

**GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Thursday, 14 June 2018**

**PRESENT:** Councillor B Oliphant (Chair)

Councillor(s): M Hall, L Caffrey, B Clelland, S Craig,  
A Geddes, E McMaster, R Mullen, S Ronchetti, C Davison,  
D Bradford, P Craig, C McHugh, N Weatherley, C Buckley,  
M Ord and G Haley

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS** Sasha Ban

**F57 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K McCartney, Councillor R Mullen, Councillor R Oxberry and Maveen Pereira.

**F58 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 19 April 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

**F59 CONSTITUTION**

The Committee received the report noting the constitution and membership of the Committee for the 2018/19 municipal year.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the report.

**F60 ROLE & REMIT**

The Committee received the report outlining the remit and terms of reference of the Committee as agreed by Cabinet and the Council.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted its remit and terms of reference.

**F61 THE COUNCIL PLAN - YEAR END ASSESSMENT AND PERFORMANCE DELIVERY 2017-18**

The Committee received a report outlining the six-month update of performance and delivery for the period October 2017 to March 2018 in relation to the Council Plan

2015-2020 for the indicators and activity linked to children and young people.

It was highlighted from the report that the final year end assessment of performance relating to the Council Plan 2015-20 which has been superseded by the Council's new strategic approach of making Gateshead a place where everyone thrives.

It was further noted that the corporate performance framework will need to be refreshed in light of the Thrive agenda and used to inform the six-month assessment of performance for 2018/19.

A summary of performance was provided to the Committee highlighting the following:

- 5 out of 9 updated indicators are showing an improvement under the 'LiveWell Gateshead' outcome, including an increase in the number of eligible two year olds accessing their free early learning place, an increase in the number of families engaged by the Troubled Families Gateshead programme and the number of referrals for young carers, a reduction in the Hospital admissions for self-harm rate (10-24 years) and an increase in the proportion of care leavers in suitable accommodation and education, training and employment.
- 10 out 14 updated indicators under the Prosperous Gateshead outcome have shown improvement, including an increase in the percentage of children offered their preferred secondary school place and increases in the percentage of children achieving a good level of development at age 5, those achieving the expected standard at Key Stage 1 in writing and maths and those achieving the expected standard at the end of Key Stage 2. Progress 8 scores for pupils at the end of KS4 have increased and the gap between attainment 8 and progress 8 scores of disadvantaged pupils/disadvantaged peers at KS4 have decreased. The progress 8 scores of vulnerable children with special educational needs have increased, and those 16-18 years who are NEET have reduced as have the percentage of children in low income families.

Further summary was provided outlining the numbers of children subject to a child protection plan in addition to those leaving care with a safe and sustainable place to live.

The Committee were updated on the implementation of new Rapid Response and Child with Complex Needs teams within Children and Families Social Care. This included:

- The recruitment of a Senior Practice Supervisor, a Practice Supervisor, 6 Complex Child in Need social workers, 2 Rapid response workers, a Family Group Conference Worker and 2 family Advocates.
- The criteria and referral procedures have been written and shared with social workers in Referral & Assessment and Safeguarding Care Planning.
- Briefing sessions with Looked after Children services, Early Help teams, Paediatrics, Platform, Local Authority Education services, Public Health,

## Young Peoples Service (CYPS) and Schools.

A comment was made that the report was good but that a further breakdown of the details within the appendix would have been appreciated. A further comment was made noting that where improvements have been highlighted in the report these are small which is disappointing.

Clarity was sought on the hospital admissions figures presented – it was asked whether the figures presented had been merged with Newcastle admission numbers, this information as not available for the Committee and will be brought back for the next meeting.

It was asked what work is being done to reduce the number of expectant mothers from smoking. It was said that this is a complex problem to tackle despite efforts from projects such as the Baby Clear programme. It was further noted that a case will be presented to the QE Hospital to encourage them to have an in-house stop smoking service. A comment that it should be a safeguarding issue if pregnant women smoke was made noting the duty of care midwives have and they should be empowered to act in such instances.

It was asked what the plans are for the work at Grove House. It was noted that a work plan is in place and is ongoing.

The closure of Thomas Hepburn was noted, the Committee were advised it was not a Council decision for the school to close and that the school admissions service are working hard to ensure all children affected are offered a school place elsewhere.

Of those leaving care it was noted that 71% are still supported by the Council up to the age of 25. It was asked what has happened to those who are not engaging with services. The Committee were advised that 100% of care leavers are contacted however those with more complex needs are difficult to keep in touch with, particularly up to the age of 25.

It was asked whether schools converting to academies was responsible for the small decline in attainment for the disadvantaged. The Committee were advised that this is a difficult question to answer. It was further noted that the DfE are more inclined to influence children down an academic route which is not appropriate for all and that this may have contributed to the decline.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted and agreed the report and appendix.

## **F62 REVIEW OF OBESITY (ACROSS THE LIFE COURSE) - SCOPING REPORT**

The Committee received a report outlining the proposed scope of the review of obesity and the process for taking it forward.

It was noted from the report that obesity is one of the most serious public health challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It was further noted that almost three in four adults in the UK will be overweight or obese by 2035 which over the next twenty years could lead to an additional 4.62 million cases of type 2 diabetes, 1.63 million cases of coronary heart disease and 670,000 cases of cancer.

The effect on public spending was highlighted noting that the cost of obesity on the economy is huge. The Gateshead Vision 2030 6 big ideas were highlighted noting that the plan sets out how Gateshead will be a healthy, inclusive and nurturing place for all. It was further noted that the Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Board have undertaken the task to reduce excess weight in children.

A further summary of the scope of the review was provided which also outlined the following points:

- By 2050, modelling indicates that 60% of adult men, 50% of adult women could be obese. Current data shows that 69.4% of adults in Gateshead have excess weight. This is significantly worse than the England average of 64.8%. Almost two in every three adults in Gateshead has excess weight and around one in four are obese. The emerging picture for our children in Gateshead is not positive. Reception children in Gateshead have some of the lowest prevalence rates of excess weight (overweight and obese 22%) in the North East, however by the time children reach Year 6, Gateshead has one of the highest rates of excess weight levels in the North East (35.5%).
- The evidence base suggests that in order to tackle obesity effectively we need an approach that involves the whole system, with action at an individual, environmental and societal level. This approach needs to create a culture where healthy weight is the default for everyone in Gateshead.
- The scope of the review includes consideration of factors influencing obesity that can be tackled by joint working across a number of areas including, planning, transport, housing, business, education and health. With local authority responsibilities in health, planning, highways, transport, education, culture, housing, employment, social care and their relationships with businesses they are in a uniquely influential position to bring about transformational change in the way that obesity is tackled.
- Successfully tackling obesity is a long term, large scale commitment. The current prevalence of obesity in the population has been at least 30 years in the making. This will take time to reverse and it is reported that it will take at least 30 years before reductions in the associated diseases are seen. The evidence is very clear that policies aimed solely at individuals will be inadequate and will not be sufficient to reverse this trend. Significant effective action to prevent obesity at a population level is required.

It was outlined that the process and timescale for the review is proposed to take place over an 11-month period from 14 June 2018 to 4 April 2019. The Committee were also advised that it is proposed the first evidence gathering session will provide a detailed overview of the status for Gateshead in terms of excess weight across the life course and the current evidence base regarding a whole systems approach to

tackle this complex area.

A concern about the quality and nutritional value of food available from foodbanks was raised – it was noted that foodbanks rely on non-perishable items such as tinned goods to ensure they can be in storage for longer periods of time. It was however noted that there are ‘fair share’ markets in the borough offering fresh produce at a price the customer can afford. Following this it was noted that work is being done by the Gateshead Health & Wellbeing Board to understand the link between poverty and obesity.

A point was raised to consider whether schools are doing enough to provide food education. It was noted that the former Health Schools Award which was a funded programme is no longer financed. Further comment was made that schools have difficulty spending sports premium funding due to rules being so prescriptive.

A point was raised regarding the advertising of fast food takeaways on billboards and television does not help the issue of obesity and that planning rules are not strict enough to prevent café’s operating as a takeaway without appropriate consent.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the scope, process and timescales outlined in the report.

## **F63 HOW ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES ARE WORKING TOGETHER - PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Committee received the report outlining examples of how well Adults and Children’s Services are working together.

It was noted from the report that Care, Wellbeing and Learning (CWL) is made up of five areas – adult social care, learning and schools, early help, commissioning and quality assurance and children and families. It was further highlighted from the report that there are interdependencies between the Service and each Director responsible for the Service is part of the Management Group which is chaired by the Strategic Director. It was also noted that the Director of Public Health

From the report the Committee received a summary of further examples of collaborative working which included examples from the following:

- Transitions and Children’s Services
- Case transfers/allocations
- Transitions and Early Intervention/Prevention
- Transitions and Special Schools
- Work experience – Children and Adult Services

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Adult Social Care (ASC)
- Learning and Skills and Adult Social Care
- ASC Provider Services and Children's Services
- Adult Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Children's Services

Areas for development were highlighted as follows:

- The review of the Domestic Abuse Service will bring together Children and Adults Services across the Council into one co-ordinated unit.
- The Domestic Abuse Service will work with Adults and Children through a holistic model of support.
- The work between Transitions and Children's Services can be strengthened to enable a seamless service and effective transition as our children with SEND and disabilities move into adulthood. A review of SEND and Disabled Children Team (DCT) is being undertaken to look at systems, processes and procedures.
- Children and Adults Services are committed to ensuring that support for vulnerable children and adults is given in a co-ordinated way and that process or systems does not allow for anyone 'to slip through the net'.
- An ICT review and replacement programme will allow for integrated IT data and processes across Children and Adults Services.
- Early Help model is fluid and flexible and can be transferred and used across Children and Adults Services. Phase two of the model will concentrate on how the continuum of need across both services can be seamless.

It was confirmed that an update on the work being done to tackle Domestic Abuse will come back to the Committee at the October 2018 meeting.

A concern was raised that due to the large size of the service some teams would become sectoral. It was confirmed that many areas within the service are discreet in terms of budgets but that great progress has been made since 2014 to improve communications including the introduction of group management meetings.

It was asked whether any departments within the service were stretched too thin. It was noted that all departments are facing resourcing issues however all share in a culture of open communication and problem sharing. It was further noted that more resource is required in quality assurance/performance management but work is being done to ensure that performance remains at a good standard.

RESOLVED:

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

## **F64 OFSTED INSPECTION - OUTCOME AND NEXT STEPS**

The Committee received a summary of the report to provide information on the outcome of the focussed visit carried out by Ofsted as part of the new ILAC (Inspections of Local Authority Children's Services)

It was highlighted from the report that the inspectors noted the Council and senior leaders have embraced the role of corporate parents. It was also acknowledged that the local authority has a commitment to continuous improvement of the service however the strategic ambition is not fully realised in all aspects of operational practise.

It was further noted from the report that the inspectors highlighted two areas where the Council has developed strong practise improving outcomes for young people via an impressive range of creative initiatives to support young people into education, employment and training in addition to an accommodation offer.

Areas for improvement were also identified during the visit, the following points were highlighted from the report:

- Most pathway plans written by personal advisers could be better. Plans need to be strengthened to be outcome focused, evidence that the young person is an active participant, better consider diverse needs and identity, and to have a meaningful contingency if things go wrong.
- The quality of case management oversight of pathway planning, written plans, and reviewing processes needs to be improved. Managers should ensure that supervision supports personal advisers to maintain a focus on being appropriately ambitious for young people.
- Auditing practice in the care leaver's service needs to be strengthened as a tool for monitoring quality of practice, rather than compliance and to feed into service development and forward planning.

The Committee were also made aware of the action plan that has been implemented and progress made throughout the service. It was noted that progress will continue to be monitored by the Quality Improvement Board and the Corporate Parenting OSC.

It was further noted that the Children Living in Care and Care Leavers Strategy reports will be going to Cabinet in June in addition to being looked at by the Health & Wellbeing Board.

It was asked why areas for improvement identified in 2015 were not picked up sooner. It was said that many of the issues highlighted have been addressed however there has been difficulty finding the correct standard of completing necessary paperwork.

It was agreed that an update report on this issue would be slotted in to the Work

Programme.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of the report.
- (ii) The Committee agreed to receive a further update on the action plan following the inspection at a later meeting.

**F65 WORK PROGRAMME**

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

RESOLVED:

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

**Chair.....**