

BOARD

19 May 2021

Present: **Elected Members** **Councillors Warrington (In the Chair), Bray, Cooney
Fairfoull, Feeley, Kitchen, Ryan and Wills**
 Chief Executive **Steven Pleasant**
 Borough Solicitor **Sandra Stewart**
 Section 151 Officer **Kathy Roe**

Also in **Suzanne Antzobus, Dr Asad Ali, Tracy Brennand, Stephanie Butterworth,**
Attendance: **Ian Duncan, Nick Fenwick, Richard Hancock, James Mallion, Dr Ashwin
Ramachandra, Ian Saxon, Jayne Traverse, Sarah Threlfall.**

Apologies for **Councillor Gwynne**
Absence

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Board meeting on the 14 April 2021 were approved as a correct record.

3 FEEDBACK FROM OFSTED VISIT

Consideration was given to a verbal report of the Director of Children's Services, which provided feedback on the recent OFSTED visit.

The Director of Children's Services explained that elective home educated children and children missing education was a focus for OFSTED due to the number of children missing education and children who had been educated at home due to Covid. It was reported that feedback had been positive and that there were robust systems in place. In regards to the Front Door and the response on acting quickly to protect children, feedback was positive however, it was identified that there were delays for children who needed further checks to decide on the next steps and highlighted concerns over the management oversight.

In regards to children who were subject to ongoing child protection plans, interventions, child in need and child protection positive feedback was received. Further, Ofsted met with care leavers and felt that the Care Leavers were inspirational, Ofsted's feedback on the support that Care Leavers received was good. It was reported that Ofsted met with a group of cared for children, they were happy to see their social workers and foster workers and that the children felt safe. However, the frequency in the change in social workers was raised as an issue.

Ofsted found that on placements, decisions to come into care were appropriate, most children that were looked at were in stable placements that met their needs appropriately, however, Ofsted identified placement pressures. It was found that there were good examples of audits, Ofsted liked the manner in which social workers and managers engaged in reflective discussion in audits. Social workers found auditing had been helpful although audits could be process driven, however, they were lacking in the focus of the child and the lived experience of the child.

It was found that there was a capacity issue within the MASH, but there was good decision making by the management and social workers. It was found that some of the gathering of information by

social workers and management oversight was delayed due to capacity issues. It was reported that social workers liked working for Tameside MBC and that managers were accessible. Ofsted highlighted problems with the with the social care system IT system, some of the elements were not as functional as they could be.

Feedback from Ofsted included feedback from schools, schools reported a good communication with the local authority and relationships social workers. Schools interviewed by OFSTED reported that Tameside MBC had done everything they could to support vulnerable children who had not been to school due to Covid.

The Director of Children's services summarised the feedback by explaining that there were 5 main themes that had arisen from the feedback.

1. The need to move from compliance to quality.
2. Quality and performance and areas to develop.
3. Management oversight.
4. Relationships and engagement with partners.
5. Staffing turnover, workload and capacity.

AGREED

That the information provided be noted AND THAT THE Council will receive a letter in due course.

4 ARRANGEMENTS FOR FORMAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Leader / Director of Governance and Pensions, which detailed the options available for holding Council meetings following the Government decision to not bring forward the primary legislation needed to extend the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the Flexibility Regulations") beyond 7 May 2021.

The report sought approval for the undertaking of council meetings as proposed in Appendix 1, funding of webcasting equipment via the Covid Grant Funding and recommended that attendance by officers at any meeting should be restricted to ensure health and safety requirements were met.

The Director of Governance and Pensions advised the Board that the Government had confirmed in a letter to all Council Leaders in a letter dated 25 March 2021 from Local Government Minister Luke Hall that The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the Regulations") that enabled local authorities to hold meetings remotely would expire on 7 May 2021.

It was explained that prior to the enactment of the Regulations, the legal position for local authorities in England and Wales as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 required members to be physically present at committee meetings in order to vote. The Regulations provided for various amendments to be made to the Local Government Act 1972 until May 2021.

The Government had further confirmed that as an extension to the regulations would require primary legislation, and that there was insufficient parliamentary time to bring forward emergency legislation to enable remote committee meetings to continue after 7 May 2021.

The Director of Governance and Pensions detailed the proposed method of holding the council meetings scheduled over May and June 2021 at **Appendix 1**. Members were advised that the funding of webcasting equipment such as the hire of cameras would be necessary to enable the webcasting of meetings at Jubilee Hall. This would be met from the Covid Grant Funding.

In addition in order to ensure that health and safety requirements were met, it was recommended that attendance by officers at any meeting should be restricted to the absolute minimum for essential

reporting.

That Council meetings are undertaken as proposed in Appendix 1 subject to Cabinet Members advising as to whether they wish to continued to undertake virtual meetings in some circumstances by delegation of the formal decision making to an Chair/Officer reflecting the wishes of the virtual meeting – such arrangement, which would need to be approved by Council.

AGREED

- (i) That it is recommended to Council that in order to maintain covid secure access to all members of the GMPF Management & Advisory Panel, which has representatives from all Greater Manchester districts and the Ministry of Justice, following the expiry of the virtual meeting legislation and in line with a letter to all council leaders dated 25 march 2021 from Local Government Minister Luke Hall, that all future meetings of the panel remain virtual until further notice with any formal decisions arising from the published agenda be delegated to the chair of the panel taking into the account the prevailing view of the virtual meeting.**
- (ii) That it is recommended to Council that in order to enable the Clinical Commissioning General Practitioners to take part in decisions of the strategic commissioning board, whilst they continue to support the NHS in dealing with the pandemic that all future meetings of the SCB remain virtual until further notice with any formal decisions arising from the published agenda be delegated to the chair of the SCB taking into the account the prevailing view of the virtual meeting. That the time for SCB/Cabinet will be reviewed to enable members to undertake Cabinet with the necessary travel required.**
- (iii) That the funding of the webcasting and necessary hire and/or purchase of equipment is met from the Covid Grant Funding.**
- (iv) That attendance by officers at any meeting should be restricted to the absolute minimum for essential reporting to ensure health and safety requirements are met.**

5 DETERMINING THE FUTURE OF THE COUNCIL AND CCG'S WORKFORCE CULTURE

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Leader / Assistant Director for People and Workforce Development. The report detailed the opportunity that the Council and CCG had to create a new culture and new normal which would provide the right balance between productivity and inclusivity whilst meeting the needs of the workforce to achieve a better work life balance. Further, the report proposed engaging with external 'People Architects' to create a new working model quickly, preventing a shift back to pre Covid ways of working.

The Assistant Director for People and Workforce Development explained that in order to 'build back better' post COVID, experiences over the last 12 months must be learnt from. This intelligence would help create a working culture that would have the right balance between how the staff had worked during Covid and a hybrid approach which would maximise productivity whilst meeting the needs of the workforce to achieve a better balance between work and home life.

Members of the Board were advised of national surveys and more recent feedback from workplaces in March 2021, summarised in the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD). It was explained that it was pivotal that any working model created was based on the experiences and feedback from our staff and managers, balancing pros and cons whilst ensuring the needs of our business and residents was prioritised.

Members received a detailed breakdown of the survey of staff and managers about homeworking. The internal survey found that 72% of staff felt their normal job could be carried out from home and Over half of people would like to work from home permanently, a quarter were not sure, and a quarter would not choose to.

In addition to the survey completed by staff and managers, People and Workforce Development attended management teams to gather manager views on the current working model and future

aspirations post-COVID. Managers were clear that they did not envisage returning to pre-COVID ways of working. They recognised that working differently had significant benefits for individuals and the organisation.

Members of the Board were advised of the benefits of a hybrid workforce including a better work-life balance, increased productivity, improved service delivery, better recruitment, decreased sickness absence, reduced estates costs, reduced mileage costs and CO2 emissions and better mental and physical wellbeing.

It was proposed that considering the importance and widespread implications of this work that external specialists in workforce architecture be procured to assist in developing a new post COVID workforce model of the future for the Council and CCG.

AGREED

That the Strategic Commissioning Board be recommended to approve the concept and introduction of Hybrid Working across both the Council and CCG approve:

- (i) the principal and introduction of Hybrid Working across both the Council and CCG**
- (ii) that there will not be an immediate return to full time office based working seen prior to the COVID pandemic following the relaxation of lockdown measures and that an appropriate plan will be developed which increases productivity, inclusivity and supports a reduction in our estate.**
- (iii) an initial investment of £50k to procure through STAR external specialists in workforce architecture to develop options for a new post COVID working model that increases productivity, inclusivity and supports a reduction in our estate.**

6 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member for Housing, Planning and Employment / Director of Growth. The report detailed the proposals to update the SCI to reflect the change in narrative and terminology around joint planning of the nine boroughs and 'Places for Everyone'.

Members were advised that the current SCI was adopted 2 November 2020 following comprehensive review and a 6 week period of public consultation. Permanent changes were proposed were proposed in the 2020 update, which were reflective of the significant changes in how people are interacting physically at that time.

It was explained that this 2021 update however, represented a technical amendment and followed the decisions of Stockport Council (3 and 4 December 2020) not to approve the submission of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF), following the intended consultation period and not to publish the GMSF 2020. This in effect signalled the end of the GMSF as a joint plan of ten Greater Manchester Boroughs.

It was further explained that the updated SCI was presented for approval to be published which had been prepared to reflect changes in preparing a joint plan of nine boroughs through Places for Everyone. Due to the technical nature of the update, recent comprehensive review following consultation and no statutory or local commitment to do so, no period of public consultation was proposed. The SCI was included at **Appendix 1** and the EIA was included at **Appendix 2**.

AGREED

That Executive Cabinet be recommended to approve the publication of the updated Statement of Community Involvement and accompanying EIA as set out at Appendix 1 and 2, and bring it into immediate effect.

7 ADULT COMMUNITY EDUCATION GRANT FUNDING AGREEMENT AND FUTURE PROVISION

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member for Lifelong Learning Equalities, Culture and Heritage / Director of Growth / Assistant Director of Investments Development and Housing. The report set out the Grant Funding agreement for Adult Community Education for the academic year 2020-21 and accompanying performance management approach relating to cessation of Covid-19 impact on contract delivery for approval.

Members of the Board were reminded that Executive Cabinet received a report on 26 August 2020 which set out the GMCA's approach to the impact of COVID19 on AEB provision. This was a variation to the Grant Funding Agreement 2019-20 that suspended performance management arrangements from April 2020 until GMCA designated the cessation of the 'Event' of COVID19.

It was explained that the Grant Agreement 2020-21 should of been in place from 1 August 2020 when the academic year began. Due to COVID19 related pressures GMCA provided the Grant Agreement on the 25 February 2021 for Tameside Council to enter into. The Grant Agreement needed to be considered alongside the updated Performance Management Rules in order to fully understand the impact of COVID19 on ACE provision and funding. The Performance Management rules were provided to Tameside Council as final on the 6 April 2021.

Section 4.67 of the Performance Management Rules **Appendix 2** set out the updated approach.

- The period August 2020 to March 2021 would retain the same approach through the pandemic equating to full funding for 67% of 2020-21.
- From the 1 April 2021 the Performance Management processes would be reinstated.
- Providers would be allowed to submit a business case for up to the maximum of their funding allocation.

This would mean that ACE would be able to submit a business case to claim up to 100% of allocated funding. ACE is currently at 69% of delivery against profile. The main costs for the service relate to permanent staff and building costs which have remained constant throughout COVID19, and need to be received by Tameside Council, despite a reduction in learners.

It was proposed that Tameside Council should enter into the Grant Funding Agreement and work with GMCA to prepare a business case as required to ensure all costs for the service were paid.

It was further explained that GMCA introduced a Flexible Procurement System in September 2020 and invited providers to apply. ACE were successful in meeting the requirements of the framework and awarded a place on the FPS in a letter dated 8 March 2021. A contract was received on 7 April 2021 which requiring approval and signature.

It was therefore proposed that Tameside Council should enter the Flexible Procurement System to allow for future response to GMCA for the provision of work, employment and Skills contracts that remain the underpinning funding mechanism for Tameside ACE

AGREED

That the Executive Member for Lifelong Learning Equalities, Culture and Heritage be recommended to approve:

- (i) The Grant Funding Agreement and Performance Management approach for cessation of COVID19 event.**
- (i) The decision to join the Flexible Procurement System to allow bids to be made to future contract opportunities.**

9 COVID LOCAL SUPPORT GRANT (CLSG) FOR THE PERIOD 17 APRIL 2021 TO 20 JUNE 2021

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Leader / Assistant Director for Policy, Performance and Communications. The report set out proposals for spending the Covid Local Support Grants (CLSG) for the period 17 April 2021 to 20 June 2021.

It was explained that the government had announced that the Winter Covid Grant would be renamed the COVID Local Support Grant (CLSG) Grant Scheme, and extended to the 20 June. The COVID Local Support Grant (CLSG) would enable us to provide support to families with children, other vulnerable households and individuals up to the period 20 June.

It was reported that Tameside had been allocated £210,000 Funding would be ring fenced and cover the period until 20 June 2021. COVID Local Support Grant (CLSG) Grant Scheme payments would be made to Tameside into the same bank account as Housing Benefit Subsidy payments.

It was proposed to continue to allocate funding to the provision of food vouchers for major supermarkets to pay for food for key cohorts including, all children attending schools in Tameside who were eligible for FSM, all college students eligible for FSM or bursaries, all 2, 3 and 4 year olds entitled to free child care, all Care Leavers, Looked After Children and low income families receiving treatment from Willow Wood Hospice. This approach would allow the delivery of an enhanced offer that would reach a large number of families in a short time frame and provides targeted support.

AGREED

That the Executive Leader be recommended to approve:

- (i) The COVID Local Support Grant (CLSG) grant be spent on supporting vulnerable families and individuals primarily through the use of Free School Meal vouchers for supermarkets.**
- (ii) A voucher scheme for children eligible for free school meals is established. This scheme will enable children eligible for free school meals to receive one £15 food voucher for every week of the mid summer term break.**
- (iii) This will mean primary school pupils are eligible for two vouchers and secondary school pupils are eligible for one**
- (iv) Any families who are not eligible for FSM but are in need to support online contact the Early Help Access Point for help, support and advice.**
- (v) That this voucher scheme is extended out to Care (to a value of £15).**
- (vi) That this scheme is further extended to low income sixth form and college students (to a value to £15). Administration of grants to students via the colleges will be formalised by letter to the colleges containing any appropriate conditions in relation to the administration of the grants on behalf of the Council**
- (vii) That an amount of money is invested in welfare rights and Willow Wood to provide food vouchers to those who are in financial need (120 vouchers in total)**
- (viii) To work with the following supermarkets to distribute vouchers, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Morrisons and Asda.**

9 FORWARD PLAN

To consider the attached forward plan of items for Board.

CHAIR