

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL**

A meeting of the Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel was held on 21 October 2019.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Councillors J Platt (Chair), C Dodds, L Garvey, T Higgins, S Hill, P Storey and G Wilson and D Rooney (As Substitute)

**PRESENT AS OBSERVERS:** J Cain and Councillor J Thompson

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** J Daniels and S Rai

**OFFICERS:** G Moore

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Councillors A Hellaoui and M Nugent.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no Declarations of Interest made by Members at this point in the meeting.

19/15 **MINUTES - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL - 23 SEPTEMBER 2019**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel, held on 23 September 2019, were submitted and approved as a correct record.

19/16 **ADDRESSING POVERTY ISSUES AND THE IMPACT ON LEARNING - EVIDENCE FROM THE FINANCIAL INCLUSION GROUP (FIG)**

The Chair of the Financial Inclusion Group (FIG) provided the scrutiny panel with:

- An overview of the group's aims, objectives, priorities and challenges.
- Details of the work undertaken by the group to tackle the root causes of poverty.

The Chair of the FIG explained to the scrutiny panel that the meaning of poverty could be defined in many ways. Members were advised that one of the difficulties with poverty, was that overtime it could be measured by different financial circumstances, meaning that individuals could move in and out of poverty, without seeing an increase or decrease in income.

Financial inclusion was closely linked to preventing poverty. It was highlighted that the main aim of the FIG was to reduce financial exclusion. In terms of providing a narrow definition of financial exclusion, the HM Treasury defined it as lack of access to financial products such as bank accounts, insurance, savings and affordable credit. However, it was advised that the FIG took a broader approach and examined how financial exclusion was associated with poorer health, food poverty, fuel poverty, use of high interest lenders and loan sharks and poorer educational achievements.

Reference was made to a quote from the Child Poverty Action Group on the effects of poverty on children, which stated that: Research had shown that family income impacted on children's lives and development in a variety of ways. Living on a low-income increased parents' stress levels, in turn affecting relationships and family dynamics. Increases in family income could boost children's educational achievements, and emotional and physical wellbeing.

The FIG was established in 2009 and initially formed part of Middlesbrough Partnership, however, since the partnership had been disbanded, the work of the FIG continued.

The focus of the FIG tended to be operational, rather than strategic. In essence, the FIG brought together organisations with an interest in improving financial inclusion in Middlesbrough and mitigating the impact of financial exclusion. The scrutiny panel was

advised that the membership of the FIG included approximately 50 organisations, which included Middlesbrough Council (officers and elected members), social housing providers (e.g. Thirteen), the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the National Illegal Money Lending Team, community banks, voluntary organisations such as Actes, Age UK, CAB, Carers Together, Environment City and MIND.

The FIG operated as a forum for sharing ideas and information about new services. The FIG also discussed the impact of national policy (e.g. Universal Credit) and promoted partnership working. The FIG worked to ensure that Middlesbrough's residents received seamless support from a variety of different organisations and supported and promoted new services in Middlesbrough.

Middlesbrough's key issues and challenges, identified by the FIG, were money lending from loan sharks and companies that charged high interest rates and welfare reform. It was explained that the issues associated with money lending had resulted in the FIG promoting credit unions and the establishment of the Community Bank on Linthorpe Road. In respect of welfare reform, the FIG had initially worked to mitigate the welfare measures implemented by the Government that affected disabled people claiming disability benefit and incapacity benefit. However, since the introduction of Universal Credit (UC), the FIG worked to ensure that individuals gained access to the benefits they were entitled to.

The scrutiny panel heard that the FIG operated a loose, open structure, which allowed flexibility to respond to emerging issues. It was commented that the FIG's next meeting was scheduled to be held on Wednesday 27 November 2019. The meeting planned to focus on addressing the needs of children and young people. It was advised that the scrutiny panel would receive an invite to attend.

In terms of challenges, one of the main concerns of the FIG had been the implementation of UC. UC replaced 6 other income-based benefits. It was explained that, when UC was first proposed, it was welcomed as a way of lifting people (particularly working families) out of poverty. However, it was indicated that there had always been concerns in respect of the complexity of the online web-based system that applicants were expected to use.

In 2019, research had been undertaken on the implementation of UC by the JRF, which suggested that 300,000 working families would be lifted out of poverty but 200,000 workless families would be swept into poverty. The JRF had also highlighted that 5 million people in poverty would see an increase in income but 3 million people in poverty would see income decrease.

In response to a Member's query regarding how working families would see an increase in income, the Chair of the FIG explained that childcare costs could be claimed. However, one issue with the payment of childcare costs was that costs had to be claimed in arrears.

A Member commented that the Community Bank could be utilised to provide advice and guidance to those claiming childcare costs.

Members were advised that one of the most complex issues faced by the FIG was that people were being advised to transfer from the old benefits to UC - when doing so made them worse off. It was explained that, in respect of some cases, people were entitled to remain on the old benefits. It was highlighted that UC was described as a lobster pot benefit, meaning once a person was in it, they were unable to get out of it. Therefore, if a person was worse off when claiming UC, they were unable to revert back to claiming old benefits.

A discussion ensued and Members raised concerns regarding the impact of UC, particularly on those with disabilities. The FIG had identified that the medical assessments, undertaken as part of claims for disability benefits (e.g. - Personal Independence Payment and Employment and Support Allowance), were of poor quality. In respect of those who challenged their medical assessments, approximately 70% of challenges had been successful.

In response to a Member's query, the Chair of the FIG explained that UC was a means-tested benefit. It was commented that, in essence, the payment was available to people who could

demonstrate that their income and capital (their 'means') were below specified limits. Those limits were identified in Government policy.

Other issues had become apparent with the introduction of UC:

- Payment rates had fallen behind original proposals.
- Claims had to be submitted using an online web-based system and claimant online journals needed to be regularly maintained and updated. If information was not regularly maintained, UC could be suspended. Introduction of the online system had been difficult for many people as it had caused problems for those individuals who were not well informed or proficient in the use of modern technology. It was also highlighted that not all individuals would have access to a computer. For vulnerable people, there was the facility to make a claim over the telephone, however, the DWP would need to provide approval. In response to a Member's query, the Chair of the FIG explained that work had been undertaken by Council officers to identify those libraries and community hubs that provided access to computers. However, once individuals had gained access to a computer, staff would not necessarily be in a position to provide support and advice on the use of the UC system. It was commented that the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) had been given a national contract to enable individuals to apply for UC. In Middlesbrough, the CAB had been inundated with individuals seeking to make a claim for UC.
- There was a 5 week delay in payment. Once individuals had applied for UC there was a 5 week delay in payment, which caused hardship. There was a system in place, whereby applicants could request a payment in advance, however, individuals needed to be mindful of how the advanced payment could impact on finances later on. The Illegal Money Lending Team had indicated that there was a connection between the 5 week delay and individuals resorting to accessing funds from loan sharks.

The scrutiny panel was provided with examples of the work promoted and/or funded by the FIG. FIG had a small budget (£47,500), which was provided by the Council, to fund services that were meeting a need.

In terms of benefits take up, in 2018, the Government identified £10 billion of unclaimed benefits (income-based benefits) per annum. That figure excluded disability benefits (e.g. Personal Independence Payments). It was suggested that if the Government was to include unclaimed disability benefits with unclaimed income-based benefits, the figure (£10 billion) would potentially double.

In 2013, the Hubs Advice Service was established. In 2015, the FIG was provided with a substantial amount of additional funding. Following on from that, the Benefit Take-Up Campaign was established. The campaign was a collaborative money management initiative developed by the FIG to help people claim the correct benefits. The campaign brought together advisers from 5 organisations (Actes, Age UK Teesside, Cleveland Housing Advice Centre, Middlesbrough Citizens Advice Bureau, Middlesbrough Council's Welfare Rights Unit & Democratic Services) to provide Middlesbrough's residents with benefits support and advice. The campaign involved advisers providing benefits advice at a series of fixed weekly sessions in local community centres (and other locations) for a two week period. It was commented that people could drop in or book appointments online via about 40 organisations. Those who attended appointments were provided with advice on benefit calculation, assistance with claiming, filling in conflicting claim forms and assistance with challenging decisions. Since 2013, the service had advised more than 7,000 people and had identified over £16 million in benefits entitlement. It was clarified that although £16 million in benefits entitlement had been identified, due to a lack of resources, the FIG was unable to establish whether those benefits had been awarded. However, it was commented that if an individual was unsuccessful with their claim, they would more than likely book a follow-up appointment with the service.

A Member queried whether, in respect of the support provided by the service, annual data was available to identify patterns and trends over the years. The Chair of the FIG confirmed that data was available and would be shared with the scrutiny panel.

In response to a Member's query regarding resources, the Chair of the FIG advised that even though 4 or 5 advisers were available to offer support, some areas were oversubscribed meaning that there was a delay in individuals receiving support. It was also commented that due to capacity issues and time constraints, advisers were unable to offer support to all those who attended the sessions. The scrutiny panel was advised that there were areas in Middlesbrough that could benefit from a greater presence from the advisers.

A Member commented that work was being undertaken by the Thirteen Group to assist tenants in applying for UC. The scrutiny panel heard that Thirteen Group had invested a substantial amount of money to develop teams to provide that support.

In terms of tackling illegal money lending, the FIG promoted a 12 month campaign led jointly by the National Illegal Money Lending Team and Thirteen Group. The campaign used the Illegal Money Lending Team's intelligence to target areas where loan sharks were known to operate. It was explained that, essentially, the campaign promoted awareness of alternatives to loan sharks and provided support to victims of loan sharks.

The scrutiny panel was provided with information on a particular case, whereby Ms P had borrowed £200 off a loan shark (7 years ago) to pay for her children's school uniforms. She was paying £100 a week back and was punched in face by loan shark when she asked how much she owed. Ms P died 3 years ago and her debt to the loan shark was added on to her daughter's debt, who was in high rent arrears due to paying loan shark £100 instead of rent. The daughter applied to Cash for Kids (children's charity) to pay for school uniforms and a Discretionary Housing Payment claim had been submitted to help clear arrears.

The scrutiny panel heard that once funds had been provided by a loan shark, individuals were not advised of how much they owed, they were just expected to continue making payments. It was commented that lending money from a loan shark was a vicious circle that individuals struggled to break away from. However, help and advice was available. It was also highlighted that the Illegal Money Lending Team was particularly interested in developing measures to raise children's awareness of financial issues and illegal money lending. The Illegal Money Lending Team had developed resource packs, however, it was unknown whether those packs had been distributed to Middlesbrough's schools.

In terms of the fuel voucher scheme, a scheme had been introduced by Middlesbrough Environment City. Individuals were referred into the scheme from partner agencies. The scheme provided emergency support to those who had been disconnected or faced disconnection from fuel. Members heard that individuals were provided with a code that could be used at a Paypoint venue to make payment towards fuel costs. The biggest single cause of problems paying rent, was delay in receiving UC.

In terms of the Feast of Fun, the project was organised by Together Middlesbrough and Cleveland. The project brought together churches, schools and community organisations to support families over the summer holidays. The project assisted in reducing the financial burden of summer holidays, on families, and provided safe places for children to have fun and eat healthy food. It was advised that in summer 2019, the project provided 220 healthy eating sessions across Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland, provided over 10,000 meals, 300 children and adults participated in cooking workshops and 1,000 children and adults attended trips out (e.g. Wensleydale Railway, NYM Park Centre Danby, Teesside Wildlife Trust). It was also added that 1500 children were provided with books to take home.

In terms of food banks, the FIG had supported the Trussell Trust, who provided 1.6 million food parcels nationally in 2018/19. In Middlesbrough, during 2018/19, the Trussell Trust supported 5536 people, of whom 2027 were children. The reasons identified for using foodbanks were low income, benefit delays and benefit changes.

A Member commented that the Salvation Army also provided food parcels and hot meals.

It was highlighted to the scrutiny panel that, when appropriate, the organisations associated with the FIG ensured that referrals were made to the relevant partner agencies, to ensure individuals received the support they required.

A discussion ensued regarding the challenges encountered with the introduction of UC and concerns were expressed in respect of the delay with UC payments and the financial impact of UC on Middlesbrough's residents.

To conclude, the scrutiny panel was advised that the FIG was meeting need in an environment of sustained high levels of deprivation and reducing resources. Partnership working enabled the FIG to identify gaps and ensure people could access a range of relevant services. FIG had a small annual budget (£47,500) to fund services that were meeting a need but was under-resourced. It was also added that the FIG's loose, open structure ensured flexibility to respond to emerging issues and Councillors were welcome to attend meetings of the FIG, either to observe or participate.

In response to a Member's query, the Chair of the FIG advised that the root cause of poverty was a lack of income. It was added that there were two ways of addressing lack of income. The first was increasing the number of sustainable employment opportunities, meaning opportunities that could be sustained by both the employer and employee. However, there was a need to recognise that not all individuals would necessarily benefit from an increase in sustainable employment, for example - those with learning disabilities, mental health issues or low educational attainment. It was explained that for those who would not benefit from sustainable employment, access to the benefits they were entitled to was crucial.

The Chair of the FIG commented that the Council supported the work of the FIG and was well placed to coordinate and promote the services available.

A discussion ensued regarding the high costs associated with buying school uniforms. The Democratic Services Officer advised that, as part of the review, school representatives would be invited to a future meeting of the scrutiny panel. Therefore, Members may wish to discuss the issue directly with schools.

In terms of the Benefit Take Up Campaign, the Chair of the FIG highlighted that advisers had visited two schools (North Ormesby Primary Academy and Priory Woods School) to provide parents with advice. It was commented that prior to the advisers being on site, Priory Woods School had promoted the work of the campaign and as a result a large number of parents received support from the advisers on accessing benefits.

**AGREED** as follows:

That the information presented at the meeting be considered in the context of the scrutiny panel's investigation

19/17

#### **ADDRESSING POVERTY ISSUES AND THE IMPACT ON LEARNING - EVIDENCE FROM THE NORTHERN HOUSING CONSORTIUM**

The Member Engagement Manager from the Northern Housing Consortium provided the scrutiny panel with:

- Information on the North East Child Poverty Network.
- Examples of good practice to tackle the root causes of poverty and mitigate the effects of disadvantage on children, families and local communities.

The Member Engagement Manager advised that the Northern Housing Consortium (NHC) was membership body, which represented the views of local authorities, housing associations, Arm's Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) and associations that provided social housing for tenants across the North of England. The NHC had 188 members, covering 93% of social housing in the North.

In response to a Member's query regarding ALMOs, the Member Engagement Manager advised that an ALMO was a not-for-profit company that provided housing services on behalf of a local authority. Usually an ALMO was set up by a local authority to manage and improve all or part of its housing stock. Ownership of the housing stock itself normally stayed with the

local authority.

The NHC brought its members together to share ideas and best practice. The NHC represented the views and interests of its members at a regional and national government level.

Whilst the NHC had a Northern approach to policy and public affairs, the body also involved members based outside of the North - as it acknowledged that practical approaches to realising efficiencies and demonstrating value for money was not geographically restricted.

The scrutiny panel was advised that the NHC had taken over the administration and facilitation of the North East Child Poverty network in 2013. Prior to 2013, it had been facilitated by the Child Poverty Coordinator from the North East Child Poverty Commission. The network involved different organisations across the region coming together with an aim to build public and political support for actions that improve the lives of children living in poverty in the North East.

The original purpose of the network was to support local authorities across the region to help them with their child poverty strategies and plans. Since the NHC had taken over administration of the network, the membership had been extended to include both housing associations and local authorities across the region - as poverty was a huge issue for housing providers since the onset of welfare reform, the introduction of universal credit and austerity in general.

The aim of the network was to connect NHC members and enable them to share best practice around tackling and mitigating the impact of poverty on children, young people, families and the wider community. That was done through providing a platform for NHC members and others to showcase their approaches, share challenges and issues, hear from external agencies and receive updates around policy.

The North East Child Poverty Network met quarterly across the region (mainly in NHC members' office spaces). The network provided the opportunity for NHC members to come together to:

- discuss the latest policy updates around poverty and social exclusion;
- receive information from professionals across the field (from within and outside the sector); and
- share learning on what the sector was doing to mitigate the impact of poverty across their communities.

It was highlighted that one of the main themes, which was discussed regularly, was food poverty.

It was commented that different colleagues from organisations attended network meetings, depending on the agenda items scheduled for discussion.

In response to a Member's query regarding representation from Middlesbrough, the Member Engagement Manager advised that the Democratic Services Officer for Welfare attended network meetings, as did other Council officers. Attendance was largely dependent on the items scheduled for discussion.

As well as colleagues from local authorities and housing associations across the region, other organisations who could support the sector in tackling poverty and mitigating the impact of poverty were also part of the network, such as:

- Greggs
- Children North East
- DWP - a local representative from the DWP attended each meeting to provide updates on Universal Credit and DWP business. The network also had a national contact at the DWP.
- Street Games

- Big Lottery
- North East Child Poverty Commission

Topics covered by the network over the past year had included - food poverty, Universal Credit, JRF research across the region, tackling deprivation etc.

The achievements of the network were outlined, and included:

- learning from others and adopting approaches informed by best practice;
- setting up local school holiday programmes;
- adopting partnership approaches;
- benefitting from different pots of funding from Greggs (in offering school breakfast clubs in areas of most need and providing household items to ensure sustainable tenancies);
- setting up local sports activity through Street Games.

It was also added that the network was instrumental in gathering intelligence around the need for school holiday food and activity programmes across the region and feeding into the feasibility study for the Big Lottery Fund's 'A Day Out, Not a Hand Out' project.

The scrutiny panel heard that school holiday programmes had been a key focus over the past year. The A Day Out, Not a Handout project had been established by the North East Child Poverty Trust, and delivered by Children North East, in response to the impact of 'holiday hunger' being a key issue for struggling families in the North East. The Trust had been keen to develop and test a programme of holiday clubs that would address the nutritional and wellbeing needs of children in a coordinated and consistent manner.

A Day Out Not a Hand Out Project had been delivered during the summer of 2017. The project had involved 17 clubs across Newcastle, Durham, North Tyneside and Darlington. 4-5 neighbourhoods took part within each site and the project represented the largest combined holiday provision effort in the North East of England. Children were served meals at each of the clubs, there was also an emphasis placed on a host of enrichment activities, which was proven to be just as important as food. Northumbria University had carried out the evaluation research on the impact of the project.

Academics from Northumbria University were enlisted to undertake a major evaluation of the holiday clubs to explore the potential relationship between club provision and children's health, nutrition and wellbeing, as well as the impact that the clubs had on parents. The largest study of school holiday clubs in England found that, as well as helping to combat childhood hunger, holiday clubs provided a number of social and health benefits, including providing children a safe place to play.

In terms of funding school holiday provision, in 2019, Department for Education (DfE) Holiday Activities and Food Research funding became available and bids were submitted by local authorities across the region, including Middlesbrough. It was commented that the bids submitted by Newcastle and Gateshead had been successful.

The importance of providing school holiday provision was highlighted. It was added that holiday clubs offered a safe place to play, supported education and learning and helped in a number of psychological factors (e.g. increasing self-esteem and increasing confidence for children and reducing stress for parents).

The Member Engagement Manager provided the scrutiny panel with examples of good practice to tackle the root causes of poverty and mitigate the effects of disadvantage on children, families and local communities.

In light of the Counting the Cost of UK Poverty research paper published by the JRF, in 2016, North Tyneside Council set up partnership boards in two of its most deprived wards. The JRF research highlighted the cost to the public purse and the knock-on effects of poverty.

The four priority areas for the partnership boards covered education, employment, housing

and health.

It was highlighted that educational achievement was a key focus for the partnership boards and the associated delivery plans. It had been identified in North Tyneside that poverty seemed to impact on a child's education when children started secondary school, therefore, the partnership boards worked closely with schools in the wards to introduce improved transitional arrangements and encourage parental engagement. The boards had identified that, in some cases, parents had disengaged from the education system due to bad experiences when attending school. The partnership boards worked with schools to overcome the difficulties/challenges identified in engaging with parents. It was advised that, as the boards had only been in existence for a short time, the impact on educational achievement had not yet been measured.

North Tyneside Council had also identified that using the word 'poverty' caused stigmatisation, therefore, the word 'deprivation' was used instead. It was highlighted that the use of language was important.

In terms of employment, North Tyneside had identified a high percentage of single households on zero hour contracts. Therefore, the partnership boards put arrangements in place to upskill those individuals and worked with training providers to ensure courses were delivered in a flexible way.

In terms of housing, the partnership boards worked with private rented sector landlords to achieve higher property standards by offering free trips to the skip yard, which proved popular.

In terms of health, the partnership boards implemented changes to contracts with GP practices. The GP practices in the more affluent areas of North Tyneside did not receive an incentive to increase take-up of health checks and vaccinations. Incentivising became more focussed on the deprived neighbourhoods to boost the uptake in the more disadvantaged wards.

The scrutiny panel was advised that Hartlepool Borough Council focussed on three themes:

- mitigating the impact of poverty on those that were suffering;
- pathways out of poverty for adults (training and work); and
- pathways out of poverty for children and young people (education, learning and aspirations).

Hartlepool Borough Council also had an aim to ensure that no one went hungry (children and adults).

Hartlepool had a strong relationship with the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) and together there was a network of support across town, which provided families with direct access to all forms of help and support (including school uniforms, food, income maximisation, benefit advice, clothing, training and volunteering). Community hubs delivered a 'one stop shop' where multiple services were offered to provide seamless support for individuals.

It was also highlighted that Hartlepool Borough Council provided workshops and seminars to schools, social workers and health visitors and other frontline services around the issues that affected families, so that services and interventions could be targeted effectively.

Karbon Homes had established a Money Matters Team, which assisted tenants with budgeting and enabled them to maximise household incomes. Tenancy sustainability and money management was a big focus. As a result of the intense support provided, there had been financial gains of £6m to customers over the past year. In light of the welfare reform, Karbon Homes had increased the size of the teams, offering a more bespoke service and adopting a smart referrals approach. It was commented that most housing providers were adopting similar approaches and all were proving to be successful.

Clarion Futures, part of Clarion Housing Group, provided a telephone service as well as face-to-face to support for residents. To address the root causes of poverty, Clarion Futures



had a money guidance service, offered fuel poverty advice and white goods fund. It was planned that the white goods fund would be extended to food and fuel vouchers in the next 6 months.

It was commented that housing providers offered advice, support and guidance to tenants to ensure that tenancies were sustainable. Pre-tenancy work, to determine income and expenditure, was also undertaken.

Clarion Futures had also set up a series of food pantries using a social supermarket model. It was explained that for a small membership fee, families could access the food pantries. The pantries usually provided discounted goods from local supermarkets. It was advised that Clarion's most recent food pantry had just opened in South Shields.

Northumberland County Council provided place based holiday provision, which focussed on working with children and families and mitigating the impact of poverty. It was explained that Northumberland County Council was delivering a full programme of events/training to support educators, enabling them to become confident and equipped. There was a strong focus on inequalities and social mobility, including universal targeted work experience, relationships with creative and cultural partners and an ambitious multi-agency children and young people's plan. A Children's University had also been set-up, which provided strategic support to young leaders. Northumberland County Council also provided holiday provision and had recently commissioned an external evaluation to examine the impact of the provision. It was identified that holiday provision had increased children's confidence and resilience, enabled them to develop friendships and assisted in ensuring children returned to school ready to learn.

Poverty Proofing the School Day was a successful project, developed by Children North East. The project aimed to support schools and enable them to identify and overcome the barriers to learning that children and young people from families with less financial resources faced. The project provided a toolkit to poverty proof the school day, reducing stigma, removing barriers to learning and assisting schools in exploring the most effective ways to spend pupil premium allocation. Poverty Proofing the School Day consisted of an audit for each individual school, questioning pupils, staff, parents and governors. Following the audit, an action plan was developed to meet that needs of that specific school and address any stigmatising policies or practices.

In the 2016, an evaluation report of the project was published, which identified that the project improved school attendance, behaviour in school, uptake of free school meals and uptake of school trips and music tuition. It was conveyed that a more up-to-date evaluation report would be published shortly.

The Democratic Services Officer advised that a representative from the Poverty Proofing Team would be invited to attend the next meeting of the scrutiny panel.

In terms of tackling the root causes of poverty and mitigating the effects of disadvantage, the Member Engagement Manager highlighted the importance of:

- partnership working (with housing providers, the VCS, schools and wider partners);
- early intervention, mapping and flagging;
- money management and income maximisation (relieving the pressure on families to allow space to support their children); and
- sustainable projects.

It was commented that early intervention and partnership working were the key recommendations from across the sector in supporting children and their educational attainment.

**AGREED** as follows:

That the information presented at the meeting be considered in the context of the scrutiny panel's investigation.

19/18

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - AN UPDATE**

Since the panel's last update, the Overview and Scrutiny Board (OSB) had met twice, on 16 September and 3 October 2019. The Chair presented a verbal update on the matters that were discussed at those meetings, including:

16 September 2019

- Call In - Long Term Lease of Gresham Site to Thirteen Group. The decision was referred back to the Executive. The Executive met on 26 September 2019 to consider the OSB's comments. The Board's recommendations were noted, but not agreed.

3 October 2019

- Strategic Plan Update Quarter 1 2019/20
- Final Report - Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel - Social Care Support for Older Carers.
- Final Report - Health Scrutiny Panel - Vulnerable and Fragile Health Services. The item was referred back to the Health Scrutiny Panel, to enable the panel to formulate and agree recommendations.
- New statutory guidance on Overview and Scrutiny: Creating a challenge culture
- Executive Forward Work Programme
- Scrutiny Chairs Update

**NOTED**