

SOUTH STRATEGIC NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

13 January 2020

Commenced: 18:32

Terminated: 20:12

Present: Councillors: P Fitzpatrick (Chair), Affleck, Alam, Bowden, Chadwick, Cooper, J Fitzpatrick, Kitchen, Owen, Robinson and Welsh

8 MINUTES

RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting of the South Strategic Neighbourhoods Forum held on 14 October 2019 be approved as a correct record with the addition of Councillor Welsh noted as present.

9 CHILDREN'S SERVICES – CURRENT POSITION AND PLANNED DEVELOPMENT FOR 2020

The Director of Children's Services presented before Members and began by giving details of the three week program of inspection of Local Authority Children's Services in May 2019.

Improvements and areas of focus over the past 12 months were outlined.

In terms of areas of focus for 2020, it was explained that the system was now more stable, but 2020 would see a continued focus on areas already targeted in 2019 and additionally a specific focus on areas including:

- Work Force Development;
- Consistency in quality;
- Complex Safeguarding;
- Children in Needs;
- Children at the 'cusp of care; and
- Looked after Children – including Fostering, placement sufficiency and permanency.

The Director concluded by explaining that a multi-faceted and co-ordinated approach was required, in order to safely and appropriately reduce the need for Local Authority Care, to stabilise the current cohort, progress children through to permanency more effectively, step children down where appropriate and provide for a range of placements to best meet children's assessed needs. The 7 projects to support these objectives were detailed as follows:

- Early Help and Prevention at a Neighbourhood Level;
- Family Intervention Service;
- Team around the School Plus;
- Duty/Locality Restructure;
- Positive Futures (Respite/Assessment);
- Fostering Service Improvement; and
- Placements Review and Sufficiency.

Members of the Forum enquired on the Social Worker turnover and the number of cases that each Social Worker is responsible for. The Director of Children's Services explained that the overall number of LAC is 709, the caseload for Social Workers as an average is below 20. Further there have been a number of new appointments of Social Workers within the service but they are still needing experience and training.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

10 TACKLING POVERTY IN TAMESIDE

The Director of Population Health submitted a presentation providing information with regard to tackling poverty in Tameside.

It was explained that the Council and partners were rethinking the approach to tackling poverty and the causes of poverty. To do this, engagement was taking place with residents and partners to understand the nature of poverty experienced in Tameside, how it impacted on people's lives and how best to support residents experiencing poverty to move out of poverty.

The presentation provided statistical information in respect of poverty levels in England, including child poverty, with the highest levels of child poverty in Tameside occurring in Ashton and Hyde Godley.

The main causes of poverty were outlined and potential levels of intervention were explored.

Detailed discussion ensued in respect of the content of the presentation and concerns were raised with regard to the levels of poverty both locally and nationally, in particular levels of child poverty and the areas where this was highest in Tameside.

Members of the forum expressed their concern that it can often be more expensive to be poor, highlighting that those in poverty end up getting high interest load, or items that are cheap and require replacement and end up using pay per day energy providers. Members asked if there could be more promotion of Credit Unions who can provide cheaper credit for those who receive child support.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

CHAIR