

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, 31 January 2019

PRESENT: Councillor B Oliphant (Chair)

Councillor(s): M Hall, L Caffrey, S Craig, L Kirton,
E McMaster, S Ronchetti, D Bradford, P Craig, M Ord,
C McHugh, R Oxberry, C Buckley and N Weatherley

F91 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Clelland, Councillor Davison, Maveen Pereira and Jill Burrell.

F92 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

RESOLVED:

- (i) The minutes of the last meeting held on 6 December 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

F93 REVIEW OF HEALTHY WEIGHT (ACROSS THE LIFE COURSE)

The Committee received a report and presentation providing further detail of the review of healthy weight across the life course. The presentation focussed on 'Obesity and the built environment' and was delivered by Professor Tim Townshend of Newcastle University.

It was highlighted from the presentation that there are a multitude of determinants of health and wellbeing in our neighbourhoods, these included the natural environment, local economy and people.

It was noted that health inequality also influences the life expectancy of individuals; it was stated that life expectancy amongst the most deprived is lower than that of the least deprived. It was emphasised that obesity is a complex issue with varying factors and influences on society that can impact on weight.

The Committee were provided with an overview of such factors which included:

- The Obesogenic Environment
- Neighbourhood Food Environments
- 'Toxic High Streets'
- Planning and Fast Food Takeaways

The presentation also highlighted that there is also evidence relating to physical environments and the influence over healthy weight and wellbeing. These included:

- Green and blue spaces
- Greenspace and physical activity
- Walkable neighbourhoods
- Urban Greenways
- Cycle Infrastructure
- Garden Allotments & Community Gardens

It was noted that evidence around fast food takeaways and planning has a role, Gateshead was highlighted as a good example of this regarding it's planning rules around hot food takeaways.

A comment was made noting that Gateshead is proud of the impact that the planning rules have had on reducing the number of hot food takeaways in the borough; however, it was acknowledged that there is still work to be done. A further comment was made noting that not enough children in the borough are walking to school, it was stated that there is too much reliance on parents driving children to and from school which discourages physical activity and causes a nuisance at school entrances. It was also stated that school drop offs and pickups are having a negative impact on air quality around schools.

The Committee noted that the presentation was excellent and provided a lot of 'food for thought'. It was also stated that whilst Gateshead has a lot of green space, it does not yet have the infrastructure to improve cycle ways in rural areas.

It was suggested that there are an increased number of hot food takeaways in deprived areas due to cheaper business rents. It was also stated that to many, particularly those who lack the skills and knowledge to cook for themselves, that venues such as McDonalds can provide a low cost source of protein to individuals.

Concerns were raised over the sale of sugary cereals, particularly those targeted at children. It was also noted that whilst planning departments have role to play, there is a wider agenda to be met with regard to sugar use in food products which needs to be approached from a national level.

The recent report presented at Council by the Director of Public Health was discussed. The Committee also noted that the report was well received by Councillors and made comment that information and education around food choices should start at home and be reinforced in schools.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of the report and presentation.
- (ii) The Committee agreed to receive additional updates at the next meeting.

F94 OFSTED - INSPECTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY CHILDREN'S SERVICES (ILAC): SELF-EVALUATION AND ANNUAL CONVERSATION UPDATE

The Committee received a report and presentation to update on the outcome of the annual conversation held with Ofsted on 5 December 218. It was noted that the conversation was held under the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) framework.

An overview of the Gateshead Local Area Context was provided. It was highlighted that Gateshead has a total population of around 202, 419 living in 90, 500 households and that socio-economic inequalities exist. The following was also noted from the presentation:

- **Around 1604 children (CIN) are open to Children Social Care (end Dec 18)**, which is CIN rate per 10,000 of 403, lower than both our statistical neighbours and North East neighbour average.
- **Around 299 Children are subject to a Child Protection Plan (end Dec 18)**, which is a rate per 10,000 of 75.1, higher than north east and statistical neighbours.
- **Around 404 children are Looked After (end Dec 18)**, which is a rate per 10,000 of 101 again higher than north east and statistical neighbours.

The Committee were provided with an update in progress made from the last annual conversation. This included the appointment of a Strategic Director for Care, Wellbeing and Learning and the new domestic abuse service. It was also highlighted that there has been active engagement with the Jewish community in Gateshead.

From the report some headline data was summarised. From this information the following was presented:

- 1,430 CAF assessments completed with 1,691 children and young people receiving an early help intervention
- 1828 referrals received by Children Social Care, with a re-referral rate of 18.4% (lower than latest SN and England average)
- Per 10,000 81.9 children subject to CP (326) and 102.3 LAC (407) (higher than England and SN averages)
- CIN assessment timescales 87.1% (higher than latest SN and England average) only 13% resulting in NFA
- 96% of ICPCs within 15 working days of strategy discussion and 100% child protection reviews held in timescale (better than latest SN and England average). 85.5% of ICPCs result in a CP plan.
- 1.3% of CP plans ended after 2 years or more (lower than England and SN average)
- 18.8% of CP plans are second or subsequent (lower than England and SN average)
- 16% of LAC admitted to care previously in care, only 3% in the previous 12

months

The Committee were also provided with a breakdown of key service strengths and priority areas for development. It was highlighted that in terms of development the following are planned:

1. Further strengthen Child in Need service delivery offer.
2. Improve quality and consistency of children's plans - as a mature learning organisation we partner other local authorities as part of our improvement journey to assess and develop practice. Strengthen the voice of children and young people to improve and impact on the focus of plans.
3. Improve impact of feedback from children and young people-capture and evidence voice of the child to improve the quality of all elements of frontline social work.
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5. Strengthen permanence planning through Early Permanence Group (EPG) reviewing admissions into care, long term matches, and all children with exit order plans. Regional Adoption Agency-established December 2018.
6. Strengthen performance management further develop data and performance tools to provide accurate, real time information to support management oversight of frontline practice, enable robust self-challenge and target quality assurance work.
7. Improve quality of frontline supervision predicated on well-embedded and understood expectations and practices in accordance with revised core practice standards.

In summarising the results of the recent annual conversation, the Committee were advised that the outcome was 'good' and that there are no current identifiable risks.

It was asked what the focus of services was in regard to looked after children; it was noted that a key focus was to keep children in the community where it is safe to do so. The Committee were also provided with a verbal update on the newly established regional adoption agency 'Adopt North East'.

A comment was made stating that it was a positive thing to have an external party come to 'hold a mirror' to services to see whether improvements should be made. It was further stated that the Committee look forward to having an update on the new children's 5-bed accommodation Longside House.

The Committee passed on their thanks to officers for the work done to continually improve services.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of the report and presentation.

F95 ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL INSPECTIONS AUTUMN TERM 2018

The Committee received a report detailing the position of Gateshead schools in relation to Ofsted Inspection findings for the autumn term 2018.

It was noted from the report that each school was given an overall effectiveness grade based upon the following areas:

- Effectiveness of leadership and management
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare
- Outcomes for pupils

It was also advised that the quality of Early Years and 6th Forms were also assessed.

Within the report a breakdown of results was provided from three schools inspected in the autumn term. Two schools were judged as good, one school received a more negative grade and one school received the same grade as the previous inspection.

In summarising secondary school assessments, it was highlighted that one school judged to require improvement and one school improved on the previous grade.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of the report.

F96 PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE - JOANNE WATERS REPORT

The Committee received a report to provide an update on the home to school and college budget, the range of reforms as part of the wider Travel Care project, savings and outcomes as a result of the Council's investment into Independent Travel Training.

From the report a summary of budget challenges was provided which included an explanation of statutory walking distance eligibility and extended rights eligibility. A further breakdown of discretionary arrangement options was also supplied noting that there are several discretionary allowances available for children including an individual taxi or minibus.

It was highlighted from the report that there is not a statutory duty to provide free home to school transport (taxis) for under 5's however legal advice states that if SEND panel are agreeing placements in specialist nurseries the Council needs to

consider how the child will get there. It was also noted that there are currently 26 children under 5 being transported at a cost of £146,148 for the academic year 2018/19.

The Committee were also advised that there are currently 5 children being educated out of borough due to no SEMH provision being available in Gateshead. Within the report a full breakdown of costs and budgets were detailed showing the differences between budgets and actual spend.

An overview of independent travel training was provided in addition to a summary of service feedback received illustrating the benefits of this training for children and their families.

It was asked what the circumstances were of the families who had appealed decisions after not being deemed eligible for home to school transport. It was noted that each appeal is different, and the outcome is decided by an independent panel.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee accepted and noted the contents of the report.

F97 HOW GATESHEAD IS MEETING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)

The Committee received a report providing an update regarding progress being made in relation to ensuring the needs of children and young people with SEND are being met.

It was noted from the report that the Council has a statutory duty to promote high educational standard, ensure fair access, promote diversity and ensure education is appropriate to meet the different age aptitudes and abilities of pupils in its area and make efficient use of its resources.

It was further stated that the Children and Families Act and the guidance in the SEND Code of Practise 2014 places a number of statutory duties on local authorities in relation to identification, assessment and provision for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) for whom is responsible.

From the report a summary of the numbers of children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans was provided. It was highlighted that there has been a 57% increase in the number of children and young people with such plans since 2014. It was noted that neighbouring authorities have also seen a rise in such figures.

The report detailed SEN support within mainstream schools and highlighted that the greatest areas of need within Gateshead are amongst school-aged children and young people include those with speech, language and communication needs and autism spectrum disorders.

It was requested that a further report be provided to the Committee on the work being done in Gateshead to support children with SEND. A comment was also made noting that the cost of out of borough provision could be removed if facilities were developed in Gateshead to support these young people.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed to receive an additional update in the next municipal year.

F98 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received the Work Programme report which sets out the provisional programme for the Committee for the year 2018/19.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of the Work Programme report and appendix.

Chair.....