

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD
08/09/2020 at 6.00 pm



Present: Councillor McLaren (Chair)
Councillors Taylor, Toor, Jacques, Price (Vice-Chair), Surjan
and Williamson

Also in Attendance:

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Curley.

2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

3 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions received.

5 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 22nd July 2020 be approved as a correct record.

6 **MINUTES OF THE GMCA HOUSING, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Housing, Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 9th July 2020 be noted.

7 **OLDHAM SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD - 2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT**

The Overview and Scrutiny Board received and considered the Oldham Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) Annual Report 2019/20. The OSAB comprises the local authority, Oldham CCG and Greater Manchester Police, as the three statutory partners, and a number of other organisations who work to provide assurance that they are working together to protect and enable adults to live safely. The production of an annual report is a statutory duty and sets out the safeguarding concerns the Board has dealt over the last year, along with the actions it has taken to help keep adults safe in Oldham.

The Annual Report provided information on the number and type of safeguarding concerns reported in Oldham during 2019/20 and presented an update on the five Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) undertaken. The Board has a legal duty to carry out a SAR if it believes that someone in Oldham has died of, or experienced, serious abuse or neglect which could have been prevented. For each SAR the Board adopted the recommendations put forward by the independent reviewer and oversaw changes to services designed to prevent similar cases happening again. The Annual Report reflected what had been done to ensure that the lessons learnt from these Reviews have shaped and improved the way services work in Oldham.

During 2019/20 a total of 1,580 safeguarding referrals were recorded for residents in Oldham, of which 556 became the subject of a formal safeguarding Enquiry. In addition, 1,543 safeguarding referrals and enquiries were dealt with and closed, which was almost double the number closed in the previous year. This was significant as 48% of the cases were complex, involving people who lacked capacity to make their own decisions. There had been a reported increase in the number of safeguarding concerns relating to self-neglect and domestic violence, with some of the increase coinciding with the Covid-19 lockdown as families found it harder to access services and support.

Members considered the breakdown provided in respect of safeguarding cases arising in 2019/20. It was noted that the 602 cases involving those aged 85+ years appeared high when compared with 772 cases in the 18-64 years category and queried whether the 85+ years cases related to care home residents. It was acknowledged the figure did appear high, but not all related to a safeguarding issue, for example a number related to quality of care issues such as falls or administration of medicines, or the hospital might refer patients who appeared unkempt. Such cases were considered and referred on to Social Workers or other agencies as appropriate. The increasing number of referrals reflected a greater awareness of safeguarding generally and the Service would look to resolve any issues raised with it.

The holding of four Learning Reviews in 2019/20 compared to one in the previous year was queried, it being asked if this suggested that things were not going according to plan. It was advised that where referred cases do not meet the legal requirements for a formal SAR but the Board feels there are lessons to be learnt, it can carry out a Learning Review. This could be an matter of training or of raising awareness of issues that could prevent re-occurrence or escalation.

Recommendations and action plans were developed from each Learning Review undertaken, with progress against these being monitored and reported back to the Board.

Further detail was sought as to the role of the Police during the Covid-19 period in respect of the domestic violence element of safeguarding, it being noted that the Police had said this issue was quiet over the early stages of lockdown. The Board was advised that the Police and the Safeguarding Team had worked closely over the Covid-19 period, with weekly meetings being held in the first instance. It was confirmed that over the initial stages of lockdown the number of referrals had dropped so work had been undertaken to identify those at high risk and to put in protective measures. There was a concern as to hidden domestic violence during this period and a number of on-line sessions had been offered where people could seek support or make contact. The number of domestic violence referrals had, other than in the early stages of lockdown, remained consistent.

The breakdown of 2019/20 referrals by ethnicity showing 81% originated from the White British community and 9% from Asian/Asian British community was queried, for example was this disparity as a result of Covid-19, non-reporting and was it the same as previous years. It was noted that there had always been disproportionate reporting of safeguarding concerns, some of which could be due to under-reporting. Work had been undertaken since March 2020 with partners and faith groups and increased referrals were the outcome. It was expected the figures would be different in the following Annual Report. It was suggested that the Board might assist in the consideration of this issue.

It was noted that abuse in a person's own home was the largest location of origin for safeguarding referrals, and the nature of these was queried. The Board was advised that these cases arose as a result of, for example, domestic violence, concerns from the community, concerns of GPs that might relate to the taking of medication etc. Reports of financial or emotional abuse was dealt with through the Safeguarding Team and measures put in place to protect the vulnerable adult. A breakdown of the nature and types of safeguarding referrals would be forwarded to Board Members.

Concern was expressed at the number of referrals originating from care homes, which was the second highest source of referrals, and it was queried whether this showed a particular problem. It was advised that not all referrals were found to be safeguarding issues but could relate to matters such as falls or mis-management of medicines. This might reflect staffing issues in a sector with a high turnover of staff and work was being undertaken with the CCG to identify any training opportunities that might be developed or offered. While this was acknowledged, it was suggested presentation needed to be clearer as it could cause worry for anyone viewing the figures without such clarification.

In response to queries, examples of awareness campaigns run by the Safeguarding Team had included work with Age Concern

to raise awareness of elder abuse and work to identify child abuse. It was acknowledged that the success of this training and awareness raising was increasing referrals and that, with regard to capacity to cope, it was advised that staffing structures across social care services generally were monitored to ensure the right staff were in the right places. While a wider look at the Team structure would commence by the end of March 2021, there was a lot of guidance coming out from the hospital with regard to processes and hospital discharges to also consider. Deprivation of Liberty issues remained time consuming and around 50 applications were received on average each month. The implementation of the new Liberty Protection Safeguards was now expected in April 2022, preceded by guidance in April 2021, and plans were being put in place for this.

RESOLVED that

1. The Oldham Adults Safeguarding Board Annual Report 2019/20 and the tremendous work undertaken in the 12 month period be noted;
2. A Task and Finish Group be established to explore issues of ethnicity and safeguarding, the terms of reference for which to be considered by the Chair and Councillor Toor.

8

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME SEPTEMBER 2020

The Overview and Scrutiny Board was invited to consider the Local Development Scheme, the project plan for the Local Plan, that set out details and timetables about the planning documents which the Council will prepare, including Oldham's Local Plan (incorporating site allocations) and the Greater Manchester Plan for Homes, Jobs and the Environment (GMSF).

The Council has to prepare a Local Plan to provide an up-to-date and comprehensive planning framework to support the Borough's economic, environmental and social objectives. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a public statement setting out the Council's project plan for preparing the Local Plan and its supporting documents and which must be updated periodically, as required. The LDS -

- sets out what planning policy documents exist and what new documents will be prepared as part of, and in support of, the Local Plan;
- sets out the timescales the public can expect for the preparation and review of these documents;
- indicates when the local community can get involved and influence the plan-making process;
- enables work programmes to be set for the preparation of Local Plan documents; and
- shows how the programme for the production of documents will establish and reflect the Council's priorities and to assist the programming of other Council strategies and programmes.

The main changes proposed to the previous version of the LDS published in January 2020 were the inclusion of a reference to a recent application by to designate a neighbourhood area and Forum for Chadderton under sections 61F and 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, amendment of the GMFS profile to reflect the most recent timetable published by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and amendment of the timetable for preparation of the Local Plan and Proposals Map to reflect those changes made to the GMSF. The timetables for the preparation and adoption of both the GMSF and the Local Plan, including the opportunities for public consultation, were presented to the Board.

In response to a query, it was advised that efforts had been made to track development of the Local Plan to the GMSF given the strategic nature of the latter document. While this meant there may need to be some flexibility around timetabling of the Local Plan development, there was a requirement on the Council to adopt an updated Local Plan by the end of 2023.

The undertaking of consultations on the Local Plan as a result of Covid-19 was queried. The Board was advised that work was being undertaken with colleagues in the Communications Team to explore options for consultation. The Council did have a Statement of Community Involvement that set out minimum requirements and the Council was being asked to consider this in light of Covid-19 at a meeting being held the following evening.

RESOLVED that the recommended revisions to the Local Development Scheme be supported and it be agreed that they go forward for approval.

9

TAX RELIEF FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT TRAVEL

Further to Minute 13 of the meeting of the Council held on 17th June 2020, the Board gave consideration of the Council Motion “Tax Relief for Public Transport Travel” that had been referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for consideration. The Motion had sought approval for the Chief Executive to write to the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to request that the Government introduces a tax relief scheme on seasonal travel tickets (following the principles outlined in Mr Johnson’s Telegraph article in 2013), making this effective as soon as possible, and to write to the Mayor of Greater Manchester saying that we all should support such a scheme.

The Board noted there had been several Government led initiatives to enable employers and employees to make savings through salary sacrifice schemes, such as childcare vouchers and cycle2work. Under these schemes the employer provides the funds upfront for an employee to buy goods or services which the employee agrees to pay back from their salary, usually over a period of 12 months. The deductions are calculated from the salary before tax and national insurance is

calculated meaning the employee makes savings in their tax and national insurance contributions and the employer saves on their employer national insurance contributions. While salary sacrifice schemes for public transport (excluding rail) were previously made available to employers by Government, in the Autumn Statement of 2016, the Chancellor announced a tightening of salary sacrifice schemes to come into force on 6th April 2017.

Any employer can set up an approved scheme for their staff. With regard to the Council's offer, Pay and Reward currently manage schemes of this nature which are approved by HMRC: there is not currently an approved scheme to allow a salary sacrifice scheme to be set up for public transport travel.

Members considered whether such a scheme should apply only to annual tickets as suggested by previous practice, or whether the tax exemption might apply on other terms such as monthly or six monthly. The uncertainty of employment in current circumstances and the potential for the scheme to be costly upfront for smaller employers were considerations. It was noted that as a result of Covid-19 and with people returning to work, employers were asking employees not to car share meaning that car usage would increase unless other options such as public transport were made more attractive. It was however suggested that the Motion was about the principle of tax relief for public transport as opposed to the detail.

In discussion it was noted that the Council was not offering a 'bike to work' scheme and it was suggested that the reason lay with payroll systems and the pending implementation of a new payroll system by the Pay and Rewards Team.

RESOLVED that

1. This Board would support asking the Chief Executive to write to the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to request that the Government introduces a tax relief scheme on seasonal travel tickets (following the principles outlined in Mr Johnson's Telegraph article in 2013), making this effective as soon as possible and to the Mayor of Greater Manchester saying that we all should support such a scheme;
2. The Pay and Reward Team report to the next meeting of the Board on matters relating to the offering of a Bike to Work scheme.

YOUTH COUNCIL MOTION

Further to Minute 7 of the meeting of the Council held on 15th July 2020, the Board gave consideration to the referral of a Youth Council Motion relating to employment opportunities for young people in the post-Covid-19 period that had been referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for consideration. The Motion specifically requested that Oldham Council pledges its commitment to providing quality job opportunities for young

people and developing the digital sector within the town, undertakes a review of the current apprenticeship offer across Oldham to ensure there is a broad range of high-quality opportunities available to all young people, and as one of the largest employers in the Oldham, considers digital apprenticeships for those leaving education.



It was recommended to the Board that a workshop be convened with the Youth Council, members of the Board and relevant Officers to address the resolutions in the Motion.

RESOLVED that a workshop be convened with the Youth Council, members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and relevant Officers to address the resolutions in the Youth Council Motion relating to the development of the digital sector in the town, the review of the apprenticeships across Oldham, and offering of digital apprenticeships by the Council.

11 **GENERAL EXCEPTION AND SPECIAL URGENCY DECISIONS**

There were no decisions taken under authorisations granted under Access to Information Procedure Rule 13 (General Exception) and Rule 14 (Special Urgency) to be considered.

12 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board was invited to review the Overview and Scrutiny Board to review the Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme which presented the issues to be discussed at each meeting, the issues and actions arising from meetings and outstanding issues.

Further to the submitted work programme the Board was asked to note that a further Joint Covid-19 overview and scrutiny meeting was to be held on Thursday, 24th September at 6.00 pm and that an extraordinary meeting of the Board was to be held on a date to be determined to discuss the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework.

The Chair noted further matters relating to the District Working Task and Finish Group which needed to meet again, a need to review the current position and possible updates related to clean air and Northern Roots, and a report on the Opportunities Fund outcomes and sustainability.

RESOLVED that the submitted Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme be noted.

13 **KEY DECISION DOCUMENT**

RESOLVED that the Key Decision Document covering those decisions to be taken in the period commencing 1st September 2020 be noted.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next ordinary meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was scheduled to be held on Tuesday, 20th October 2020 at 6.00 p.m.



The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.20 pm