

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, 4 April 2019

PRESENT: Councillor B Oliphant (Chair)

Councillor(s): M Hall, B Clelland, S Craig, L Kirton,
K McCartney, E McMaster, R Mullen, D Bradford, P Craig,
M Ord, C McHugh, R Oxberry, N Weatherley and G Haley

CO-OPTED MEMBERS Cheryl Lain and Tim Kynoch

F107 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Jill Burrell, Councillors Caffrey, Councillor Buckley and Councillor Davison.

F108 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

RESOLVED:

- (i) The minutes of the last meeting held on Thursday 7 March 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

F109 LIAISON WITH GATESHEAD YOUTH ASSEMBLY

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee agreed to defer this item due to unforeseen circumstances.

F110 REVIEW OF HEALTHY WEIGHT ACROSS THE LIFE COURSE (FINAL REPORT)

The Committee received the final report of healthy weight across the life course.

It was highlighted from the report that obesity is described as one of the most serious public health challenges in the 21st Century. It was stated that due to the complexity of the issue the response has been to focus on the individual lifestyle choice and interventions to address this however this is only a small part of the wider picture.

The Committee were reminded of the scope and aims of the review as noted at previous meetings. It was also highlighted that the current evidence base, as part of a 'whole system approach' is to include a focus on legislation, regulations, advertising and the environment in which people live work and play.

From the report it was noted that three evidence gathering sessions had taken place

with evidence sought from colleagues at Newcastle University, Public Health England and the Gateshead Public Health Team. The report then outlined some of the key points from the evidence gathering sessions which highlighted a focus on Gateshead Council's THRIVE agenda.

The Committee were advised that during the evidence gathering sessions a number of key issues and challenges were identified, these were:

- Complexity
- Long term commitment (noting that there is no quick fix to the issue)
- Whole system approach
- The evidence base
- Challenging the Food Industry
- Weight bias and stigma
- Inequalities

The report also provided details of the emerging recommendations which included the creation of a strategic steering group to consider the vision for a health weight generation for Gateshead. As part of the recommendations it was also highlighted that work needed to be done to lobby efforts to prevent and reduce obesity to encourage national policymakers to devise effective public health policy interventions across the system.

The Committee were advised that details from the review and the recommendations would be presented to Cabinet on 24 April 2019 by the Chair.

A comment was made noting frustration that whilst the report outlined a positive path forward for the future, there was no firm progress made. It was stated that this issue is complex, and that meetings and workshops are planned in order to move forward with the recommendations outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed the recommendations.
- (ii) The Committee also agreed to receive an update on the final recommendations for the review in October 2019 and again in April 2020.

F111 EARLY HELP PROGRESS UPDATE

The Committee received a report and presentation to providing an update on the progress of the Targeted Family Support function of the Early Help Service.

From the presentation the Board received an overview of the Early Help Service which includes teams such as the Youth Offending Team and the Domestic Abuse Team. It was noted that nationally, a 71% reduction in budgets for all forms of Local Authority early intervention is predicted up to 2020. It was stated that whilst resource is decreasing demand is increasing.

An overview of the services Common Assessment Framework was provided; it was

highlighted that Early Help teams sit in the “emerging and escalating needs” category of the framework. Following this, the Board received a summary of referrals that have been received by the service, it was stated there is currently a live caseload of 872.

It was noted that caseloads are mapped against Thrive and LloN categories. These categories were:

- Vulnerable – Extremely
- Vulnerable – Very
- Just Coping – Only Just
- Just Coping – Getting By
- Managing
- Thriving

It was acknowledged that there are significant volumes of referrals being received and that staff are holding an increasingly complex level of work. From the presentation an overview of changes in practice was provided in addition to a summary of closed cases. The Committee also received a display of case studies and quotes from the service to provide a wider context to the work being done.

A comment was made noting that the presentation and report is excellent. A concern was noted on the comment that resources within Early Help teams were reducing. It was stated that officer caseloads have been maintained at a safe level but that this may result in some individuals and families being excluded from services.

It was noted that a refreshed Gateshead Early Help Strategy (2018-2021) is placing a higher emphasis on Early Help as “everyone’s business” to broaden the partnership responsibility for delivering timely and effective support to families in a range of contexts and settings.

RESOLVED:

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

F112 WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW

The Committee received the Work Programme report setting out the provisional Work Programme for the Committee for the year 2019/20.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the information contained in the report.