

JOINT MEETING OF EXECUTIVE CABINET WITH OVERVIEW PANEL

12 February 2020

Comm: 1.45pm

Term: 2.40pm

Present: Councillors Warrington (In the Chair), Bray, Cooney, Feeley, Gwynne, Kitchen (Ex Officio), Ryan and Wills

Overview Members: Ricci, Cooper, Glover and Welsh

In Attendance:	Steven Pleasant	Chief Executive
	Sandra Stewart	Director of Governance and Pensions
	Ian Saxon	Director of Operations & Neighbourhoods
	Richard Hancock	Director of Children's Services
	Jess Williams	Director of Commissioning
	Kathy Roe	Director of Finance
	Richard Hancock	Director of Children's Services
	Jayne Traverse	Director of Growth
	Tom Wilkinson	Assistant Director of Finance
	Debbie Watson	Assistant Director of Population Health
	Simon Brunet	Head of Policy, Performance & Intelligence
	Catherine Moseley	Head of Access Services
	Dr Ashwin Ramachandra	Co-Chair of NHS CCG Tameside & Glossop

Apologies for absence: Cllrs Fairfoull and T Smith

101 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received from Members.

102 MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE CABINET

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet meeting held on 22 January 2020 be approved as a correct record.

103 MINUTES OF STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING BOARD

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Commissioning Board held on 22 January 2020 be approved as a correct record.

104 GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

RESOVLED

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held on 7 January 2020, be noted.

105. SCRUTINY UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Governance and Pensions summarising the work of the Council's two scrutiny Panels: Place and External Relations and Integrated Care and Wellbeing,

In addition to a chronological breakdown of activity and oversight of both Scrutiny Panels, details were given of in-depth reviews carried out during 2019/2020 as follows:

- Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel – Quality and Standards in the Private Rental Sector; and
- Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel – Recruitment and Retention of Foster Carers.

It was also explained that the Children's Working Group, a fixed sub-group of the Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel, was currently reviewing Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing, with findings and recommendations to be reported to the overarching Scrutiny Panel in March 2020.

In respect of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Assurance reviews, it was reported that, on 9 September 2019, the Overview Panel had received a report on the 'Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Annual Report for Complaints Monitoring'. A recommendation was made for the Council's Scrutiny Panels to develop a consistent approach to review learning and improvement outcomes to inform future work priorities. A further report to the Overview Panel on 18 November 2019, provided details on the planned approach of the Scrutiny Panel to routinely review decisions and focus reports published by the Ombudsman. A new approach had been adopted to ensure shared learning opportunities were directly communicated with service areas and that a formal response and/or position statement be returned to the appropriate Scrutiny Panel within agreed timescales.

With regard to the Budget Consultation, Members were informed that all Scrutiny Panel Members were provided with an opportunity to attend one or two budget briefing sessions held in January 2020. This followed on from a mid-year budget position update received at Panel meetings held in September 2019. A number of points were discussed in respect of demand pressures on statutory services along with the tailoring of financial priorities to a neighbourhood model. Details of the discussions had been drafted in a letter of the Scrutiny Chairs to the Executive Member for Finance and Economic Growth and the Director of Finance, a copy of which was appended to the report.

RESOLVED

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

106 SCRUTINY REPORT – RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF FOSTER CARERS

Consideration was given to a report of the Chair of the Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel / Deputy Executive Leader (Children and Families), which provided recommendations and Executive responses in respect of the review of Recruitment and Retention of Foster Carers, carried out by the Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel.

It was reported that, at the start of September 2019, Tameside had a total of 710 looked after children. This was a number that had risen consistently over a period of 3 years. When compared to a similar period in 2016, the authority had experienced an overall increase of 63% in the number of looked after children.

The increase in demand on services had been significant, which generated a direct impact on the ability of fostering services to find the most suitable placements to meet the needs of all children. Whilst a rise in agency placements could be considered reasonable during such a period of

demand, the service had been unable to achieve the required levels of recruitment in order to grow the total number of carers to achieve an appropriate level.

The Fostering Service had provided data from September 2019 to show that there were a total of 309 Council approved foster carers, this was made up of:

- 207 community/mainstream carers (external/members of the public); and
- 102 connected carers (family and friends)

Data from a year end fostering return (March 2019) showed that from the 356 places made available, a total of 297 placements were made. This was a number made up of both community and connected carers. Details were given of a breakdown of placements, vacancies and unavailable places. The data appeared to show an underutilisation of existing placements, with a total of 53 places either unavailable or on holiday, through to the service awaiting outcome from investigation before placements could resume.

The report gave details of a review of Tameside Fostering Service, undertaken by an independent fostering specialist. The review highlighted positives and number of challenges with a key element being the need to improve the recruitment and retention of foster carers.

The approach taken by other local authorities in relation to the recruitment and retention of foster carers had also been considered, with research primarily focusing on the areas where Children's Services had been rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted and examples of good practice at a regional level. This had proved useful when seeking assurances on the importance of developing a local offer and package for Tameside carers.

Feedback from foster carers had also been sought, which had shown a remarkable dedication and commitment to the role, with the ambition to improve services for the better. It was important that mechanisms were in place to ensure the views and experiences of carers were captured to inform future service delivery.

The Chair thanked everyone involved for an interesting and informative report and it was:

RESOLVED

- (i) That immediate attention is placed on increasing the number and range of foster placements available in Tameside;**
- (ii) That future action be taken to raise the profile of fostering and to gain greater understanding of the local barriers to fostering;**
- (iii) That services look to develop a programme of listening and engagement activity, which includes role requirements, what to expect from the Council, training, development plans, remuneration and reward;**
- (iv) Review options and potential advantages of introducing a mentoring scheme for fostering and to actively seek foster carer representatives to work more closely with the service;**
- (v) That the Council create a clear and consistent offer for Tameside foster carers, with learning available from other authorities to support the development of a new benefits package for foster children and families;**
- (vi) Options be explored to establish an adequately resourced foster carer recruitment function, with a dedicated role that could be responsible to future demand; and**
- (vii) That the Executive involves Scrutiny in future development stages and consultation aimed to improve service delivery and outcomes.**

107 ASSURANCE REVIEW OF LGSCO FOCUS REPORT

The Director of Governance and Pensions submitted a report providing information of a service response on shared learning detailed within the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) focus report on SEND provision. It was explained that Scrutiny Panels routinely

reviewed LGSCO decisions, with shared learning reported to services in order to gain assurances of practice, delivery and outcomes for residents and service users.

The report concluded that Tameside, like many local areas, had found implementing SEND Reforms challenging. Implementation had not been consistent and capacity challenges and changes in leadership had negatively impacted upon this. Recent joint work meant that there was a robust self-evaluation in place, tested via peer challenge.

A thorough and well considered improvement plan was in place and it was targeted to the areas requiring the swiftest improvement. Oversight to the implementation of the plan was provided by the SEND Strategic Group and would be reported to the Starting Well Board and the Educational Attainment and Improvement Board.

RESOLVED

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

108. MONTH 9 INTEGRATED REVENUE MONITORING REPORT

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member, Finance and Economic Growth / CCG Chair / Director of Finance providing an overview on the financial position of the Tameside and Glossop economy in 2019/20. For the year to 31 March 2020 the report forecast that service expenditure would exceed the approved budget in a number of areas, due to a combination of cost pressures, shortfalls in income and non-delivery of savings.

It was explained that for the 2019/20 financial year, the Integrated Commissioning Fund was forecast to spend £619.6 million, against an approved net budget of £617.2 million. The forecast overspend of £1.550 million was primarily driven by Children's Services, offset by contingency and capital financing. The deteriorating position this month was due to an increase in Children's Services costs. Further detail on the economy wide position was included in an Appendix to the report.

It was reported that the Operations and Neighbourhoods Directorate had been offered a grant of £92k from the Urban Tree Challenge fund to plant and establish urban or peri-urban trees. The grant required match funding which could be met from the existing budgets for labour and equipment in Operations and Greenspace.

Details of the Council's irrecoverable debts over £3,000 that had been written off in the period 1 October to 31 December 2019 were appended to the report.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the significant level of savings required during 2019/20 and beyond to deliver a balanced recurrent economy budget together with the related risks, which are contributing to the overall adverse forecast, be acknowledged;**
- (ii) That the significant financial pressures facing the Strategic Commission, particularly in respect of Children's Social Care, Acute and Growth, be acknowledged;**
- (iii) The acceptance of the Urban Tree challenge grant funding, as set out in paragraph 2.4 of the report, be approved; and**
- (iv) That the write-offs of irrecoverable debt for the period 1 October to 31 December 2019, be noted.**

109 BUDGET CONVERSATION 2020-21

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Leader / Executive Member, Finance and Economic Growth / Joint CCG Chairs / Director of Governance and Pensions, detailing responses

to a public engagement exercise undertaken between 13 December 2019 and 15 January 2020 to understand their priorities for spending within the context of the financial challenges facing public services.

The conversation was used to educate and inform the public on the Strategic Commission's budget and its financial challenges whilst also allowing feedback and ideas on how services can be improved and savings made. The conversation focussed primarily on two questions:

- What do you think should be the spending priorities for the Tameside & Glossop Strategic Commission in 2020/21 and future years; and
- Do you have ideas or suggestions for how we might deliver services more efficiently, save money or raise revenue?

To support the engagement activity, a full programme of communications was undertaken. The public were provided with an opportunity to leave comments and feedback through the Big Conversation, available on both the Council and CCG websites. Dedicated webpages to the Budget Conversation were created explaining all aspects of the conversation with links to the feedback form. A dedicated email account was also provided to enable public / service users / businesses to submit any comments. An analysis of the feedback received was detailed in the report.

RESOLVED

That the content of the report be noted.

110 BUDGET 2020/21

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Leader / Joint CCG Chairs / Director of Finance setting out the detailed revenue budget proposals for 2020/2021 and the Medium Term Financial Plan for the 5 year period 2020/21 to 2024/25, including the proposed council tax increase for 2020/21. The proposed budget was set in the context of cuts in local government funding and significant growing demographic and demand pressures across the economy. Children's Social Care and Continuing Health Care were identified as particularly significant pressures and budgets included significant Targeted Efficiency Programme (TEP) savings targets which needed to be delivered to achieve a balanced position by 31 March 2020.

It was reported that 2019/20 was the fourth and final year of a four year funding settlement for the Council, agreed with the Government. The four year settlement provided the Council with some certainty over funding levels, but had nonetheless, resulted in year on year funding reductions. A review of Local Government funding had been ongoing during 2019 (the 'fair funding' review) but had not yet concluded. A full spending review did not take place during 2019 and was not now expected until later in 2020.

In September 2019, a one year budget was announced by the Government and in December 2019 a provisional 2020/21 Local Government Finance Settlement was announced. The resourcing figures included in the budget were based on the provisional finance settlement which would be confirmed in February 2019. Traditionally there was little movement between the provisional and final settlements and any differences would be adjusted through the contingency budget or reserves.

Beyond 2020, assumptions had been made based on intelligence gathered from the HM Treasury's budget in September 2019 and commentary from sector experts. The funding for local government was expected to remain broadly flat, with the continued reduction in central government support being compensated by increasing local taxes, specifically business rates and council tax. It was currently assumed that the additional social care funding announced in September 2019 would as a minimum, continue at current levels into future years, and that the Better Care Fund would continue.

It was reported that, after taking account of budget pressures, additional income and savings identified for delivery in 2020/21, the total net budget requirement for the Council was £205,279k. Before any increase in Council Tax levels, the resource available in 2020/21 was £201,568k, leaving a gap of £3,711k. The gap of £3,711k could be closed through an increase in Council Tax of 3.99%. This was made up of a 2% increase for the Adult Social Care Precept and a 1.99% general increase in Council Tax. For a typical Band A property in Tameside a 3.99% increase in Council Tax would equate to an increase of £39.09 per year or 75 pence per week.

A three year capital programme had been approved in October 2017 and since then a number of changes had been approved by Executive Cabinet to add additional schemes to the programme. Future investment plans were subject to available resources and the realisation of available capital receipts, however the current plans would see investment in excess of £200 million over the four year period 2017 to 2021. In accordance with the CIPFA prudential code work had been undertaken to assess the additional capital demands for the next five years on top of the current approved investment programme. The capital strategy indicated that the level of investment required over the next five years was £124m which was in addition to the current programme and earmarked schemes.

The Pay Policy Statement, Appendix 19 to the report, set out the Council's approach to pay policy in accordance within the requirements of Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011. This pay policy applied for the year 2020/21 unless replaced or varied by Full Council.

In relation to the Treasury Management Strategy Members were informed that as at 31 March 2019, the Council had £105 million of investments which needed to be safeguarded, and £111 million of long term debt, which had been accrued over the years to help to fund the Council's capital investment programmes. The Council was the lead authority responsible for the administration of the debt of the former Greater Manchester County Council, on behalf of all ten Greater Manchester Metropolitan Authorities. As at 31 March 2019, this represented a further £59m of debt. The Treasury Management Strategy set out the estimated borrowing requirement for both Tameside MBC and the Greater Manchester Metropolitan Debt Administration Fund (GMMDAF), together with the strategy to be employed in managing the debt position.

RESOLVED

That the following recommendations outlined in Section 13 of the submitted report be RECOMMENDED to Council for approval subject to any final minor changes to the final figures:

- (i) That the significant financial challenges and risks set out in this report be noted;**
- (ii) That the budgeted net expenditure for the financial year 2020/21 of £205,279k, as set out in Section 3 Appendix 1, noting the significant pressures outlined in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved;**
- (iii) That the proposed savings to be delivered by management outlined in Section 3 and Appendix 3 to the report, noting the additional detail provided in Appendices 7 to 16, be approved;**
- (iv) That an uplift to fees and charges, as set out in Appendix 22 to the report, be approved;**
- (v) That the advance payment of three years employer pension contributions, as set out in paragraphs 3.16 to 3.20 of the report, be approved;**
- (vi) That the proposed resourcing of the budget, as set out in Appendix 4, including the use of £12,395k of reserves, be approved;**
- (vii) That a 3.99% increase to Council Tax for Tameside MBC for 2020/21 consisting of a 1.99% general increase and 2% Adult Social Care precept, be approved;**
- (viii) That the budget projections set out in Section 6 of the report assume a 1.99% per annum increase in general Council Tax through to 2024/25, be noted. The budget projections also assume that there is no further reduction to current levels of Government funding;**
- (ix) That the Director of Finance's assessment of the robustness of the budget estimates and adequacy of reserves as set out in Appendix 5 to the report, be accepted.**

Following this, determine that the estimates are robust for the purpose of setting the budget and that the proposed minimum General Fund Balance is adequate;

- (x) That the proposed minimum General Fund Balance of £27.2 million set out in Appendix 6 to the report, be approved;
- (xi) That the Reserves Strategy and the proposed rationalisation and consolidation of reserve balances as set out in Appendix 6 to the report, be approved;
- (xii) That the position on the Capital Programme (Section 8 and Appendix 18 to the report) previously approved by Executive Cabinet, and the forecast future investment requirements, be noted;
- (xiii) The Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21 as set out in Section 9 and Appendix 19 to the report, be approved;
- (xiv) That the Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21, which includes the proposed borrowing strategy, Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy (Appendix 20 to the report), be approved;
- (xv) That the Capital Strategy 2020/21 (Appendix 21 to the report), be approved;
- (xvi) That an increase in the child allowance fees payable to Tameside Foster Carers and Relative Carers for the financial year 2020/21, in line with the weekly minimum rates as determined by the Department of Education, together with a corresponding increase to the related allowances payable; be approved;
- (xvii) That an increase in the personal allowance rate payable in 2020/21 to eligible and relevant care leavers living independently, to the same level as the Job Seekers Allowance rate payable for 18-24 year olds as determined by the Department for Work and Pensions, be approved; and
- (xviii) That delegated authority to the Directors (in consultation with the Section 151 officer) to agree any uplifts required to other contractual rates from 1 April 2020, which Directorates would manage within their approved budgets for 2020/21, be approved.

111 STALYBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE CHALLENGE

The Executive Member, Finance and Economic Growth / Director of Growth submitted a report providing an update on the progress with Stalybridge Town Centre Challenge (STCC), including the development of the Strategy and Action Plan and the new governance structure.

It was explained that the Stalybridge Town Centre Challenge and Action Plan, as appended to the report, set out the STCC Board's aspirations for Stalybridge and their proposed actions. The document was approved at the meeting of the STCC Board on 25 July 2019, subject to final amendments which had now been made. This document was an important stage in the development of the vision for the town centre and even in draft form had already proved valuable in expressing the aspirations and plans for Stalybridge in bidding for funding. The Action Plan was subsequently being reviewed in detail by Council officers in order to produce a delivery plan which had proper regard to Council policy and resources. A summary of the actions and achievements to date against key priorities within the Action Plan was appended to the report, and illustrated the significant activity in progress.

It was further explained that, to date, Stalybridge Town Centre Challenge had been led and co-ordinated by the STCC Board, a working group of local representatives, supported by the Council. As the Town Centre Challenge moved from a 'visioning' stage to implementation, the next phase of work would require a robust governance structure to be put in place. This was essential in order to ensure that the project and public monies were managed in a transparent and accountable way, that appropriate legal and financial processes were adhered to, that any conflicts of interests clearly addressed, and that the project and individuals involved with it were protected from the risks of challenge.

The current governance and the work of the Board members had been invaluable in developing and progressing the project to this stage. It would be important that current Board members continued to be involved as part of the new governance structure. The Board approved the

proposed governance arrangements at its last meeting on 25 July 2019. The revised governance structure proposed was comprised of a Strategic Panel of elected Members, advised and supported by a Stakeholder Advisory Group, which would involve local stakeholders and an officer group, which would ensure input from Council officers who would facilitate delivery.

A link was provided in the report to the terms of reference for the Strategic Panel, Stakeholder Advisory Group and officer group, including objectives methods of working, membership and structure. These had been designed to ensure clear lines of responsibility and communication between the panel and groups. The Strategic Panel would prepare an Annual Report for the Council's Executive Cabinet and any interim actions requiring decision would be referred to the Executive Cabinet by the Executive Member as per Council processes.

Details were given of funding opportunities being pursued, to enable the delivery of priority actions, including an expression of interest submitted to the High Streets Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) initiative launched by Historic England. Risks associated with Stalybridge town Centre Challenge, both at strategic level and project level, were also outlined.

The report concluded that important progress had been achieved by the Stalybridge Town Centre Challenge Board in developing a Strategy and Action Plan to shape future delivery in Stalybridge. Work was already in progress to start delivery and additional funding had been secured to help enable this. It was therefore important that new governance was put in place which combined engagement of Stalybridge stakeholders with robust and transparent governance of public resources. Intensive work had taken place in order to meet the (HAZ) deadline of 20 December 2020 for final bid submission. Whilst match funding would only be committed once grant funding was formally offered and accepted, it was important to make in principle provision in order to enable a prompt decision in the New Year and commencement of delivery from April 2020.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the positive achievement to date in producing the strategy and action plan, securing external funding and recent successful events in the town, be noted;**
- (ii) That the new governance arrangements for Stalybridge Town Centre Challenge, be noted;**
- (iii) That the Stalybridge Town Centre Challenge Board's Strategy and Action Plan be accepted, noting that endorsement of these documents did not commit the Council to resourcing, be accepted;**
- (iv) That subject to the grant offer and conditions, the allocation of up to £1.275 million match funding required (as set out in section 4 of the report, and recommendations (v) and (vi) below, in order to secure up to £1.275 million High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) funding through a bid submitted by 20 December, be approved in principle;**
- (v) As part of the match funding requirement, an amount of up to £890k be ring fenced from the existing earmarked capital investment pot for the refurbishment of capital assets (paragraph 4.8), be approved;**
- (vi) That a one off budget of £75k towards a feasibility study to inform proposals for the Civic Hall to be funded from the Business Rates Pilot Reserve, be created;**
- (vii) It be noted that the bid was submitted by the deadline of 20 December 2019;**
- (viii) That acceptance of £130k Evergreen Surplus funding, subject to the appropriate due diligence being undertaken with regard to the grant offer and conditions; be approved;**
- (ix) That the risks of entering into grant funding agreements (GFA) for HAZ and Evergreen funding be accepted and authority provided for the following:**
 - Delegated authority be provided to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Director of Governance & Pensions to accept and enter into the GFAs on behalf of TMBC; and**
 - Delegated authority be provided to the Director of Growth to manage the programme of works associated with the GFAs and to drawdown and incur all expenditure related to delivery obtaining such governance as required**

within the Council's financial and legal framework with such on-going performance and reporting will be provided as necessary.

(x) That further reports on the delivery of the HAZ programme be received.

112 CONSULTATION ON ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member, Lifelong Learning, Equalities, Culture and Heritage / Head of Access Services providing the outcomes of the consultation on the admission arrangements and published admission numbers for Tameside community and voluntary controlled schools for admission in September 2021.

It was explained that, for entry to school in September 2021, the following changes were proposed to the admission arrangements for community or voluntary controlled primary, junior and secondary schools:

- Proposed changes to published admission numbers at Broadbottom Primary School.

The proposed changes only affected community or voluntary controlled primary, junior and secondary schools and would not affect any academies, voluntary aided or free schools who were responsible for their own admission arrangements.

A pupil place planning update was also provided and the full school place planning annual report was set out in an Appendix to the report. The annual report set out how the forecasting of demand was matched to need and where there was a need for additional places to be created, how this was achieved. It was explained that, currently, with a falling birth rate, the need for additional places was in the secondary sector for four years from September 2021 to September 2024. In partnership with secondary schools, the gap in September 2021 looked likely to be closed as several schools were consulting on increasing their admission numbers in return for investment using basic need funding to remodel accommodation and other schools had agreed to take additional pupils without the need for further investment.

RESOLVED

That the determination of admission arrangements for all Tameside community and voluntary controlled schools for 2021/22 with change from those that applied for admission in 2020/21 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, other than amendments to the Published Admission Number as set out in the report, be approved.

113. URGENT ITEMS

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

CHAIR