update on the Virtual School be received in 12 months' time.
3. Any Ofsted results be reported in a short briefing note to the Overview and Scrutiny Board during the next municipal year.

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CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE 'GETTING TO GOOD' IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

The Board gave consideration to a report which detailed progress of the improvement journey Children's Services had been on since the Ofsted Single Inspection Framework (SIF) inspection in 2015. A review had taken place earlier in 2018, the final report had not yet been submitted but the Board were informed of headline findings.

In response to the judgement and recommendations from Ofsted, an improvement plan had identified key actions to deliver improved outcomes. The activity and developments as outlined in the report had been delivered against rising demand. Since June 2017, the number of children on child protection plans had increased by 17.8% and the number of Looked After Children had risen by 5.3%. A key change had also been the new inspection regime introduced by Ofsted which meant that future inspections would be completed under the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) framework.

Members were informed of progress on the improvement priorities as identified to the Board in June 2017. This included reduction of caseloads per social worker, more team managers, reduction in the number of agency staff; and turnover rate was down. With regard to practice and recording, there was some improvement needed. Strong progress was noted in the safeguarding unit. Some process of recording also required improvement. Quality assurance framework had been embedded as well as a significant amount of auditing around casework. Domestic abuse was highlighted as a key issue and there was an emerging priority around children missing from education with a number of whom were educated at home and where schools had encouraged home education. A draft plan would be available at the end of April. Members were informed of another Ofsted two day inspection week during week commencing 12 March and this would form part of the update.

Members asked for a view on the rating expected and it was clarified that it would probably be "requires improvement" due to the challenges around demand and high caseloads.

Members asked if there was capacity to deliver more in-depth training, clarification on a 7-minute briefing and how home educated students were monitored. It was clarified that a range of training had been identified and this would be provided by the Council's own development services as well as outside suppliers. The challenge was the release of staff. It was also

clarified that the 7-minute briefing was a short and quick way to get learning out to the workforce, i.e., what they needed to know quickly. A contract provider had been established for the monitoring of home education which included the nature of the provision, a range of indicators and best value.

Members remarked about staff retention and asked if budgets allowed for the recruitment of more staff. It was clarified that there were significant pressures in Children's social care. Investments had been made to upgrade pay and recruit more social workers which had made a difference. The number of looked after children and deprivation was raised. Demand would need to be established before permanent investment was made. Members commented on the high caseloads of social workers and were informed that the review had found that morale and confidence of staff was good and support was received from other agencies. There was good participation in the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB). There were also regular meetings with the police and health agencies.

Members raised the issue of domestic abuse and it was clarified that intervention was made when abuse became apparent.

The Chair commented that this would be the Executive Director of Health and Wellbeing's last visit to the Overview and Scrutiny Board as she was leaving the Council on 20th March. The Board thanked her for the work she had done in Oldham and wished her well in the future.

RESOLVED that:

1. The report which provided an update on the Children's Social Care 'Getting to Good' Improvement Plan be noted.
2. A further report be received in the new municipal year following the sign-off by Ofsted.

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UPDATE ON SOCIAL VALUES IN PROCUREMENT

The Board gave consideration to a report which provided an update on the implementation on the inclusion of social values into the commissioning life-cycle. The report outlined the background, principles and current status of the implementation and included details on the Council's Social Value Framework together with an example of a Contract Award Notice which identified some of the social values that would be monitored and measured over the course of this contract.

Work had continued on the implementation of the framework and a set of procurement principles had been developed to guide the approach to social value, which were aligned to the Oldham Plan. For each procurement opportunity over £5,000, a Social Value 'Opportunity Assessment' was undertaken. The level of cooperation from stakeholders remained variable and was slowly improving. It was also ensured that processes were compliant under procurement law. Responses were evaluated

and monitored. The social value element was appropriate to each tender.



Members queried the use of the CHEST System and local companies who felt they were inhibited in being able to access the system. Members referred to the system in Preston whereby use of local businesses had grown with more money being spent locally. Members had received representations from companies who were unable to bid. It was clarified that work was ongoing to encourage local companies to bid and develop their capability to bid on contracts. Members raised the road surfacing contract whereby two companies bid on the contracts and asked if the Council was getting good value. Members were informed that this would be reviewed. Members asked that the organisation's approach be reviewed to encourage more Oldham companies to bid.

Members queried how values were measured and how realistic they were. It was clarified that there had been a lack of sophistication how questions were phrased and this was being reviewed to ensure that questions and responses reflected what could be measured as well as contract monitoring.

RESOLVED that:

1. The update on the Social Values in Procurement report be noted.
2. The ability of local companies to access the Chest system be discussed at the next Link meeting and a date be agreed to come back to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

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SELECTIVE LICENSING SCHEME UPDATE

The Board gave consideration to an update on the progress of the Selective Licensing Scheme. All designated Selective Licensing areas were in Year 3 of the 5 year scheme. Members were informed of the number of applications received and number of licences issued. Members were also informed that warning letters had been issued to properties where no application had been received. Members were informed that 26 landlords had been prosecuted for failing to licence their rented property with another 143 cases where the landlord had received a warning letter but not yet submitted an application.

Members were informed of the timeline of the application approval process through Greater Manchester Police and Licensing. Members were informed of findings and work being completed around warrants which included work with Immigration Enforcement and United Utilities where tenants had tampered with electric and gas supplies.

Members were also provided with an update on the management of properties and condition audits.

The Housing Act 2004 stated that the operation must be reviewed from time to time. In addition, government guidance stated that after a making a designation, local housing authorities must continue to monitor designations to show that the desired effect was being achieved. A review would be carried out and compared with analysis from previous year on the criteria as set out in the report. It was felt that progress had been made. The scheme may need to be extended to other areas in other years. It was recommended that a workshop be convened to that a full review could be commissioned.

Member expressed disappointment on the number of applications, and expressed concern on the staffing levels required to maintain the services. The Selective Licensing Scheme also needed to link with the Housing Strategy and Homelessness.

RESOLVED that:

1. The progress on the Selective Licensing Scheme be noted.
2. A workshop be held on Thursday, 22 March 2018 at 5.00 p.m.

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COUNCIL MOTION: COMBATting ACID ATTACKS

On 8th November 2017, Full Council referred a motion to the Overview and Scrutiny Board which requested that Trading Standards and retailers' associations examine merits and practicalities of the introduction of a voluntary schemes related to the sales of corrosive products which contain acids or ammonia to under 21 year olds in advance of future legislation.

The Home Office had announced a new action plan aimed at the reduction on the number and impact of acid attacks. Given the widespread availability of products which contained acids, there was no identifiable group to consult. It was understood that Government had consulted nationally on this issue. It was confirmed that there were ongoing discussions related to the regulation of acid sales. The Counter Terrorism Team advised raising the issues at a local resilience forum rather than introducing a scheme at this time.

Members were informed of the plethora of products available. The enforcement powers were with the police. Three changes were proposed related to restrictions on the sale of acid to members of the public; new criminal offences related to possession of acid; and sentencing. Government was sponsoring the legislation but the timetable was not known. The problem needed to be tackled by national legislation. A voluntary scheme would need to be led by the Council which had resourcing issues.

RESOLVED that after taking into consideration the report and information provided at the meeting and the House of Commons Briefing Paper, it was agreed that a voluntary scheme not be introduced at this time. However, the issue would remain on the

Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme and would be reviewed when legislation had been approved.



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RESIDENT FIRST PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Board gave consideration to an update on the progress on the Resident First Programme and planned resident improvements. The report provided information on:

- Progress to date on Phase One of the Programme which included Flytipping, new website launched; Registrars; Highways; Revenues and Benefits; Contact Centre; Licensing; and In-Year Transfers.
- Benefits being seen by Phase One to date;
- Member engagement which included four member briefings;
- Financial position; and
- An overview of Phase Two.

RESOLVED that the update on the Resident First Programme be noted.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Board gave consideration to the latest Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme for 2017/18.

Members noted that an update on Prince's Gate was not yet available as the report had not yet been agreed at Cabinet.

Members noted the outcome of the visit to the Department for Work and Pensions. A future visit would be scheduled in June or July 2018.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme be noted.
2. A future visit be scheduled with the Department for Work and Pensions in June/July 2018.

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GENERAL EXCEPTIONS AND URGENT DECISIONS

The Board gave consideration to a decision authorised under Rule 17 of the Council's Constitution.

RESOLVED that the General Exception and Urgency Decision related to Earl Mill Business Centre be noted.

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KEY DECISION DOCUMENT

The Board gave consideration to the Council's Key Decision Document.

RESOLVED that the Council's Key Decision Document be noted.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.54 pm

