

WEST STRATEGIC NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

22 June 2023

Commenced: 6.30 pm

Terminated: 7:25 pm

Present: Councillors Quinn (Chair), Axford, Boyle, Cooney, A Holland, B Holland, Jones, Mills, Naylor, Newton, Reid, M Smith, T Smith, Ward

In Attendance:

Emma Varnam	Assistant Director, Operations and Neighbourhoods
Tony Decrop	Assistant Director of Children's Services
Jane Darrington	Head of Service, Adolescent Services
Mathew-Morris Jones	SHift Lead Guide
Deborah Smolka-O'brien	Service Unit Manager, Cared for Children

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Warrington, Martin, Ricci and Gwynne

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting of the West Strategic Neighbourhood Forum held on 24 March 2022 were approved as a correct record.

2. CADDY LINERS IMPLEMENTATION

The Chair welcomed Emma Varnam, Assistant Director of Operations and Neighbourhoods, who gave a presentation in respect of the Caddy Liners Implementation, a copy of which was circulated with the agenda.

Ms Varnam reported that currently, the Council supplied free on request compostable caddy liners to encourage residents to compost their food waste and add it to their brown bin. It was however reported that food recycling caddy liners would no longer be provided free of charge from 1 July 2023.

It was explained that the collection of food waste was now a well-established practice across households in Tameside. The provision of caddy liners was not necessary to enable residents to recycle their food waste and did not align with the Council's environmental aspirations of achieving net zero services, reducing consumption and procuring sustainably.

Members were informed that the preferred approach was to recycle food waste directly into the caddy and then into the brown bin, reducing unnecessary resources in the waste stream as well as the detrimental carbon footprint of producing liners. Discussion ensued with regards to the presentation and the Carbon Footprint of the Caddy Liners.

The Council stood to save approximately £170k per annum because of the changes and Members believed that if residents wished to purchase caddy liners, they could do so inexpensively elsewhere.

The Chair thanked Ms Varnam for the presentation.

RESOVLED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

3. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND

Emma Varnam, Assistant Director, Operation and Neighbourhoods presented before Members providing an overview of the Household Support Fund in Tameside.

Ms Varnam explained that in Rounds 1 to 3, funding had primarily been used to support families with children eligible for free school meals during the holiday periods. Vouchers were provided, via the schools, to all eligible families ahead of each holiday period in the form of supermarket vouchers. Following the guidance set by the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP), it was reported that an application based scheme had also been available for low income households to support with basic costs such as food, energy, utilities and related essentials.

Members were advised that the Household Support Fund had been distributed by Tameside Council since October 2021, with funding provided in 4 'Rounds' to all Local Authorities. Ms Varnam provided an overview of each 'Round' and reported that funding for a 12 month period had been confirmed, which allowed for longer term planning and support.

It was explained that funding would be used to support the most vulnerable families in Tameside, as follows;

- 70% would be provided via schools to families eligible for free school meals.
- 27% allocated to an application based scheme for residents not directly in receipt of Cost of Living Payments, accessed via Navigators which ensured that residents were supported to access the funding most relevant to them and wider support to build longer term financial resilience.
- 3% allocated for staffing required to administer the fund.

Ms Varnam further advised that families with school age children would receive their voucher via schools directly. Older Families (aged 65+) who were in receipt of Council Tax Support would be contacted directly and organisations such as Age UK, the Action Together community network and the Carers team would further help to raise awareness of the support available. Outreach drop in sessions would also be planned in community venues and information would be provided via existing channels such as social media, Welfare Rights, Citizens Advice Bureau, Customer Services, Libraries and Helping Hands events. It was explained that funding would be rolled out in four tranches throughout the year to spread out the support, especially during the winter periods.

Members were provided with contact details for the Household Support Fund team and were advised that residents would be able to book appointments by phone, online or in person with Customer Service Navigators to discuss the support they would need and to help them access funding relevant to their situation.

The Chair thanked Ms Varnam for a very informative presentation.

RESOLVED

That the presentation be noted.

4. FOSTERING

The Chair welcomed Deborah Smolka-o'brien, Service Unit Manager, Cared for Children who attended the Forum to provide an update on Tameside Council's Fostering Service.

Members were informed that Fostering was the support and care for a child when they could not live at home that provided a stable and caring environment. It assisted with contact with birth parents and other connected persons; getting a child to school; attendance at meetings – reviews and education; and to undertake training to develop fostering skills. Anyone could foster and all ethnic and religious backgrounds were welcome. The only requirement was a spare bedroom in

the home, that did not have to be owned, and people ideally lived locally in order to transport children to school.

The type of carers required for the different cohorts was outlined alongside how people could assist. Ongoing fostering support was provided via social workers and support workers with social workers assigned to the children; support was also available through the Foster Care Association and there was a foster carer support group, a Buddy scheme, a training programme, therapeutic services and allowances and fees.

Members were told that a fostering campaign, Fostering Unfiltered, had been created in conjunction with Greater Manchester Combined Authority to help the conurbation recruit more foster carers, which also included a website Fostering Unfiltered-Home(fostering-unfiltered.org). Fostering Fortnight 2023 had taken place with a variety of events including an Advan campaign, Park Run events and a new team of foster care ambassadors, who represented the team at local events to help recruit more foster carers in Tameside.

The Staying Put initiative and supported lodgings were explained and contact details provided. Members were asked to share marketing materials and social media posts to assist with the much needed recruitment of foster carers in the Borough.

A discussion ensued with regard to supported lodgings and the initiatives that were currently undertaken to help increase the number of foster carers in Tameside.

The Chair thanked Ms Smolka-o'brien for returning to the Forum to provide an update on the Fostering Service.

RESOLVED

That the update presentation be noted.

5. SHIFT

The Chair welcomed Matthew Morris-Jones, SHiFT Lead Guide, who attended the Forum to deliver a presentation on SHiFT where every Practice was focused on enabling creative and impactful change with children and young people to break destructive cycles of harmful behaviour.

An introduction to the Adolescent Safeguarding Framework was provided, which had been developed as part of the Greater Manchester Children and Young Peoples Plan. The Framework had been created and adopted by the 10 Greater Manchester authorities and set out principles and guidance for working with young people. The Framework was not prescriptive and was designed to provide a shared foundation for the development of local systems and practice. The Framework provided some detail and examples around six practice principles and three strategic enablers that underpinned good practice with young people at risk of extra-familial harm.

The strategic ambitions were outlined and two projects that had taken place nationally were highlighted. In terms of Tameside, Members were told that the Practice commenced in February 2023 and was based in Youth Justice Services. An extensive scoping exercise took place with 116 considerations that went through a triage process and Tameside SHiFT was currently working with 27 children and young people who were supported by four Guides. There was emerging evidence of relationships being built and trust established. It was emphasised that establishing relationships was the cornerstone of SHiFT work and would develop as one of the key foundations of the SHiFT programme in order for young people to be able to move to a place of safety and strength.

A progress update was provided of the cohort as follows:

- 14 children were currently engaged and enjoying regular face-to-face interaction with regular communication via text message. All the professional networks had been contacted and the Guides were beginning to become embedded within this network.

- 6 children were tentatively engaging at present. These children required a more measured and staggered approach, whereby the initial steps were communicating through text message, visiting the home and ensuring the Guides were conducting themselves in a different manner befitting of the SHiFT model.
- 2 children had recently swapped Guides for two children as one Guide was working with cousins who were experiencing family issues and had become estranged, which would have caused issues when working with both.
- 5 were currently not wishing to engage, but steps of engagement were underway. For example, Guides remained in contact with the professional network, were sending letters and offering support through messaging. Due to the co-location with Youth Justice Services, Guides were able to ensure they were up to date with any pending matters for some of the cohort and therefore could bide time in offering the support.

Members were provided with the contact details of the Tameside SHiFT team and Members acknowledged the importance of partnership work and sharing knowledge.

The Chair thanked Mr Morris-Jones for an enlightening presentation

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED

That the next meeting of the West Strategic Neighbourhood Forum is scheduled to take place on 12 October 2023, be noted.

CHAIR