

## NORTH STRATEGIC NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

30 January 2024

**Commenced:** 6.30 pm

**Terminated:** 7.45 pm

**Present:** Councillors Bowerman (Chair), Glover (Deputy Chair), Choksi, Drennan, Fairfoull, Howarth, Karim, McLaren, McNally and Patel

**In Attendance:**

Ashley Hughes	Director of Resources
Tracey Harrison	Assistant Director of Adults
Jeff Upton	Head of Service — Place Shaping and Planning
Graham Holland	Planning Policy Team Manager
Anne Whittington	Consultant in Public Health
Gordon Murray	Children's Services Consultant

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor Bray

### 14. MINUTES

#### RESOLVED

**That the Minutes of the meeting of the North Strategic Neighbourhood Forum held on 30 January 2024 were approved as a correct record.**

### 15. BUDGET CONSULTATION

The Chair welcomed the Director of Resources, who attended the Forum to deliver a presentation with regards to the Budget Consultation for 2024/25.

He began by outlining to Members the national landscape and the significant challenges that Local Government was facing. Key points relating to historic Government funding were provided with particular emphasis on details from the 2023 Autumn Statement. Information was given on Section 114 Notices and the notable rise since 2018 in Council's having to issue them.

The key challenges Tameside faced were listed and included:

- Additional demand for services across the front line;
- Fragile markets for social care and housing supply;
- Increases in complexity of care needs in Social Care;
- Increased number of young people with Educational, Health and Care Plans;
- Increased contacts due to the economic environment; and
- Digital Transformation.

Tables detailing the budget reductions and the revised budget gap were presented and explained to Members. It was stated that the budget consultation went live on 19 December 2023 and 193 responses had been received by 23 January 2024, with the consultation closing on 2 February 2024. The Director of Resources emphasised the importance of residential engagement in the consultation process, in order to help shape the priorities for the 2024/25 budget, and participation was encouraged for residents to have their say by accessing the following link: [Tameside Council seeks your view on £39.82m budget challenge](#).

The next steps for the period 2024-29 were outlined and Members were advised that there would be a greater use of Neighbourhood Forums in order to increase Member engagement on priorities within each locality to feed into the budget consultation. This was in addition to a rolling consultation process with the Executive Cabinet.

The Chair thanked the Director of Resources for the informative presentation.

**RESOLVED**

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

**16. CARERS STRATEGY**

The Chair welcomed the Assistant Director of Adults who attended the Forum to present the Tameside Carer's Strategy 2024-27 [Click here to view our strategy.](#)

She advised Members that a carer could be a person who provided informal and/or unpaid support to a partner, family member, friend or neighbour who was ill, struggling or disabled and could not manage without this help. The voice of carers had been captured via a consultation process that had taken place in 2022-23 with the aim of understanding what was most important to a carer and to inform the strategy's key priorities, as detailed below:-

1. Identifying and recognising carers
2. Carers as real and expert partners
3. Supporting carers to stay healthy and well
4. Getting the right help at the right time
5. Younger carers
6. Carers in/into employment and training

Information on how and where carers could access support was provided. It was explained that the Tameside Carer's Centre provided emotional support, advocacy, advice and guidance for carers, along with carer's courses and activities to support carers and it was emphasised that an appointment was not necessary in order to speak to an advisor. With regards to the Carer's Offer in Tameside, Members were informed that carers could ask for a carer's needs assessment in their own right or a joint assessment with the person they cared for.

The next steps were outlined and Members were advised that officers continued to work with partners across Social Care, Health and Voluntary and Community Frontline Sector in order to develop a delivery plan for the implementation of the strategy with ongoing consultation with carers. It was explained that the Carer's Strategy was expected to launch in March 2024.

A discussion ensued around finding suitable employment for carers and clarification was sought and provided on how carers could access respite.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director of Adults for a thought provoking presentation.

**RESOLVED**

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

**17. HOW TO BECOME A FOSTER CARER**

The Chair welcomed Gordon Murray, Children's Services Consultant, who attended the Forum to deliver a presentation in respect of the Fostering Service.

He began by providing a definition of fostering; Fostering for Tameside Council provided locally based carers with an opportunity to help children in the local area to remain close to their existing schools and support systems. It was a fun, flexible, challenging and rewarding role where a carer could make a real difference to a child's life. There were a variety of reasons why children came into care, which included parental illness, abuse or neglect, domestic violence, a parent's depression or drug or alcohol abuse.

The role of a foster carer was outlined and it was 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 welcomed and there was no specific qualifications required to become a foster carer.

The various types of fostering were detailed as follows and the journey for someone to become a foster carer was explained:-

- Short term fostering
- Long term fostering
- Respite fostering
- Supported lodging scheme

It was highlighted that ongoing fostering support was provided via supervising social workers, with a social worker assigned also to the child, and regular support groups. An extensive training and development programme was available and support was also available through a buddy system and the Fostering Network. Information was provide on the associated allowances.

In conclusion, contact details were provided in order to gather further information on fostering or to speak to a member of the team for an informal, initial discussion.

- [Tameside Council | Facebook](#)
- [Tameside Council \(@TamesideCouncil\) / X \(twitter.com\)](#)
- [www.instagram.com/tamesidecouncil/](http://www.instagram.com/tamesidecouncil/)
- [www.tameside.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.tameside.gov.uk/fostering)
- [fosteringenquiries@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:fosteringenquiries@tameside.gov.uk)
- 0161 342 2342

Members enquired about the use of social media for recruitment and commented on the importance of word of mouth to cascade information on fostering to residents of the borough.

The Chair thanked Mr Murray for an interesting presentation.

## **RESOLVED**

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

## **18. LOCAL PLAN**

The Chair welcomed Graham Holland, Planning Policy Team Manager, who attended the Forum to deliver a presentation on the Local Plan.

Members were informed that the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 required that each Local Planning Authority prepared and maintained a Local Development Scheme, which was based on up-to-date evidence and examined by independently appointed inspectors. It was explained that the Local Development Scheme set out key milestones for plan making, which the Council proposed to deliver, and identified the nature and scope for the delivery of Development Plan Documents that were the local planning framework for Tameside.

The opportunities for engagement and the activities that were intended to be undertaken in the short, medium and long term were outlined and a summary was provided of the key subject areas within the plan, which included the location of development, protection of assets and meeting needs.

It was explained that the Council's Local Development Scheme was published in July 2023 and details of the current and intended planning frameworks for the borough were provided alongside clarity to the associated documents that were collectively included within the borough's Local Plan.

It was further explained that in Tameside, the Local Plan consisted of a number of documents, which formed the policy framework within Greater Manchester.

It was highlighted that the plans were currently undergoing consultation. With regards to Places for Everyone, it was explained that 177 consultation responses had been received, which were to be considered and included within the inspectors report, with a view to adoption in early 2024.

Members were provided with an update on Homes Spaces Places which replaced any remaining elements of the Unitary Development Plan. It was explained that officers consulted on an integrated assessment in July 2023 via various different means, and this was currently in the Plan Scoping stage.

A schedule of proposed local development documents was outlined to Members alongside information on the risks and opportunities.

A discussion ensued and members sought clarification on the nature and length of the plan and affordable housing. It was confirmed that there was a 15 year minimum time period with reviews taking place every 5 years and annual monitoring, which was published. Members enquired about how they could input into the process. In response, Members were encouraged to act as an advocate and engage with the process in order to influence the plan as it was developed.

## **RESOLVED**

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

## **19. SERIOUS VIOLENCE STRATEGY**

The Chair welcomed Anne Whittington, Consultant in Public Health, who attended the Forum to provide an overview of the Tameside Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29, which was now available to view on the Council's website and could be accessed [here](#).

Information was provided on The Serious Violence Duty that required 'Specified Authorities' for a local government area to work together and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence including the Council, Greater Manchester Police, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, Probation Services, Youth Offending Services and NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board.

Members were informed that Tameside partners worked closely with the Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit who had produced a Serious Violence Strategy for Greater Manchester. The Duty encouraged a 'public health approach', which had been done for Greater Manchester and Tameside.

A definition of serious violence was provided and Members were notified of the types of serious violence in Tameside as follows:-

- Possession of weapons
- Domestic Abuse
- Personal robbery
- Safeguarding
- Self-directed violence

Priorities for tackling serious violence in Tameside were listed as follows:-

1. Community led approach
2. Early and timely intervention
3. Partnerships for change
4. Equality, equity and justice
5. Trauma responsive support for communities in Tameside

Members were advised that the strategy for Tameside would be led by the Community Safety Partnership and an action plan to deliver the Tameside Serious Violence Strategy 2024-2029 was under development. Ongoing conversations and involvement with people living in Tameside, especially those affected by violence, would continue and changes would be made to the service provided and the work undertaken, from evidence in the needs assessment, in order to ensure that the priorities and commitments in the Strategy were achieved.

Members commented on the increase in members of the public carrying weapons and the numbers ceased by the Police. Questions were asked on the preventative work that was currently undertaken and response times and outcomes. Information on the White Ribbon event held at Dukinfield Town Hall was provide for Members.

**RESOLVED**

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

**20. FLU UPTAKE & IMPACT OF DOCTORS STRIKE**

Members received a presentation from Anne Whittington, Consultant in Public Health, which provided an update on the Autumn/Winter 2023-24 flu vaccination programme

A table detailing the seasonal Flu Vaccination Uptake as at December 2023 was shown broken down by neighbourhood areas, based on the Primary Care Network, and age categories. It was highlighted that uptake had been low, and lower than the Greater Manchester average, across all age categories.

A comparison table showing the December 2023 uptake rates against the December 2022 uptake rates was also shown. It was stated that there had been slightly lower uptake within all groups, which mirrored the national picture. It was encouraging that there had been an increase in pregnant women taking up the offer of a flu vaccination and an increase in all aged 2 being vaccinated.

Some of the challenges around uptake of the flu vaccination, both across the region and nationally, were outlined and a summary of the industrial action by junior doctors in January 2024 was detailed. It was stated that all urgent and emergency care services were fully covered by consultants and specialist doctors and all cancer services continued as planned. Some routine elective activity had to be cancelled and teams were working to rearrange these as soon as practically possible.

A detailed discussion ensued into the possible reasons for the decrease in flu vaccinations this year and information was provided on the recent national measles outbreaks and the importance of the MMR vaccine.

**RESOLVED**

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

**21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED**

**That the date of the next meeting of the North Strategic Neighbourhood Forum, scheduled for 26 March 2024, be noted.**

**CHAIR**