

## WEST STRATEGIC NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

10 November 2022

Commenced: 6.30 pm

Terminated: 7.35 pm

**Present:** Councillors Quinn (Chair), L Boyle, Gwynne, A Holland, B Holland, Jones, Mills, Naylor, Newton, Reid, Ricci, M Smith, Ward and Warrington

**In Attendance:**

Emma Varnam	Assistant Director of Operations and Neighbourhoods
Alison Stathers-Tracey	Director of Children's Services
Julian Jackson	Director of Place
James Mallion	Assistant Director of Population Health
Damien Cutting	Economic Growth Lead
Charlotte Lee	Population Health Programme Manager
Lynda Clifford	Fostering Service Manager

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillors Cooney, Martin, Ryan and T Smith

### 12. MINUTES

#### RESOLVED

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

### 13. COVID VACCINE UPDATE

James Mallion, Assistant Director, Population Health, presented before Members and gave an update in respect of the seasonal vaccination programme (Covid 19 and Flu).

It was explained that Levels of Covid-19 infection and the impacts were lower than seen in previous waves. There was a recent increase with the ONS survey estimating around 1 in 30 people currently infected (similar rate across England and Tameside).

Due to national policy, there was less testing and fewer measures in place to tackle the spread of Covid-19 but vaccination remained a key way to protect the most vulnerable.

The Covid-19 booster was being offered in the autumn/winter to:

- People aged 50 years and older
- Residents in care homes (older people)
- Those aged 5 years and over in a clinical risk group
- Health and social care staff

Seasonal flu vaccinations were being offered in the autumn/winter to:

- People aged 50 years and older
- Residents in care homes (older people)
- Those aged 6 months and over in a clinical risk group
- Health and social care staff
- Children – toddlers aged 2 and 3; all primary school children; secondary school children in Years 7, 8 and 9
- Pregnant women
- Carers and those in close contact with immunocompromised people

It was reported that there were still some people in hospital with Covid-19, (currently around 15), however there were fewer people in hospital and fewer people with severe illness. Testing was still in place in Care Homes and there were still some care home outbreaks, which teams were supporting the homes with. Circulation of Covid was still a risk to the most vulnerable people and still had an impact on the health system with people coming in to hospital / staff absence where people were unwell with Covid).

For the highest risk groups, vaccinations had been done as a priority. There were also dedicated programmes:

- Schools – delivered across Greater Manchester by Intrahealth;
- Community pharmacies also offered flu vaccinations (and some had also started offering Covid boosters); and
- Health & Social Care Staff – via the hospital and the council programme for all staff.

Progress on the programmes and work undertaken to maximise uptake, was provided, including specific progress in the Denton Primary Care Network. Further details were also given in respect of communication activity, across social media channels, Tameside website; information at GP Surgeries/clinics; and Greater Manchester press.

The Assistant Director concluded by explaining that there was still time and lots of opportunities to have Covid 19 and flu vaccinations and further information was available:

- Residents could contact their GP / check at a local pharmacy;
- Check the Tameside website for further information on bookable and walk-in sessions <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/covidvaccine>; and
- People could also check their eligibility at <http://gmintegratedcare.org.uk/get-my-jab/>

The Chair thanked the Mr Mallion for a very informative presentation and it was:

## **RESOVLED**

**That the content of the presentation be noted.**

## **14. ASHTON PUBLIC REALM CONSULTATION**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member, Towns and Communities / Director of Place providing an update on the draft proposal for the redevelopment of Market Square and the outdoor market including the key findings of consultation and engagement work to date.

It was explained that on 27 October 2021, it was announced that the £19,870,000 Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bid for Ashton Town Centre had been successful. The specific interventions proposed in the LUF bid were prepared in accordance with the requirements of the LUF and were critical to unlocking the comprehensive redevelopment of the Town Centre; supporting a coherent vision and completing of the final phase of Vision Tameside.

The Council had now commenced delivery of the Ashton Town Centre LUF programme in the context of an emerging wider strategic vision for Ashton Town Centre following the decision by Executive Cabinet on 24 November 2021. A Memorandum of Understanding with Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) was signed in February 2022, which had enabled the first payments of the grant to be drawn down by the Council. A further update was provided to Executive Cabinet on 9 February 2022. Progress on delivery of the Ashton Town Centre LUF programme and public realm works was reported quarterly to the Council's Strategic Planning and Capital Monitoring Panel.

Work had commenced on the preparation of a draft proposal (Phase One) for the improvement of Market Square and the outdoor market in Ashton that would be used to shape future design

proposals for the key public space in the Ashton Town Centre. The draft proposal had been costed and formulated from feedback received at the Love Ashton Event in March and from discussions with Council officers, key stakeholders and market traders.

Within the wider Ashton LUF programme grant funding of £5,300,000 had been secured associated with the former interchange site. The Council was currently finalising the acquisition of the site from Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) that would be the subject of a separate report to Executive Cabinet later in 2022.

Consultation and engagement to date had identified that delivery of significant improvements to the outdoor market and Market Square in Ashton was a priority for the local community. Market Square and the market stalls continued to attract anti-social behaviour which in turn, deterred people from visiting the area, new businesses from setting up in the centre of Ashton and a general overall negative perception of the town centre.

The Council had secured funding of £19,870,000 from LUF, of which £11,200,000 was identified for public realm works in the Town Centre for delivery by 31 March 2025. As the priority area of focus was to deliver works linked to Market Square, the public realm strategy and some of the design principles were primarily focused on this area and its immediate surrounds. However, the Public Realm Strategy included proposals, strategies and design principles for the whole of the Town Centre. It would be important that Ashton Town Centre had a clear vision and plan in place in order to respond positively to future funding initiatives as and when they emerged in order to deliver the later phases of works.

Damien Cutting, Economic Growth Lead, then delivered a presentation, which gave details of the draft proposal for Phase One - Market Square/Ashton market.

Members were advised that the proposed works for Market Square would look to improve the quality of the public realm, accessibility and mobility of the square, an improved outdoor market offer including the creation of a flexible town square to incorporate a range of uses and possibilities that would enhance the area and the town as a visitor destination in its own right. The extent of adaptations and improvements to Market Square was dependent on the future ambition and provision of the outdoor market.

The total cost of the draft proposal was £10,832,846 and would include the removal of all of kiosks and market stalls and replacing them with the construction of a large canopy or a series of canopied structures (including a canopy attached to Market Hall) that would include flexible market units to meet the needs of modern market traders.

It was explained that there were a significant number of advantages of progressing the draft proposal, which included the opportunity to open up the views to heritage buildings in the square, shelter for traders and visitors from the elements, reduce the likelihood of ASB by removing the fixed stalls and providing modern market facilities. Ultimately, the clearance of the existing stalls and kiosks would enable the comprehensive redevelopment of Market Square that would deliver a much more flexible space for a multitude of uses in addition to a modern outdoor market, to enable small and larger scale events to take place. The main disadvantages of the draft proposal was that it would inevitably lead to disruption to market traders whilst the work took place. Measures would need to be put in place to ensure disruption caused to traders was minimised. Specialist consultants in market operations would be included in the multi-disciplinary team to support the practicalities and logistics when the scheme was to be delivered. A high level breakdown of the costs for the draft proposal are included in the report. The costings would be subject to detailed design work due to commence imminently.

In terms of next steps, the Council were now in the period of public consultation on Phase One of the Public Realm Strategy, which included the draft proposal for the redevelopment of Market Square using funding secured from Levelling Up Fund.

Consultation material would be available online and an event would also be held at Ashton Market Hall where the local community would be able to speak with Council officers and members of the consultant team around the emerging proposals which would be displayed on exhibition boards at various locations in the town centre. Once the consultation period had ended, comments and feedback would be collated. This would inform preparation of the final proposals for the Phase One works for Executive Cabinet approval.

Timescales for delivery of the works to Market Square were challenging and the funding agreement was clear that monies need to be spent and works completed by March 2025. This was achievable within the current delivery programme on the assumption that the phase of consultation was completed by November 2022 to enable the first stages of the detailed design stage to progress.

In response to a query from Members, Mr Cutting explained the parameters for levelling up funding, which was tied to the constituency the funding was attributed to.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the content of the report and presentation be noted.**

### **15. HELPING HAND WARM HUBS/RESPONSE TO COST OF LIVING CRISIS**

Tom Hoghton, Policy and Strategy Service Manager delivered a presentation, giving details of the local response to the cost of living crisis.

It was explained that poverty was more than just a lack of income, other areas such as physical and mental health, education, housing and the ability to participate fully in public life must also be considered. Tameside Council, alongside partners in the public, private and voluntary sector, recognised the severity of the current crisis and was working hard to support residents, including:

- Immediate Response Action Plan
- 'Helping Hand Tameside'
- Warm Welcome Hubs
- Longer Term Response
  - Needs Assessment
  - Strategy

It was further explained that a comprehensive Needs Assessment had been created to identify the nature of poverty in Tameside and gaps in services and processes. Information for the Needs Assessment was gathered through the following exercises:

- Service mapping to understand processes, pressures and pinch-points and capture the views of service users and front-line staff on causes and potential solutions to poverty;
- Public consultation for 8 weeks, asking respondents "What do you think about poverty in Tameside?" and "What can we do about poverty in Tameside?";
- Four focus groups with people with lived experience of poverty in Tameside, with the aim of taking a more in-depth look at the key themes emerging from the survey and service-mapping work;
- Poverty was the headline focus of the July 2022 Partnership Engagement Network Conference;
- Input from the Poverty Truth Commission (PTC); and
- Data, research, literature and other good practice.

Key challenges identified from the Needs Assessment included:

- Benefits
- Debt
- Food Poverty
- Fuel Poverty
- Employment
- Council Tax

- Mental Health
- Disabilities
- Life Expectancy
- Carers
- Barriers to Accessing Services
- Service User Experience
- Child Poverty
- Social Housing
- Private Rent
- Homelessness

Details were then given of Helping Hand Tameside, a one-stop-shop which directed people to local support services, charities and organisations, ensuring all residents knew how to get in touch for support and what help was available.

As well as broader signposting, the campaign focussed in on more detail in specific areas and programmes of work, for example;

- Warm Welcome Hubs;
- Food poverty;
- Scam awareness;
- Debt advice and risks associated with poverty and the Cost of Living Crisis;
- Fuel poverty - Energy saving tips; and
- Accessing benefits entitled to.

The long term response was also detailed and discussed.

Wide ranging discussion ensued in terms of the issues raised and Members thanked everyone involved for the work undertaken directing people to appropriate support services.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the content of the presentation be noted.**

## **16. FOSTER CARE RECRUITMENT PRESENTATION**

The Chair then welcomed Lynda Clifford, Fostering Service Manager, who gave a presentation in respect of the Fostering Service.

It was explained that fostering was the support and care for a child when they couldn't live at home; providing a stable and caring environment; assisting 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.

It was further explained that there was no upper age limit and anyone could foster whether they were married, co-habiting, single, straight or gay. All ethnic and religious backgrounds were welcome and there was just a requirement that there was a spare bedroom in the home.

Ms Clifford reported that, as of 4 November 2022, there were 663 cared for children in Tameside. 428 were in foster care (292 Tameside own provision). She added that there were currently not enough foster care placements for children within Tameside to cope with demand.

Details were given of the different types of fostering, the reasons why people fostered and the approval process were outlined. Ongoing fostering support and the type of carers required were also discussed. Further details could be found at: [fosteringenquiries@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:fosteringenquiries@tameside.gov.uk)

The Chair thanked Ms Clifford for the very interesting presentation and it was:

## RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

### 17. FAMILY HUBS

Charlotte Lee, Population Health Programme Manager, presented before Members in respect of Family Hubs and Best Start for Life programme.

It was explained that family hubs were a way of joining up locally and bringing existing family help services together to improve access to services, connections between families, professionals, services, providers, and putting relationships at the heart of family help. Family hubs brought together services for families with children of all ages (0-19) or up to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), with a great Start for Life offer at their core. Family Hubs could include both a physical (using existing buildings) and virtual offers.

The following principles were key to the family hub model:

- More accessible – through clearly branded and communicated hub buildings, virtual offers and outreach;
- Better connected – family hubs drive progress on joining up professionals, services and providers – through co-location, data sharing, shared outcomes and governance. Moving from services organised for under-fives, to families with children of all ages, reduced fragmentation (even though an emphasis on early years and the ‘Start for Life’ offer would remain);
- Relationship-centred – practice in a family hub builds on family strengths and looked to improve family relationships to address underlying issues;
- Universal through to targeted services – providing welcoming, non-stigmatised services for families;

Family hubs were a key part of the Best Start for Life vision outlined in [The Best Start for Life: A Vision for the 1,001 Critical Days](#). Additional funding had been allocated to Tameside to further develop the Family Hub and Best Start for Life Offer (£302 million, across 75 LAs, over a 3 year period).

The funding with the Family Hubs Programme also included funding to expand 0-2/0-5 services and provision, the funding was aimed at:

- Infant Feeding;
- Parent Infant Mental Health;
- Parenting;
- Home Learning Environment;
- Publishing the Best Start for Life Offer; and
- Building a Parent and Carer Panel.

Tameside’s progress was detailed as follows:

- Family Hubs and Best Start for Life Steering Group established;
- Project Team identified;
- Official ‘sign up’ form approved by Executive Cabinet, and submitted to the Department of Education (end of October);
- Department of Education Advisor identified for Tameside;
- Sharing and Learning Networks established within Greater Manchester, and the North West;
- Detailed delivery plan in development with key including co-production and consultation (due for submission by the of December 2022); and
- Strong alignment with the Programme Guidance:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/family-hubs-and-start-for-life-programme-local-authority-guide>

The Chair thanked Ms Lee for a thought provoking presentation and it was:

**RESOLVED**

**That the content of the presentation be noted.**

**18. LITTER CAMPAIGN**

The Chair then welcomed Emma Varnam, Assistant Director, Operations and Neighbourhoods, who gave information in respect of the network of Litter Hubs in Tameside.

It was explained that Tameside Council's Litter Hubs Network enabled residents or groups to book out free equipment, including high vis jackets, litter pickers and black bags, from community places. Council officers would arrange for the rubbish to be disposed of appropriately. It was part of the 'Our Streets' campaign, bringing people together for a cleaner and safer borough.

It was further explained that there were 14 live litter hubs in the Network at present expanded across the 9 towns of Tameside. More litter hubs were planned and further information on Litter Hubs could be obtained by contacting Sharron Power on 07980 993553 or by email at [sharron.power@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:sharron.power@tameside.gov.uk).

Details of enforcement action was also provided as follows:

- 'Our Streets' campaign launched;
- 3 days of action –Ashton, Droylsden & Denton;
- 9 Fixed Penalty Notices issued;
- 62 businesses visited regarding waste Duty of Care;
- Illicit tobacco and drugs seized; and
- 3 fly tipping prosecutions in 2022 -fines totalling £3,608.

Further planned dates for enforcement activity across the Borough were also provided.

The Chair thanked Ms Varnam for the presentation and it was:

**RESOLVED**

**That the content of the presentation be noted.**

**19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED**

**That the next meeting of the West Strategic Neighbourhood Forum is scheduled to take place on 26 January 2023, be noted.**

**CHAIR**