

**CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL**

A meeting of the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel was held on 19 December 2019.

**PRESENT:** Councillors R Arundale, C Dodds, C McIntyre and J Thompson

**OFFICERS:** S Blood and N Mearns

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Councillor J Goodchild, Councillor B A Hubbard, Councillor L Lewis, Councillor J Rostron.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None declared

**19/26 MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2019 AND 21 NOVEMBER 2019**

The minutes of the meetings held on 24 October 2019 and 21 November 2019 were submitted and approved as a true record.

**AGREED- That the minutes be approved.**

**19/27 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA MAPPING**

The Chair welcomed Nicola Mearns, Strategic data, Governance and Project Manager (CMF Data Mapping Manager). Following the last meeting of the Panel, the members had agreed four terms of reference, the second being:

- To determine how community cohesion is measured in Middlesbrough and to receive relevant statistical information.

The Panel had received a presentation in October which related to work undertaken by Stronger Communities Middlesbrough (SCM). The presentation covered the activities undertaken by the project to improve community cohesion / community tension. Whilst the presentation looked at measureable factors (in terms of how many people the project has engaged with etc), the Panel were keen to understand where statistical information /evidence based information was available. The Panel therefore requested to receive a presentation on the data mapping project which was undertaken as part of the Controlling Migration fund (CMF) to better understand Middlesbrough's cultural makeup and the challenges being faced.

The officer provided a setting the scene slide, advising that the last census was carried out in 2011. Since then the Council had recognised there has been significant demographic changes within the Town as well as an increase in migrants and international arrivals.

Due to this, the Council saw a need to address data gaps and service pressures that had been identified and were successful in bid for funding for four two- year (2017-/19) projects from the Controlled Migration Fund (CFM).

Those four projects were:

- Community Cohesion (Stronger Communities Middlesbrough)- previously discussed with the Panel.
- Education project (including EMAC Team)
- Local Authority Asylum Seeker Liaison Officer Project (LAASLO)
- Data Mapping Project

In terms of the funding, the officer advised that the remit of the data mapping project was to map the scale and impact of recent demographic changes, and evidence why Middlesbrough needs funding for the projects. The Government recognises that funding was essential to

develop work within the evolving communities, but also needed evidence to support this.

The Education project was described as a key factor in bringing our communities together and developing a sustainable programme that Middlesbrough schools can use if they are experiencing resource and integration-related challenges due to the challenge of accommodating an increase in new international arrival children. Schools which have been identified as a within the project were predominantly within Newport and North Ormesby wards, and these schools have now started to deliver training to other schools on mitigating and managing the impact/ pressures within their schools.

### **Middlesbrough's International Population**

The officer provided some background information in relation to Middlesbrough's international population. It was noted to the Panel that there had been an increase from 8% in 2011 to 11% in 2019 of non- UK born and non-UK population. This increase included:

- Economic migrants
- Asylum seekers and refugees
- International students

To better understand the change in Middlesbrough's demographic make-up, the Council commissioned Teesside University to undertake a 2 year study to map the new community formations of the town. This examined the numbers of international new arrivals, economic migrants, international students, refugees and asylum seekers as well as trying to identify illegal immigrants (e.g. people trafficked into the Country).

Teesside University worked with partners including Cleveland Police, Public health, the Voluntary and Community sector, local schools and all council departments to map all known data across those organisations, to better understand how the demographics have changed over the Town in the past 10 years, but also determining the demand on services and resources and how organisations can best respond to these demands. It was noted that the data mapping exercise has been recognised as best practice by MHCLG (Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government) as well as subsequent work on creating a toolkit that has followed since the exercise. MHCLG are keen to share this learning nationally with other local authorities experiencing similar demographic changes.

The Panel learnt that nationally the birth rate was dropping, however there was an increase in births in Middlesbrough to non-UK mothers. Between 2001 and 2011, 60% of the population in Middlesbrough were non-UK born, there was a younger age profile of immigrants and higher percentage of males (increasing the percentage of working age and net contributors) and that there tends to be a concentration at ward level, not equally spread across the town.

The officer also outlined to the Panel that data showed the settled population of Middlesbrough is declining, so the increase in International New Arrivals is helping to keep the population level stable . If Middlesbrough's population decreased, this would have serious implications for the level of funding the council receives.

The increasing numbers of non-UK children has proven challenging for local schools already at or above admission capacity. It is difficult to plan school intake however the officer advised that the EMAT (Ethnic Minority Achievement Team) team do a fantastic job working with new families and with schools, and try to ensure every international arrival family registers with the team, so that they are able to determine what services they require and forecast school intake for certain years. The officer advised that there are particular challenges with supporting and accommodating the Roma/traveller community in terms of school admissions and education, as a family may have an extended absence of leave/ move away without informing the school, however the school place must be kept open for 28 days. This added further pressures on the school. Whilst the percentage of travellers was very small across Middlesbrough, the above causes significant pressures on teaching staff and school place availability.

The Panel collectively agreed that the pressures on schools due to International arrivals was a

growing concern, and felt there would be potential merit in the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel exploring this topic.

### **Community relations**

From the data mapping exercise, three key factors were identified:

1. From a socio- economic context- migrants mainly reside in areas already under multiple pressures e.g. Central Ward, North Ormesby and Newport, where there is significant levels of anti-social behaviour, higher levels of domestic abuse, unemployment, crime within the settled community.
2. Low cost private housing was commonly identified as 'pull' factor to central areas- Middlesbrough's response to the Integrated Communities Green paper, outlined that asylum seekers were generally placed by the Home Office in areas of cheap housing. Whilst the Local Authority has no control of where international arrivals are placed, the new local housing provider contracted by the Home Office to manage asylum seeker accommodation is working with the Council and listening to concerns over distribution spread and numbers.
3. Range of views about recent community change- there has been tensions in terms of public space, environmental issues and cultural differences. There are far right views in the Town and within the community there were pockets of community tensions between International new arrivals and the settled community and between the international new arrival communities.

However, whilst there were some tensions, the Panel were advised that Middlesbrough had always been built on migration and had generally always been seen as a welcoming Town. There has been positive contributions from migration, for example, there is growing acceptance, an increase in skilled workers arriving in the UK, international students bringing qualifications in tech (links to BOHO). There was also statistics to show that by the time international arrival children leave key stage 4, there are out performing settled children and contributing to increasing educational attainment levels in schools. The evidence shows that non UK-born children are more engaged in education, have a more cultural ethos and town wide their educational attainment is higher. Schools have also seen positive outcomes in terms of more global awareness with UK born children benefitting from learning different languages (some schools have over 30 languages) and an increase of cultural awareness.

### **Local Impact**

The data mapping also indicated a number of local impacts from the increase of international arrivals:

- maintaining local population level - more UK born young people are moving away from Middlesbrough due to the lack of jobs in the area.
- Some pressures on partner public services relating to concentration and volume, language barriers and lack of understanding about social processes and practices- in the 2011 census, 1.6% of international arrivals were unable to speak English and there were 78 main languages across the town. There was inappropriate use of services, including going to A & E for a general health conditions, because in their home country the norm would be to attend hospital., it was therefore essential that education was provided to families to know where to attend for health care.
- plugging skill gaps, with a large number of international new arrivals providing vital roles in the MHS for example.
- Business creation- bringing new skills to the town and creating local jobs.
- Increasing educational attainment levels in schools.
- Increases in hate crime reports (with international new arrivals predominantly falling victim to hate crime)
- Some pressures on local authority services, particularly around housing and

- environmental services (due to different cultural and social practices)
- Increased cultural diversity

These can be tackled by better orientation of new arrivals into the Town, and improved cohesion work to increase cultural understanding and acceptance between the diverse communities.

### **Asylum seeker support**

The Panel had previously expressed their concern about the welfare of Asylum seekers in the Town and how the panel could look to challenge the Home Office in terms of equal distribution of Asylum seekers in Middlesbrough, due to the increasing pressures Middlesbrough faces. The Officer discussed the support offered to Asylum seekers through the North East Migration Partnership and the Local Authority Asylum Seeker Liaison Officer Project (LAASLO). Middlesbrough Council support Asylum seekers, although the number of Asylum seekers are small with 580 Asylum seekers in Middlesbrough (4 in every 1,000 of the population of the town- December 2019), this makes up 13.5% of the Asylum seeker community in the North East.

Whilst there are a small proportion of the population, they are a vulnerable group, who have a distinct characteristics and support needs and specific challenges and barriers.

From the data mapping exercise, mental health was a identified a significant concern, as there was limited intermediate level mental health services or specialist support, which leads to further problems in terms of community cohesion and integration within the community, this was something the Panel felt needed addressing.

The Voluntary sector play an essential role in assisting Asylum seekers through the claim process, which can often take months to complete and be processed. The LAASLO team are an important additional resource, and have made huge leaps in assisting Asylum seekers in Middlesbrough secure jobs for example.

In terms of Asylum seekers, Middlesbrough is fortunate to host the North East Migration Partnership (NEMP) in house (although their work covers the whole North East region), who have been drafting a response to the Home Office about the uneven distribution of Asylum seekers in Middlesbrough. In previous years the Housing contractor for Asylum Seekers had little discussions with the Council, however the new provider Mears Housing has undergone discussions and has been listening to the concerns raised. It is hoped that the discussions will lead to a better dispersal across the Town, which will alleviate some of the tensions within certain communities.

### **Benefits of better community data**

The Panel further learnt of the benefits from better community data, including:

- Accurate up to date information available for managers of the demographic makeup of the community. From this, managers can put in place better and SMART plans for services, meaning resources can be specific and more reactive to service users.
- Better targeting of services and special measures into 'hotspot' areas- there is now a move towards locality based working to identify what the challenges are within a specific area. These will identify how to tailor Council services to address the challenges.
- Better trend analysis and therefore better ability to predict demand/service pressure- this will allow the Local Authority to target/allocate resources better, regardless of the numbers of International arrivals.
- Provides accurate, robust, evidence for funding/ grant applications (which demonstrates demand and service pressure). The Council needs to demonstrate the demand on services and the need for funding and therefore has recently seconded a research specialist to undertake funding applications.
- Middlesbrough requires the funding to undertake these projects, however the

Government has advised that there needs to be a level of sustainability in place to continue projects when funding comes to an end in 2020.

Sustainability plans include:

- Schools providing training to other schools on addressing capacity and integration challenges
- Data mapping- delivering roadshows with, for example, the police, schools, public health and the VCS to showcase the profile of Middlesbrough and present the key findings.

### **Key recommendation and Next steps**

The officer lastly advised of the key recommendations and next steps devised from the study undertaken.

The data mapping exercise identified the following recommendations:

- Improve local data collection through coordinated and consistent approach across council departments and with public sector partners.
- Develop a dashboard of data sources, training and tools and undertake regular analysis and reporting.
- Incorporate international migration as a theme in strategic needs assessments.
- Ensure continued deliver of orientation programme and community based cohesion work (Stronger Communities Middlesbrough)
- Place based support in three wards (Central, Newport and North Ormesby)- holistic approach to address multiple, interconnected challenges.

The project has received funding for an additional year, to work within a new “CMF Transitions” programme focussing more closely on supporting local schools, and the next steps will be as follows:

- Develop a ‘best practice’ toolkit
- Implement the data collection recommendations
- Take the Data Mapping report on a roadshow, making the documentation and learning available to our strategic partners.
- Provide training on data collection, accurate analysis and business use and evidenced funding applications.
- CMF round 2- Transitions project- will look at improving data collection processes, particularly in partnership with schools, and build better ‘live’ demographic management intelligence.

The Panel expressed their thanks to the officer for her informative presentation. From the presentation the Panel agreed the following:

- That the Panel be provided with a copy of the ‘best practice’ toolkit
- That at a future meeting, the Panel invite partners who work directly with the Council to assess what they do to promote community cohesion and integration. The partners were agreed as follows: Cleveland Police and Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner, North East Migration Partnership and Public Health.

**Agreed as follows:** That the information presented at the meeting be considered in the context of the scrutiny panel's investigation.

19/28 **DRAFT FINAL REPORT- FOODBANKS**

The Chair of the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel submitted the final report on Foodbanks, along with the draft recommendations for approval.

The Panel expressed thanks to the Trussel Trust for their involvement in the review.

**AGREED-**

1. **That the final report be approved,**
  2. **That the following recommendations be included within the report prior to the reports submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.**
- **That the Council work with the Trussel Trust to develop a foodbank within the Centre of Middlesbrough. Whilst the Panel is conscious that Middlesbrough town hall may not be a suitable location, initial discussions have taken place with officers of the Council and a number of potential locations have been identified. The Panel recommend that these be explored and be kept up to date on progress.**
  - **In terms of the operation of the foodbank, the Panel is aware that this will depend on the goodwill of volunteers. It is therefore recommended that agreement be sought for Middlesbrough Council staff, where appropriate, to be granted paid time off to volunteer in the Foodbank. Appropriate training from the Trussel Trust would be provided for this.**
  - **That the Civic Centre reception become a food and toiletries donation drop off point for Middlesbrough Foodbanks. This would be published on the staff weekly bulletin and officers would work with the Trussel Trust to ensure that there are regular collections.**
  - **That an awareness session on foodbanks be established for elected members. This would include information regarding foodbank drop off points, locations of the foodbanks and information on how to become an emergency foodbank voucher distributor.**