

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

18/06/2019 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillor McLaren (Chair)
Councillors Harkness, Jacques, Hulme (Substitute) and Price

In attendance: Lorraine Kenny Community Safety Manager
Merlin Joseph Director of Children's Services
Kerrie Scraton Director of Children's Social Care
Anna da Silva Project Director, Northern Roots
Mark Hardman Constitutional Services

Also present: Dr Henri Giller Chair, Oldham Local Safeguarding Children's Board

1 **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

RESOLVED that Councillor Price be appointed Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board for the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

2 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Curley, Taylor and Toor.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

5 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions received.

6 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 5th March 2019 be approved as a correct record.

7 **APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS FOR EDUCATION MATTERS**

RESOLVED that (1) the following appointments to Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Overview and Scrutiny bodies be confirmed:

- i. GMCA Corporate Issues and Reform Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Councillors Goodwin and McLaren (GMCA Executive to agree final membership);

- ii. GMCA Economy, Business Growth and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Councillor Hulme (GMCA Executive to agree final membership);
 - iii. GMCA Housing, Planning & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Councillor Brownridge (GMCA Executive to agree final membership);
 - iv. GMCA Overview and Scrutiny Substitute Pool Nominations - Councillors H Gloster and S Al-Hamdani;
- (2) the following appointments of the Statutory Co-opted Members of this Committee for Education Matters (with voting rights) be confirmed:
- i. Rev. Jean Hurlston, Manchester Church of England Diocese;
 - ii. Mr. V. Hall, Salford Roman Catholic Diocese;
 - iii. Mr. C. Maude, Parent /Governor Primary School;
 - iv. Vacant, Parent /Governor Secondary School.

8 **MINUTES OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY ECONOMY, BUSINESS GROWTH AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Economy, Business Growth and Skills Scrutiny Committee held on 8th February and 15th March 2019 be noted.

9 **MINUTES OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY HOUSING, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Housing, Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14th February and 14th March 2019 be noted.

10 **MINUTES OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY CORPORATE ISSUES AND REFORM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Corporate Issues and Reform Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12th February and 19th March 2019 be noted.

11 **COUNCIL MOTION: IMPROVING PUBLIC SAFETY IN OLDHAM'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY**

Further to Minute 14 of the Board at the meeting held on 22nd January 2019, the Committee received a report presenting subsequent considerations given to a Motion concerning the improvement of public safety in Oldham's night time economy and submitted in the first instance for consideration at the meeting of the Council held on 12th December 2018.

The Board was advised that the suggested 'Ask Angela' scheme was already in operation and that localised materials, examples

of which were shared with the Board, were being developed; that Street Angels had been established in the town centre for a number of years; that work was to be undertaken to ensure that college and University students are aware of the 'Ask Angela' and Street Angels schemes; and that work was being undertaken by Licensing Officers with private hire operators and the licensed trade in respect of this matter.

In response to a query as to whether any progress had been made in identifying potential 'safe havens' as had been referenced in the Motion to Council, the Board was advised that this had been considered but potential significant safeguarding issues associated with such a scheme had been identified. Likewise, a suggested scheme that taxi companies might be asked to agree to carry identifiable students and bill them later via college or university authorities had been looked at and was considered to be beyond the powers of the local authority to implement.

RESOLVED that (1) the work already undertaken in support of the 'Ask Angela' scheme be noted;

(2) information in the submitted report be included in the Council action update;

(3) a further report be submitted to the Board addressing work being undertaken with the taxi and private hire trade in relation to improving public safety in the night time economy and in relation to the review of the fit and proper person scheme.

12

COUNCIL MOTIONS

The Committee was advised of two Motions that had been referred by the Council from the meeting held on 20th March 2019 to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for further consideration.

1. Tackling Dog Fouling and Nuisance

The Council Motion –

“This Council notes that:

- Though most dog owners are law-abiding, a small number of irresponsible owners still fail to clean up after their dogs or control them in public places
- The law requires owners to clean up after their dogs in public places, to keep control of their pets, and to ensure their animal is micro-chipped and displays a dog collar with name and address of the owner
- Under powers granted to the Council under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, this Council introduced a borough-wide Public Space Protection Order to replace five existing Dog Control Orders.

In October 2014, following the adoption of a motion by Council, the Overview and Scrutiny Board looked at

additional measures to combat dog fouling and nuisance, however, none were adopted.

Council recognises that, with the passage of time, new innovative practices and the greater use of technology have in other local authorities had a proven impact in addressing these issues.”

The Council resolution –

Council resolved that the Overview and Scrutiny Board be asked to:

- a. Re-examine current examples of best practice, and the powers granted to it in recent legislation, to determine which could, and should, be adopted in this borough;
- b. Confer with The Dog Trust to establish the ways in which the Council might work in partnership with them to address dog fouling, promote micro-chipping, or otherwise improve animal welfare; and then bring a report back on this matter to Council at the earliest opportunity.

RESOLVED that initial investigations be made into examples of best practice and the potential contribution of the Dog Trust, and the matter be considered further at the next meeting of the Board in conjunction with the Work Programme item.

2. Tackling Speeding

The Council Motion –

“Council notes that speeding continues to be a factor in road collisions and that a pedestrian is four times more likely to die if they are hit by a vehicle travelling at forty miles per hour than they are at 30 mph.

It is therefore imperative the Council working with the Police and residents seek to reduce excessive vehicular speeds in this borough, especially outside schools, on minor residential roads and in rural areas.

Council believes that we should work with our residents’ groups to deter and catch offenders and that we should employ mobile technology in order to do so.”

The Council resolution –

Council resolved that the Overview and Scrutiny Board be asked to:

- Identify, with the assistance of District Executives, local police and the Council’s highways officers, locations not currently equipped with a speed camera which might benefit from one for consideration by the Drive Safe Greater Manchester Casualty Reduction Partnership.

- Explore the availability of funding to purchase and deploy mobile speed cameras to catch offenders, change driver behaviour and improve road safety.
- Investigate how the Council and the police can work with community and residents' groups to establish Community Speed Watch schemes and Community Concern speed enforcement sites in the Borough
- Explore the merits of establishing 'bus gates' at sites outside schools and look at establishing a pilot project. ('Bus gates' limit vehicular through traffic outside schools to cycles and local buses at the start and end of the school day, with a fixed penalty for transgressors.)

RESOLVED that further information and evidence be sought on the issues raised in the Motion, including the potential for further work with the police and the community, and the matter be considered further at the next meeting of the Board in conjunction with the Work Programme item.

13

CLEAN AIR UPDATE

Further to Minute 15 of the Board at the meeting held on 5th March 2019, the Board received a report advising that the key features of Greater Manchester's feasibility study and the Clean Air Plan (CAP) Outline Business Case (OBC) to reduce nitrogen dioxide exceedances in Oldham and across Greater Manchester (GM) in the shortest possible time had been approved by the Cabinet at a meeting held on 25th March 2019 for submission to the government's Joint Clean Air Unit.

It had been acknowledged that a key group affected by the clean air proposals was the taxi and private hire trade and recognised that the GM authorities had three major policy levers comprising licensing standards, a Clean Air Zone charging and exemptions policy, and a proposed Clean Air mitigation fund for taxis and private hire vehicles to secure the agreed objectives in this area. Alongside the objectives linked to the CAP, a co-ordinated GM approach to develop a common set of minimum licensing standards for taxis and private hire vehicles was being pursued.

GM Licensing Managers had developed a proposed set of common minimum licensing standards informed by a six week conversation over July/August 2018. These proposed standards would require all GM authorities to make changes to their current policies, and the likely implications for Oldham were outlined in the submitted report.

The measures contained within the OBC included a proposed Clean Taxi Fund to support the upgrade of non-compliant GM licensed taxi and private hire vehicles. The proposed measures and the supporting transport, economic and air quality modelling needed further development and this, along with the planned

engagement, would inform the detailed design of the measures and help to refine the proposals. The engagement to inform the formal consultation planned for the summer was underway and a further update would be provided to the Board following the consultation.

Members noted the proposed Clean Taxi Fund proposal but expressed concern as to how this would be funded if the government did not provide additional support. Two particular issues were raised relating to idling zones and the implications of the clean air proposals on buses. Reference was made to a taxi rank in the town centre where up to 15 taxis could be queued with their engines idling and it was queried what options could be used to address this, and whether such measures might also be used to address engine idling outside schools. It was noted that while the report addressed implications for taxis/private hire vehicles, there would also be implications for non-compliant buses after 2023. It was queried whether any assessment had been made as to the number of buses in Greater Manchester and/or locally that might be affected and what the impact on services might be.

RESOLVED that (1) the report be noted;
(2) Members be provided with a briefing note on issues related to engine idling and implications for non-compliant buses after 2023 arising from the clean air proposals.

14

CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING

Dr Henri Giller, Chair of the Oldham Local Safeguarding Children's Board attended the meeting to introduce a report presenting proposed new arrangements for Oldham's children's safeguarding and seeking the endorsement of the Board to those proposals. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 required the local authority, police and local clinical commissioning group as the three statutory partners under the legislation to publish revised multi-agency safeguarding arrangements by 29th June 2019 and implement these new arrangements by 29th September 2019. The requirements of the Act meant also that the current Local Safeguarding Children's Board and current structures would be disbanded.

The proposed arrangements comprised a Safeguarding Children Strategic Partnership to provide strategic vision, leadership, scrutiny and accountability; a Children's Safeguarding Executive Group to support the Partnership and be responsible for delivery of the Partnership's strategic business plan; and sub-groups of the Executive to undertake detailed work on implementation of the business plan with respect to services, service developments, performance monitoring and quality assurance. A stronger role for the voice and vision of the child is also proposed in service planning and scrutiny. Responding to a query as to the potential complexity of arrangements, Dr Giller noted that safeguarding is a complex area with many issues and organisations needing to input.

It was intended that the new arrangements would provide for challenge, scrutiny and commitment to continuous improvement amongst the statutory partners and relevant agencies, ensuring that all relevant local agencies continued to engage with the statutory partners in effective safeguarding activities while building stronger linkages with the Oldham Adult Safeguarding Board and allied partnerships and governance groups.

A number of options and alternatives had been considered by the statutory partners. Retention of current arrangements was not available due to the statutory imperative. In determining a local option, emergent options at both Greater Manchester and national levels had been considered, including an option to bring together children and adults safeguarding governance arrangements. The preferred option, presented in detail within an appendix to the submitted report, focussed on the strategic role of the statutory partners and relevant agencies for leadership and accountability; delegated operational oversight and performance management to an executive group; enabled functional priority sub-groups to address the detail of issues; and facilitated both safeguarding working between children and adults services in a consistent and coherent fashion and the continuous improvement in safeguarding practice, along with the contribution of children and young people to this.

Responding to a query about the role of children in the process, Dr Giller advised that there were current contacts and arrangements through, for example, the Youth Forum and the Children in Care group, and it was intended to widen this approach to increase inclusiveness.

The Chair noted that previous scrutiny of safeguarding arrangements had comprised only of receipt of annual reports, suggesting that a more stringent approach might be required in respect of the new arrangements. Dr Giller concurred, particularly over the initial 12 months of operation. Reference was made to two Greater Manchester authorities that had been early adopters of new arrangements and key messages were emerging from the differing models adopted. It was key that the gains made since the 2015 OFSTED inspection were not lost and that closer working with adult safeguarding arrangements were developed. With regard to finance, the Board was advised that an 'as is' budget assumption had been made for the first six months and should a significant increase in costs be identified this position could be reviewed.

The Chair proposed a six month report to the Board in March 2020. Dr Giller further advised on implementation workshops and events occurring between July and September to present and clarify new arrangements to stakeholders that Members of the Board might be interested in attending. With regard to any training or development activity for elected Members on the new arrangements, Dr Giller suggested that this might be appropriate

in around three months as the detail of expectations of the new arrangements was developed.

RESOLVED that (1) the proposed revised arrangements for children's safeguarding be endorsed and recommended to the Cabinet for adoption;

(2) an update report on implementation of the new arrangements be submitted to the Board in March 2020.

15

CHILDREN'S SERVICES - GETTING TO GOOD

The Board received a report presenting an update in respect of improvements to Oldham's children's services. The Council had been aware of challenges within Children Services and a Structural Investment Plan and Transformation Programme for Children's Services to be delivered throughout 2019-20 had been developed, along with a new operating model for Children's Services and the allocation of £12m additional funding allocated to support the transformation journey.

Children's Services had been inspected by OFSTED between 21st January and 1st February 2019 with a judgement of "Requires Improvement to be Good" being delivered along with six recommendations of improvement activity which must be undertaken. The areas identified as requiring improvement comprised –

- the quality of assessments to effectively analyse risks and parents' capacity to meet children's needs;
- effective assessments of the needs of disabled children that lead to well-coordinated planning to meet their needs;
- the quality of evidence gathering during child protection investigations;
- the timeliness and effectiveness of pathway plans that lead to provision of effective support into independence;
- the internal audit of practice to provide effective analysis of the impact on children; and
- management oversight and practice leadership at all levels in the organisation to ensure that consistent, and good quality social work practice is in place.

OFSTED had acknowledged the transformation of services in the judgment and the intended effects that the transformation activity would have on children in Oldham over the coming three years. The Council had been required to prepare and submit an Improvement Plan by 11th June 2019 to detail the actions that would address the recommendations. The Improvement Plan, attached as an appendix to the submitted report, had been submitted as required and would remain as 'draft' pending confirmation from OFSTED that they considered the Plan to be fit for purpose. Arrangements for monitoring of the Plan by the Cabinet Member and by the Children's Change Board were advised within the report.

In response to a query, the Director advised further on governance arrangements, particularly relating to Task and Finish Groups established for major projects such as the social workers' accommodation move and the implementation of 'Signs of Safety' as the social worker model and which reported to the Getting to Good Board. The issues raised in the Improvement Plan had not been subject to peer review, having been developed solely to respond to the OFSTED judgement. The Council had the wider Transformation Plan that OFSTED had described as a good, well sequenced plan. Members commented on the importance of seeing the whole picture, and that it might be timely to receive an overarching update on the Transformation Plan and see where the Implementation Plan fitted in to this wider picture.

The Board revisited the provision of safeguarding training for elected Members, in particular referencing a session proposed for 4th September 2019. The Director confirmed that the nature and content of the session would be different from previous years as a result of the new arrangements and there would be opportunity to develop and provide further training.

RESOLVED that (1) the progress of Children's Services against the issues identified in the OFSTED judgement of 4th March 2019, including the development of an Improvement Plan to address those issues, be noted;

(2) an update report on progress of the Children's Services Transformation Plan and the Improvement Plan be submitted to the meeting of the Board to be held on 10th September 2019.

16

ALEXANDRA PARK ECO-CENTRE AND NORTHERN ROOTS

The Board received a report advising of developments in respect of the Alexandra Park Eco-Centre and the Northern Roots project. Both projects had been developed out of the co-operative borough ambition and developments in community growing, horticulture skills and training, renewable energy and the local food economy through a series of linked initiatives. At a meeting held on 28th January 2019 the Cabinet had approved capital funding for the Eco-Centre and the undertaking of further work on the Northern Roots project.

Alexandra Park was acknowledged as one of Oldham's greatest assets for residents and also provided a Depot facility which was in urgent need of replacement. Already operating from the site and park are at scale growing, community growing, training, and bio-mass which the new Eco-Centre facility would build on and also provide a place for a wider range of activities including education, enterprises and community engagement. Northern Roots was a proposal to develop the UK's largest urban farm and eco-park on 160 acres of land at Snipe Clough, immediately adjacent to the Alexandra Park depot. The two projects presented a major opportunity to further develop and establish

Oldham as a green and growing town for the benefit of Oldham residents and businesses, for Greater Manchester and beyond. More work was needed to further develop ideas and interest in the Northern Roots project, as well as identifying sites and opportunities for events, investment and activities. Getting communities involved was key to the success of this project as well as seeking engagement and interest from other organisations, investors and experts.

The Committee further received a presentation providing more information on the scope, ambition and current status of the Eco-Centre and Northern Roots projects and, with regard to the Northern Roots project, asked to consider -

- are there any particular communities, partners or stakeholders which should be included in the consultation?;
- are there any pilot projects that the Board would like to see prioritised?; and
- how should elected Members be involved and engaged in the project going forward?

With regard to Northern Roots and in response to queries, it was noted that while land issues had been complex in terms of identifying title and ownership, a potential resolution to the one significant issue arising had been identified. Members noted the size of the site and commented on the incidence of anti-social behaviour in the Borough's parks, querying how this might impact on this project. The Board was advised that engaging with communities was seen as key to discover what people were interested in, from which a number of pilot projects might be developed. The Cabinet had allocated £700k of revenue resources for the development of the project, though planning costs and business case development might require additional finance. A sum of £25M capital funding to deliver the project had been considered. Some commercial investment would be required, and other funding options, for example via Defra, were under consideration.

Members sought and received confirmation that retention and improvement of sports pitches remained part of the vision, and it was suggested that an animal petting farm or a similar facility might be a suitable venture for the area. Members noted the opportunities for the development of jobs and apprenticeships presented by the proposal. With regard to engagement, it was suggested that the establishment of mini-hubs in communities that had access to smaller areas of land might be considered as a spin-off activity. Consultation needed to be as wide as possible, and the opportunities for training and skills enhancement emphasised.

With regard to further options for activities and developments on the site, it was proposed that a Committee site visit to enable Members to gain a better idea of the potential might be beneficial.

RESOLVED that (1) the objectives of the Alexander Park Eco Centre and the Northern Roots project be endorsed;
(2) the progress to date in developing the Alexander Park Eco Centre and the Northern Roots project be noted;
(3) a site visit to the Northern Roots project area be arranged to enable the Board to further consider the potentials for activities and development of the project;
(4) a six-month update report be submitted to the Board on the progress of the Alexander Park Eco Centre and Northern Roots project.

17 **THRIVING COMMUNITIES**

RESOLVED that consideration of this item be deferred to the meeting of the Board to be held on 23rd July 2019.

18 **GENERAL EXCEPTIONS AND URGENT DECISIONS**

The Board gave consideration to a report advising of the decisions related to the items 'Empty Homes Pilot – Procurement Approval' and 'Award of the Thriving Communities Social Fund (CPB)' that had been authorised under Rule 16 (General Exception) of the Council's Constitution.

RESOLVED that the report and the authorisations granted under Rule 16 (General Exception) be noted.

19 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TOOLKIT**

The Board gave consideration to the Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit that provides the framework for the overview and scrutiny function at Oldham Council.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit be noted.

20 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board gave consideration to the Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme for 2019/20, noting that the Work programme would require amendment in light of decisions taken at this meeting.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme for 2019/20 be noted.

21 **KEY DECISION DOCUMENT**

The Board gave consideration to the Key Decision Document which listed key decisions to be taken from 4th June 2019.

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

22 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

RESOLVED that the date and time of the next Overview and

Scrutiny Board to be held on Tuesday, 23rd July 2019 at 6.00 p.m. be noted.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.43 pm