

OVERVIEW PANEL

26 September 2022

Commenced:
14:00hrs

Terminated: 14:50hrs

Present: Councillors M Smith, Cartey, N Sharif, Cooney, Fairfoull and North

In Attendance:

Sandra Stewart	Chief Executive
Paul Radcliffe	Policy and Strategy Lead
Julie Speakman	Head of Executive Support
Lorraine Kitching	Performance, Intelligence & Scrutiny Service Manager

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Naylor, T Sharif, Kitchen, Ryan and Billington

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

9. MINUTES

The minutes of the Overview Panel meeting on the 25 July 2022 were approved as a correct record.

10. SCRUTINY UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive. The report provided a summary of the work undertaken by the Council's Scrutiny Panels for July to September 2022.

It was reported that on the 26 July 2022 the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel met with the Executive Member for Planning, Transport & Connectivity / Interim Director of Place / Head of Modelling and Analysis (TfGM) / Head of Policy (TfGM) to receive an update on the transport strategy and delivery plan. The Panel also agreed the Annual Work Programme and future work priorities and received the Corporate Performance Scorecard for information. On the 20 September 2022 the Panel met with the Executive Member for Town Centres, Communities, Corporate Land & Community Assets / Assistant Director of Place to receive a strategic overview and proposals on the next steps for Tameside town centres and regeneration.

Members were advised that on the 27 July 2022 the Children's Services Scrutiny Panel met with the Deputy Executive Leader (Children and Families) / Director of Children's Services for scene setting with regard to children's social care and to review the improvement plan. The Panel also agreed the Annual Work Programme and future work priorities and received the Corporate Performance Scorecard for information. On the 21 September 2022 the Panel also met with the Executive Member for Education and Achievement / Director of Education to receive a response to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Focus Report "Out of School, out of sight? Ensuring children out of school get a good education". Further, the Panel met with the Assistant Director of Children's Social Care to review the Children's Social Care self-evaluation.

On the 28 July 2022 the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel met with the Executive Member for Adult Services / Assistant Director of Adult Services to receive an update on the social care reform White Paper and its implications for Tameside. The Panel also received an Executive Response to the LGSCO learning report, "Unprecedented pressure: Learning from complaints about Council and care provider actions during the Covid-19 pandemic, specific to Adult Services. The Panel also agreed the Annual Work Programme and future work priorities and received the

Corporate Performance Scorecard for information. On the 22 September 2022 the Panel received an overview of strategic priorities for local health outcomes and inequalities, considering aspects of rising cost of living and poverty, future priorities and work streams.

It was stated that there was an ongoing commitment to ensure all scrutiny members receive a suitable level of training and guidance. The report set out training and development sessions delivered since the start of 2022/23 municipal year.

RESOLVED

That the content of the report and summary of scrutiny activity be noted.

11. CORPORATE PLAN SCORECARD

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive. The report summarised the Corporate Plan Outcomes Scorecard that was appended to the report at Appendix 1. The Corporate Plan Outcomes Scorecard, followed the structure of the Corporate Plan, and contained indicators focused on long-term outcomes across the plan's priorities.

The Performance, Intelligence and Scrutiny Service Manager highlighted areas within the Corporate Plan Scorecard. According to newly released economic figures, Tameside's regional gross value added, GVA, fell by nearly £200 per head year-on-year to 2020, down to £15,617.50 in current prices. The total rateable value of non-domestic properties in Tameside in June 2022 was £148,475,723, down almost £400,000 on the same month the previous year, a decrease of 0.25%.

The number of Tameside residents receiving universal credit in May was down 5.1 % on the same month last year, with 25,154 people receiving payments. However, the % of Universal Credit recipients getting payments while also in employment has increased from 37.0% in April 2021 to 40.4% in April this year. Tameside currently sat 0.7% points below the national average, which had also been increasing over time.

Starts and achievements of apprenticeships in 2021/2022 were both down significantly on the previous year, both in Tameside and England as a whole. In 2021/2022 there were 1,020 apprenticeships started, equivalent to 72.3 per 10,000 Tameside residents aged 16-64; while above the national average of 57.9, this was much lower than the 112.6 starts per 10,000 in 2020/2021 in Tameside and 91.2 across England. In 2021/2022 there were 230 apprenticeship achievements in Tameside, 16.3 per 10,000 16-64 year olds. In the previous year there were 850 achievements, equal to 60.2 per 10,000; across England, there were 44.4 achievements per 10,000 working age people in 2020/2021.

The latest release of Sport England's Active Lives Survey, which covered the period November 2020 to November 2021 showed that the proportion of Tameside's residents who were classified as inactive had risen from the same period 12 months prior by 1.9 percentage points, with 32.4% of Tameside's population doing less than 30 minutes of exercise each week compared to 27.2% of the population across England. This linked to the high proportion of adults in Tameside classified as overweight or obese, with 70.3% of residents aged 18+ falling into one of these categories in 2020/2021, down from 71.3% the year before but above the national average of 63.5%.

The rate of first time entrants into the youth justice system had risen from Quarter 4 2021/2022 to Quarter 1 2022/2023, which now sat at 36.76 per 100,000. The monthly rate of crimes committed in Tameside was 10.9 per 1,000 residents in May 2022, up slightly from 10.4 per 1,000 residents in May of 2021.

RESOLVED

That the content of the report be noted.

12. ASSURANCE REVIEW OF LGSCO FOCUS REPORT

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive. The report set out the Executive and service response to Scrutiny on shared learning detailed within the LGSCO focus report “*Out of school, out of sight? Ensuring children out of school get a good education*”.

The Children’s Services Scrutiny Panel made a formal request to the Executive Member for Education & Achievement, to review a newly published LGSCO Focus Report and to collate a service response to a number of questions aimed to improve local accountability.

Councils could make alternative arrangements for a child or young person who was not of compulsory school age, but they did not have a duty to do so. This report focuses on Council duties to children of compulsory school age. The Council should consider the individual circumstances of each child and take account of any medical evidence or advice when deciding what arrangements to make.

It was explained that in all cases, Councils should consider the individual circumstances of each particular child and be able to demonstrate how they made their decisions. They should take account of all available evidence, and record the reasons for decisions. They could need to make decisions in cases where they did not have all the evidence they would like.

The focus report includes case studies and the experiences to highlight the breadth of investigation and identified common issues and themes associated with the following areas:

- Taking responsibility for ensuring pupils receive suitable full-time education
- Making decisions based on the evidence available
- Providing suitable full-time education
- Reviewing plans and amending the approach
- Restricting alternative provision: the meaning of ‘otherwise’

It was further explained that focus reports promote local accountability and include a comprehensive set of questions for Scrutiny to seek assurance at a local level. The Children’s Services Scrutiny Panel received the response and update report at the panel meeting on 21 September 2022. This responded directly to the focus report and questions listed on page 11 of Appendix 3.

RESOLVED

That the report and ongoing activity of the Scrutiny Panels to review LGSCO decisions to inform and improve local service delivery be noted.

13. UNDERSTANDING OUR CUSTOMER CONTACTS AND LEARNING FROM OUR COMPLAINTS

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive / Head of Executive Support. The report provided an update and strategic overview in relation to dealing with and responding to customer contacts. This report also provided a summary of complaints received by the organisation, those that escalated to a statutory panel and or Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. In addition the report provided a summary of how the review and management of these contacts could help drive system improvement.

In regards to complaints and customer care, for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, the organisation had received and processed a total of 1,188 complaints of which 946 were Stage 1 and 242 were Stage 2. It was explained that there were three distinct areas in terms of the Council’s complaints process that customers can access; these were the statutory processes for a) Children’s Social Care,(Stage 1, 2 and 3 process). Adults Social Care and the corporate complaints(Stage1 and 2 process) relating to issues regarding to any other Council wide service.

The report set out a breakdown of the complaints received at Stage 1 and Stage 2 together with the volume received per service directorate and whether they were fully responded to within the 20

working day timescale.

From the total complaints received during this reporting period, 78% of cases were responded to within the prescribed timescale compared with 57% from the previous reportable year for Stage 1 complaints. It was important to note that although there was 28% outside of the prescribed timescales there will be many reasons for this however active dialogue with customers will have taken place to keep them update on progress of when they would be likely to receive their responses. For Stage 2, 62% were responded to within the prescribed timescale and 38% outside of.

Members of the Panel were advised that the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) is the final stage for complaints about Councils and some other authorities and organisations, including education admissions appeal panels and adult social care providers (such as care homes and home care providers). Every July the Ombudsman publishes information on the complaints and enquiries received by individual local authorities and the decisions made during that financial year as part of an Annual Letter, a copy was attached to the report at Appendix B.

This information could be valuable in helping local authorities assess their performance in handling complaints. Intrinsic to the learning from this process the annual report was reported to Overview/Scrutiny to provide further challenge and inform learning of systems and process for improved outcomes for service delivery and customer experience from these.

The Annual Letter for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 provided an update on the current performance and how this compared with other local authorities in relation to number of cases, type and learning for example and this report outlines this additional information. For the reportable period, the LGSCO received a total of 74 compared with 43 complaints for the previous year across the service themes below. The number of complaints escalated to the LGSCO was in line with what was expected and similar to those that would have been received pre Covid pandemic.

It was reported that the LGSCO uphold complaints when they find fault in an organisation's actions, including where the organisation accepted fault before they investigated. There was an upheld rate of 81% (based on 17 of 21 cases) detailed investigations compared with 56% (9 of 16 cases) the previous year. This compared less well to the average uphold rate of similar authorities of 68%.

In addition for some cases where the LGSCO upheld the complaint the service area would have been asked to remedy the situation and of the 74 cases received there were 12 requiring further action.

RESOLVED

That the Overview Panel:

- (i) note the content of the update and strategic overview of complaint system/process**
- (ii) support the refreshed training offer being promoted across the organisations; and**
- (iii) receive further more detailed reports in relation to the top 5 key areas of complaints.**

14. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

CHAIR