

EAST STRATEGIC NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

22 January 2020

Commenced: 6.30pm

Terminated: 8.00pm

Present: Councillors: Pearce, Patrick, J Homer, S Homer, Lane, Sharif and Sweeton

Apologies for Absence: Councillors: Billington, Dickinson, Feeley, Gosling, Jackson, Taylor, Wild and Wills

9 MINUTES

RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting of the East Strategic Neighbourhood Forum held on 16 October 2019 be approved as a correct record.

10 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.

The Director then outlined the judgements arising from the inspection and explained that some important improvements had been made, such as:

- The scale and effectiveness of early help services had been strengthened through a new locality-based model that was now serving most children well;
- A new multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) was ensuring that referrals about children for whom there were safeguarding concerns were almost always dealt with quickly and appropriately; and
- An 'edge of care' team was working intensively with families to ensure that children only came into care when they needed to.

However, much progress, particularly in services for children in care, was very new and so impact was inevitably limited.

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 seven 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 made reference in particular, to the Fostering Service and highlighted the recent review of the Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel into the recruitment and retention of foster carers. In terms of care leavers, reference was also made to the mentoring service/adviser support scheme, currently being trialled and Members commented on the success of such initiatives in the past.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

11 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 suggested that the Ridgehill Big Local National Lottery Funding initiative could be utilised to assist with money management/debt education.

The Chair of Tameside Cash Box Credit Union, in attendance at the meeting as a member of the public, gave details of the community savings and loan cooperative, whereby members pooled their savings to lend to one another and helped run the credit union. Ongoing initiatives were also highlighted including education/advice regarding debt management and how this work could be developed.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

CHAIR