

## **Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel**

**10 January 2016**

**Commenced:** 6.00pm

**Terminated:** 7.50pm

**Present:** Councillors K Welsh (Chair), Piddington (Deputy Chair), Affleck, Beeley, Bowden, Bowerman, Drennan, Feeley, Fowler, Glover, A Holland, Homer, Newton, Patrick, Pearce, Reid, Sharif, Sidebottom, F Travis, Whitehead.

### **25. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel held on 8 November 2016 were approved as a correct record.

### **26. EXECUTIVE RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW OF FOOD POVERTY**

The Panel welcomed Councillor Gerald Cooney, Executive Member (Healthy and Working); and Emma Varnam, Assistant Executive Director, to receive the Executive Response to the review of Food Poverty in Tameside.

Councillor Cooney informed members that this was a coordinated response to the recommendations, aimed at ensuring all relevant areas are covered. The Policy and Communications team, for example, advised that a number of data collection tools are used to determine where the most acute poverty is in the borough, which helps to target resources to support the most vulnerable groups and communities in Tameside.

In addition, a new website to be named 'Life in Tameside and Glossop' is currently in development and expected to be launched later in 2017. This will bring together data to enable effective decisions to be made, as well as help residents by signposting them to appropriate services within their local area.

The Panel was made aware of the Council's increased online presence through a variety of social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, with over 33,000 people subscribed to these. Ms Varnam informed members that a wide range of campaigns have been successfully run using social media to raise awareness for schemes like Tameside Jobs Pledge, Early Years Grants and Cashbox Credit Union.

The Panel heard that discussions had been held with Action Together and local foodbanks about introducing a borough-wide database of intelligence to promote improved data collection and sharing. Members were made aware that while effective data collection and sharing is important to inform best practice going forward, there is a clear need to allow foodbanks to continue processing this through their own methods without additional pressure of a robust reporting structure.

The impacts of food poverty are being raised with schools across the borough. The response to recommendation 6 creates an opportunity for Tameside headteachers to receive information at their next group meeting on severity of food poverty within communities, as well as food bank contacts.

The Panel was also made aware of the important role that Public Health and other health partners have in helping to reduce all forms of poverty, not just food poverty. Work is ongoing across Tameside and includes awards aimed at incentivising healthy eating in under 5s and a Food4life school food award. Going forward health programmes can be aligned with food

poverty themes, investigating the feasibility of creating a senior level food partnership to develop a healthier food culture in Tameside.

The Panel raised a number of points relating to issues surrounding schools and the sharing of information and data around food poverty in order to ensure children and parents receive the necessary advice and support. The Panel wish to be updated on outcomes and progress from the meetings with Tameside headteachers.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That Councillor Cooney and Ms Varnam be thanked for attending the meeting.
- (2) That the Panel receive timely feedback from the meetings with Tameside headteachers.

## **27. AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The Panel welcomed Councillor Gerald Cooney, Executive Member (Healthy and Working); Ade Alao, Head of Investment and Development; and John Hughes, Housing Strategy Officer, to receive an update on affordable housing in Tameside.

Mr Alao informed the Panel that the Council's strategic housing role involves assessing and planning for housing need, which involves making best use of existing stock and planning for new housing supply.

The National Planning Policy Framework is used to define affordable housing, and includes Social Rented, Affordable Rented, Intermediate Housing. This definition includes eligible households whose needs are not met by the market having regard to local incomes and local housing costs.

Mr Alao also provided some national context, with the private rented sector now larger than social rented and rising. The Panel heard that in Tameside between 2001 and 2016 approximately 7,600 additional houses were built, 1,680 (22%) of which were affordable. The average house price in Tameside was £131,780 in October 2016.

Members were presented with data and graphs showing house price sales in Tameside between 2005 and 2015 for all properties and new builds. For existing housing stock approximately 59% of sales were at £125,000 or less. This reduces to 32% of recorded new build sales. Affordability projections show that properties up to the value of £105,000 are deemed affordable for the median household income in Tameside, and properties up to the value of £135,000 are deemed affordable for the mean household income in Tameside.

The Panel heard that Affordable Housing Needs Assessments are carried out to determine the different housing requirements within a given area. The Council first uses the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework 'Objectively Assessed Housing Need', adding to this with local evidence from surveys and research, ultimately producing an estimate of measures required and the scale of housing supply necessary to meet the demand forecasts.

Partnership work is being carried out with housing associations and other partners to secure effective, efficient delivery of new affordable homes. Links are also being developed with the Private Rented Sector, as private landlords can effectively add to the supply of affordable homes in the borough.

Councillor Cooney informed the Panel that the Council is working with Housing Associations and other partners to ensure alternative investments and affordable housing initiatives are implemented. Future plans need to be ambitious in order to accelerate home building and to ensure the best use of Policy to generate the best local outcomes.

The Panel asked about the links between the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework and the Council's affordable housing strategies.

Mr Alao informed members that the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework is a significant body of work being carried out to ensure that Tameside, along with all other Greater Manchester authorities, is able to provide enough housing to meet the needs of a growing population. Affordable housing will form part of this, and it is important to note that local residential property prices already make Tameside a relatively affordable location in Greater Manchester.

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Cooney, Mr Alao and Mr Hughes be thanked for attending the meeting.

## **28. PEOPLE AND PLACE SCORECARD**

The Panel received an update on sections of the People and Place Scorecard performance report that are relevant to this scrutiny panel.

## **29. UPDATE ON CURRENT REVIEW**

The Chair updated the Panel on the progress of the current review on the 'Approach to Community Safety Partnership Working in Tameside', advising members that the working group met with Emma Varnam, Assistant Executive Director, to receive an overview of the Council's current position, impact of resource pressures and ongoing partnership approach.

**RESOLVED:** That details of future working group meetings be circulated to members by email and as electronic calendar invitation.

## **30. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chair informed Panel members that the next meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel will take place on Tuesday 14 March 2017.

## **31. URGENT ITEMS**

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

**CHAIR**