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CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY BOARD
18/06/2024 at 6.00 pm



Present: Councillor Hobin (Chair)
Councillors Adams, Z Ali, Ball, Bishop (Substitute) Hughes,
S. Hussain, Iqbal, McLaren, Rustidge (Substitute) and
Shuttleworth

Also in Attendance:

Rhys Attwell	Constitutional Services
Matthew Bulmer	Director Education Early Years and Skills
Paula Healey	Education Improvement Manager

1 **ELECTION OF A VICE CHAIR**

There were two nominations for the role of the Vice-Chair between Cllr Adams and Cllr McLaren. The vote was tied, with both nominees receiving 5 votes each.

The Chair used his vote to break the deadlock and vote for Cllr McLaren. Who was elected Vice-Chair.

2 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were apologies received from Cllr Mushtaq and Cllr Moores.

Cllr Ken Rustidge substituted for Cllr Eddie Moores.

3 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

4 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

5 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no Public Questions received.

6 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY BOARD MEETING**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 20th March 2024 be approved as a correct record.

7 **START FOR LIFE AND FAMILY HUB PROGRESS REPORT**

Commencing with the first Committee of the municipal year, Matt Bulmer Director for Education and Skills explained to the Committee what his role and responsibilities are to the Oldham Council. Members were informed that there were three Children Services Directors which was Gerard Jones, Julie Daniels, and Matt Bulmer, with there being potential for all three directors to be in regular attendance at Committee meetings.

Paula Healey, Head of Early Years and Matt Bulmer Director for Education presented the Start for Life and Family Hubs Progress Report.



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The Director for Education and Skills presented to the Committee the background for the Start for Life and Family Hubs Progress Report. Members noted that in April 2022 the Department for Education (DfE) announced that Oldham was one of 75 upper tier local authorities to receive government funding to deliver Start for Life and Family Hub Services over the fiscal years 2022-23, 2023-34 and 2024-25. Members noted that Oldham Council had received £3,648,000 capital and revenue funding to create a network of Family Hubs.

The Director for Education and Skills raised with Members 1.3 of the report, where Members noted that the Department of Education had set out core services that it expects to be delivered through Family Hubs. Members noted Appendix 1, which detailed how the main funded services had received £3,648,000, and how they had subsequently been implemented into Family Hubs and Start for Life programmes. Activities detailed in appendix 1 was themes ranging from infant feeding, Home Learning Environment/ Early Language Support and Parental Support.

Appendix 2 was a case studies on how these services have been received by the families. The case study was based on the original 'National Children's Bureau Making it REAL Programme,' REAL enhanced had been developed locally and piloted in 2023 as an intervention to support children who may have special educational needs and/ or disability which could have long term impact on their learning.

The interventions aim was to support children who are not attending an educational setting and provide Families with the skills and strategies to use in a home environment with their child.

The Director for Education and Skills noted that this was being conducted so that families and children in Oldham receive the best start in life, acting as a preventative measure to ensure a higher standard of living for children.

Members were informed that there was 7 Family Hubs, with community work being carried outside of these hubs.

The Director for Education and Skills informed Members that finance runs out in March 2025, with there being no guarantee the authority would receive another generous sum of £3,648,000. The Director for Education and Skills stated that they were hopeful that a government of whatever political affiliation would provide that finance and avoid consequences of no funding.

In response to questions concerning support for young people undertaking examinations in schooling system, the Head of

Early Years stated that limited funding would be split into priority areas. Members were informed that increased funding had been made available to work with voluntary sector employees, talking therapy and drop-in sessions in family hubs.

In response to questions about Youth Services and 'targeted Youth Services' the Director for Education and Skills informed Members that Youth services and Youth Justice were not maintained by the Oldham Council and was the responsibility of Positive Steps, however Oldham Council does work collaboratively with Positive Steps.

In response to questions about how funding is prioritised, the Head of Early Years stated that there was a criteria which required a specific percentage go to precise targeted areas. It was further explained that through collaborating with partners, there was flexibility on how funds were used, and attempts to fill any gaps in service deliver had been undertaken. It was also noted that the Parent panels have been used to voice concerns of the families, and to informs how the service would operate and scope of service delivery. E.g., infant feeding, early language, and early learning environment.

Members asked questions concerning the establishment of a timeline where improvements can be tracked, in reply to the Director for Education and Skills informed Members that it was specific in what services could be delivered and what data can be collected.

Members raised questions around the report not being clear on what issues there might be in terms of staffing, and the impact this could have on the next budget requirements. The Director for Education and Skills stated that staff were on fixed terms contracts, with there being potential for staff to leave, with it being noted that the programme had been managed to try and accommodate this, with doing as much as possible with the budget received.

In response to questions about a rolling cost by Members, the Director for Education and Skills responded that there was no figure for a rolling cost, however 80% of the 80% of £3,648,000 was for service delivery.

The Head of Early Years stated in response to questions about Family Hubs including Special educational Needs support. That the Department of Education criteria did not include funding for SEND. However, it was noted that there is already SEND practitioners point which had been supporting family hub programme and point droppings in all the hubs.

The Director for Education and Skills stated that the Department of Education had funded SEND Initiatives that could be run out of Family Hubs. In addition, the Director for Education and Skills stated that they wish for Family Hubs to promote families to

accept early year's provisions, which would increase the of identifying any needs a child may have early on.

The Head of Early Years informed Members that Family Hubs are expected to deliver as a minimum the services listed in 1.3 of the report, with some services not being covered by funding received. Family Hubs had the obligation to sign post and promote other offers that are not funded but can be directed to other services.

There was a discussion by Members about the use of Children Centres, with the Head of Early Years noting that in recent years since Covid-19 Pandemic there had been less people using them.

In response to questions about if any work had been undertaken in Royton, the Head of Early Years responded that a Family Hub was launched the previous week.

Members asked for an update on the report on 20th March 2025 meeting.

Resolved that-

- 1) Members of the Scrutiny Board note the update and progress made in delivery of the Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme.
- 2) Members recognised and supported the need for effective sustainability planning for beyond the life of the funded programme which would end on the 31st March 2025.

8

WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair stated that if there was anything to add to the programme to please contact constitutional services.

Members noted that the Work Programme was a working progress, which would need to be updated at the next meeting.

Resolved that-

- 1) That Members of the Scrutiny Board noted the Work Programme.

9

KEY DECISION DOCUMENT

There was no Key Decision Document.

10

RULE 13 AND 14

There was no Rule 13 and 14.

The meeting started at 18:00pm and ended at 19:04pm.