

# Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel

5 November 2020

**Commenced:** 6.00pm

**Terminated:** 7.40pm

**Present:** Councillors T Smith (Chair), Affleck, Alam, Cooper, Jackson, Martin, Mills, Owen, Patrick, Welsh, Wild.

**Apologies for absence:** Councillors S Homer, Boyle, Gosling.

## 23. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel held on 10 September 2020 were approved as a correct record.

## 24. CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Panel welcomed Councillor Bill Fairfoull, Deputy Executive Leader (Children and Families); and Richard Hancock, Director of Children's Services, to receive an overview of Children's Social Care improvements.

Members received an overview of service objectives. The core principles aim to support children and families by building stronger relationships, delivering high quality place-based services and developing a more cooperative approach in order to improve outcomes for children in Tameside.

Mr Hancock informed members that the Early Help Strategy and action plan are now in place, with a comprehensive and blended neighbourhood offer. A new family support service was launched in September 2020, providing a 7 day flexible and adaptive offer to meet the needs of children and families. Work in this area has been further complemented by the roll out of Team Around the School (TAS), the launch of a parent strategy and a young carers review completed.

The presentation touched upon key services within children's social care, with detail provided on specific improvements and practice changes across:

- Safeguarding & front door
- Services for children in care and care leavers

The new quality assurance framework includes the Signs of Safety and is a fundamental part of the ongoing improvement work. The framework has been revised, rewritten and re-issued, with a need to ensure this becomes fully embedded. Developments made to the audit framework and activity, with next steps to close the loop on this work ensuring it becomes connected and evidence based to inform and improve future practice.

A significant amount of reflection and planning has taken place across a broad range of areas. It was reported that the Integrated Children's System has improved functionality as a result of recent upgrades. Workforce planning is ongoing, while some issues have arisen related to recruitment and retention, there is a need to once again work to reduce agency rates. This will be monitored closely to ensure numbers and ratios continue to improve by the end of 2020.

The Panel heard that further integration has taken place with children and adolescent mental health services (CAHMS). There is a single point of access for Healthy Young Minds aligned to the Early Help Access Point. A number of completed project were referenced and include:

- LISTENing co-production framework agreed and implemented. Provides a methodology and

- commitment to how we work with young people.
- ILACS action plan
  - SEND local offer
  - Care Leavers local offer
  - Early Help website

It was reported that Covid-19 has presented a range of challenges to the workforce, requiring an ongoing dedication and commitment for staff to remain flexible and creative in order to deliver quality services and ensuring a range of statutory responsibilities are met.

New procedures were developed and risk assessments undertaken when face-to-face visits were required. Regulations eased to accommodate this during the first phase of national restrictions, however they are no longer in place and face-to-face visits are expected once again. They continue to be risk assessed to ensure the safety of children and staff.

Education services reconfigured to create a single point of contact. Schools contacted daily, with a need to respond quickly to emerging issues. This work also included the distribution of laptops to support virtual learning. It was reported that additional measures were put in place to ensure the effectiveness of our safeguarding partnership during this challenging period.

Cllr Fairfoull and Mr Hancock responded to a number of questions from the Panel on:

- Transitional support and good quality accommodation options for care leavers.
- Approach and ambition to build on the current position for in-borough placements and capacity. This included new areas of investment for placements and preventative measures.
- Recruitment of foster carers within Tameside's BAME community
- Workforce issues related to permanence and caseload levels
- Progress of key elements within the agreed sustainability projects
- Adoption services and external factors
- Domestic abuse

**Resolved:** That Cllr Fairfoull and Mr Hancock be thanked for attending the meeting.

## **25. SCRUTINY MID-YEAR BUDGET UPDATE**

The Panel received for information, a letter of the Scrutiny Chairs to Councillor Oliver Ryan, Executive Member, Finance and Economic Growth, in response to the mid-year budget update meetings held on 22 September 2020.

## **26. GREATER MANCHESTER SCRUTINY**

The Chair provided a verbal update on activity of the Corporate Issues & Reform Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting that took place on 6 October 2020. Regular Scrutiny update emails will continue to include a link to all public papers for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Scrutiny Committees.

## **27. CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Chair informed members that the next meeting of the Children's Working Group will take place on 12 November 2020. The group will be undertaking follow-up activity on a previous review of Recruitment and Retention of Foster Carers. The report tabled at the joint meeting of Cabinet and Overview Panel on 12 February 2020 will be circulated to members of the group to review past recommendations and the Executive Response.

## **28. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting of the Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel will take place on 14 January 2021.

## **29. URGENT ITEMS**

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

**CHAIR**