

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 11 October 2016.

PRESENT: Councillors J Sharrocks (Chair); J G Cole, E Dryden, A Hellaoui, T Higgins, C Hobson, L Lewis, J A Walker and M Walters

PRESENT BY INVITATION: Councillor T Harvey - Executive Member for Environment

OFFICERS: A Brown, B Carr, M Colley, G Field and A Williams

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor T Mawston, Councillor J McGee, Councillor L McGloin, Councillor D Rooney.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

1 MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - 13 SEPTEMBER 2016

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 13 September 2016 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

2 ATTENDANCE OF EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AT THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

The Democratic Services Officer submitted a report to provide information in respect of the scheduled attendance of Members of the Executive at the Overview and Scrutiny Board (OSB). It was intended for Executive Members to provide updates on their respective work in terms of their aims, aspirations, objectives, priorities and any emerging issues.

The Chair welcomed Councillor T Harvey, the Executive Member for Environment, to the meeting. The Executive Member introduced Geoff Field to the Board, the new Assistant Director for Environment, Property and Commercial Services who had taken over the role in August.

Councillor Harvey advised that it was very important to encourage member and officer engagement so that issues could be discussed on a structured basis. Walkabouts around the Wards were being arranged on a weekly basis and they would be repeated on a six monthly cycle. The first one had been held in the Coulby Newham Ward and it had proved to be very successful. The order in which the Wards would be visited would be determined by placing the names of the Wards in a hat. The schedule of the dates and times of Ward Walkabouts would be circulated to Members in the next few weeks.

In response to a query, the Executive Member advised that the Walkabouts would not involve partner organisations; they would involve Middlesbrough Councillors and officers.

Councillor Harvey provided information in respect of the following:

- A cheque was to be awarded to SANDS - the stillbirth and neonatal death charity. It was to be paid for through payment for recycled metal from the crematorium. Next year the nominated charity was a Dementia related charity.
- A recycling reward scheme was due to be established to encourage more people to recycle properly. Council officers would select a specific area and look into one of the bins. If the recycling was clean and the correct items were in the bin, the person responsible for the recycling would receive a £50 gift voucher to spend in the Cleveland Centre. The scheme would be advertised via a leaflet being delivered to every household and it was to be financed from a grant the Council received to increase recycling participation.
- Recycling had been brought back in-house and the staff working for the service had

transferred on to Middlesbrough Council terms and Conditions. The service had also improved since the service had transferred back to the Council.

- Office recycling had also been brought back in-house. Officers were to be given a recycling bin which could be stored next to their desk to encourage recycling.
- The Bus Station had received Dementia Friendly status and it had signed up to the Safe Places Scheme - a national initiative which involved local organisations and businesses offering a place of safety to vulnerable members of society, typically the elderly or those with learning difficulties.
- Funding of half a million pounds had been secured from the Capital Programme to purchase extra refuse vehicles.
- The green waste collection service had been extended to November 2016.
- The Council's Tree Policy had been revised to allow more flexibility in respect of decisions regarding whether a tree could be removed.
- External works to the crematorium had been carried out as a result of a scrutiny panel's recommendations and internal works were due to commence.
- The Environment, Property and Commercial Services made good use of the Council's Apprenticeship scheme and more adverts were due to be placed for apprentices to work in the horticulture and general service areas and two apprentices would be allocated to the cemeteries service.
- The Middlesbrough schools catering service had received a Gold Food4Health Award which was a reward for its commitment to promoting health through nutrition in Middlesbrough Schools.
- The Joint Agency Group were due to meet to discuss problems with back alleys to see if a joint approach could be established.
- A Christmas side waste collection would be established for two weeks.
- The department had hit all the income targets that had been set.
- In terms of Carbon reduction, Middlesbrough had made an improvement in carbon savings of 40%.
- Energy suppliers were required by law to offer their customers smart meters
- The Council was involved with One Planet Living to try and reduce the carbon footprint of its buildings. New buildings were designed with energy efficiency in mind.

In response to a query with regard to how much money was saved by the Council as a result of recycling, the Assistant Director for Environment, Property and Commercial Services advised that he would send information to the Members with regard to the figures for every tonne of recycling recovered and in respect of green waste and refuse waste. The Board was advised that the authority did not send a large amount of waste to landfill. The Council had two lines of energy from the waste plant at Haverton Hill and it could have access to another three lines if the Council's 2 lines were out of action.

A Member referred to the recycling facility at Stokesley and asked if any progress had been made in utilising the site. The Assistant Director for Environment, Property and Commercial Services advised that discussions were ongoing but the initial thoughts were that it could prove more expensive and there could be an increase in the people using the site.

The Executive Member advised that she intended to go out with the refuse/green waste collection vehicles and the Board was advised that if any Members wished to go out with the crews, it could be arranged. The Chair suggested that the Democratic Services Officer liaise with the Assistant Director for Environment, Property and Commercial Services to find out the level of interest from members.

3 **TEES-WIDE SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD - STRATEGIC PLAN - 2016/17**

The Board was advised that the Chair of the Tees-wide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) had been due to attend the meeting to present information to Members as part of the Board's local accountability arrangements.

Unfortunately, the Chair of the TSAB had advised that she was no longer able to attend this meeting and had requested that the item be deferred to the next meeting of the Board. It was agreed that the item would be deferred to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

ORDERED

That the above item be deferred to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

4

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILDREN'S CARE BALANCED SCORE CARD CONCERNS

The Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Children's Care submitted a report, the purpose of which was to provide the Overview and Scrutiny Board with a briefing in relation to the areas of concern identified within the Balanced Score Card, namely the continuing high numbers of Looked After Children and the report by Ofsted which indicated that Middlesbrough Safeguarding and Children's Care services required improvement.

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Board advised that Members had concerns about the number of 'red' categories indicated on the Balanced Scorecard and the Board were interested in hearing about the strategies that had been put in place to deal with the issues.

The Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Children's Care advised that it was evident that Middlesbrough had a high number of looked after Children compared to other neighbouring authorities. An independent review had been commissioned to look at why the Looked After Children (LAC) figures were so high.

Changes in legislation had made an impact such as :

- Judges making Supervision Orders to ensure that children were protected at home;
- the Local Family Court decisions sometimes restricted what options were available to the local authority in terms of LAC;
- changes to Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 (Accommodation).

The department were currently working on a policy to make it clear what kind financial support was available to families in need of intervention.

The reasons why Middlesbrough continued to have high numbers of LAC included:

- Middlesbrough displayed a risk averse approach to assessment rather than signposting at an earlier stage to Early Help. Many of the cases underwent assessments but the cases were later closed with no further action being taken. Middlesbrough also sometimes took longer than other authorities to complete assessments.
- Care plans were routinely completed before an assessment had concluded.
- Some managers considered that the 'Middlesbrough Factor' had an impact; whereby the disadvantage in Middlesbrough had become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Families had lower aspirations and there was a greater acceptance that they would require social care intervention which had increased the numbers of LAC. The numbers could be reduced by challenging and supporting families to build on their strengths and support themselves.
- Early Help was not impacting enough on the high numbers of LAC. There was a lack of confidence amongst partners to co-ordinate Early Help activity and the need was only addressed when the family required social care intervention.
- Resources were not sufficiently aligned to priorities such as reducing demand. The ratio of children placed with In House Foster Carers in comparison to those placed in Independent Fostering Agencies was too low, and current strategies to address this were not having sufficient impact in rebalancing this.
- Commissioning and Community Cohesion Strategies were strong. Commissioning was promoting capacity-building within the voluntary sector which should reduce the need for the Council to be the main provider of services.

Referrals were received from schools (e.g. children appearing to be malnourished); the police (in respect of cases of domestic violence) and health visitor referrals. In the past, more resources had been allocated to dealing with families in crisis and the Council were trying to shift the focus and allocate more resources to Early Help to avoid families reaching the crisis

stage. Early Intervention needed to be delivered in partnership with other organisations such as schools.

Reference was made to the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) which aimed to help professionals working with children, young people and families, to find out about their strengths and needs. It improved the way different organisations worked together.

The CAF was a standard assessment that could be used by all services working with children and young people. It was particularly suitable for use in integrated early intervention work, to work with families as soon as it was identified that a child or young person was experiencing difficulties. The problem with the CAF process was that it was very complex and involved completing lots of forms and the assessment took a long time to complete which meant that it could be months before any results were evident. The Early Help strategy had moved the access point for Early Help under the same umbrella as safe-guarding, so that when a family was referred to the Social Care department, the department would first consider whether Early Help was the appropriate intervention tool rather than referring the family straight down the safe-guarding route.

It was commented that although it was recognised that Early Help would meet some family's needs, the people assessing the families were sometimes not confident enough to sign-post families along this route, for fear of making a mistake.

It was anticipated that the Single Access Point should make the process simpler and more efficient, although more work and further training needed to be carried out to change the mind-set of those people dealing with referrals to provide them with the confidence to sign-post to Early Help. The Council faced a challenge in retaining experienced Social Workers because it attracted newly qualified Social Workers, who would complete their training and move on to other authorities that paid more for the service. It was suggested that Social Workers who received training from the Council, then chose to move on, should repay the training fees and this should be written into their contracts.

The Board was advised that the Council was making efforts to retain staff by offering a number of benefits such as a 9 day fortnight flexible working patterns. Many Social Workers were choosing to work for agencies because they paid more than the Council. Some authorities were working with a 30-40% agency staff ratio because agency staff could earn up to £40 an hour. This could mean that agency staff would only have to work six months of the year to earn the same amount of money that a Social Worker working for Middlesbrough would earn in a year.

The Council was trying to establish a sub-regional agreement with regard to the pay rates for agency workers. It was highlighted that the Government could also be making changes to the tax rates for agency staff. In response to a query whether the Council employed agency staff, the Board was advised that sometimes up to 3 or 4 agency staff were employed but where possible the Council tried to employ full time employees as some agency staff might not be as committed as a permanent full-time employee. If the Council did have to employ agency staff, they did not offer long term contracts.

The Council did work with schools in relation to Early Help and many of the schools had good pastoral support in place. The role of Health Visitors had also changed in terms of visits to new mothers. The Health Visitors were only required to carry out visits in respect of mothers who were considered high risk or who had a high level of need.

A member queried whether the Council's partners received a copy of the Ofsted report. The Board was advised that the report had only just been finalised and it was due to be submitted to the Safe-Guarding Children's Board and the partner's would see a copy of the report at that meeting.

The Chair of Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel advised that the Panel had looked at the topic of Early Help in the past and it was evident from the previous investigation that CAFs was being by-passed.

Members advised that it was frustrating to see that the same issues identified when the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel had looked at the topic before, still existed. A Member queried whether the political direction from the Council had made staff more risk averse.

The Board was advised that the key to changing the way in which the authority worked was to adapt the role of the Social Worker so that when they worked with families, they concentrated on the strengths of the family by working with the wider family to see what benefits they could bring in terms of support.

The Board was advised that Members needed to be challenged to make them less risk averse and to encourage them to offer support to staff making decisions about Looked After Children. The service had received support from the LMT and the Lead Executive Member for Children's Services. It was acknowledged that to change the way in which Early Help was delivered would cost money and take time. The real challenge was to bring about a culture change for staff in respect of the way in which the authority dealt with LAC to bring about better outcomes for children and young people.

It was suggested that the Board establish a Task and Finish Group consisting of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, the Chair of the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel and the Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Children's Care to look at the previous Scrutiny Panel report in respect of the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel's investigation into Early Help Improving Outcome for Children, Young People and Families to see if the recommendations contained in the report were still relevant and if so, if they had been implemented. The outcome of the Task and Finish Group would be reported back to the Board.

The Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Children's Care advised that the department were currently working on establishing a Parenting Strategy and a copy of the strategy could be submitted to the Board once it had been agreed.

ORDERED as follows:

1. That a Task and Finish Group consisting of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, the Chair of the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel and the Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Children's Care be established to look at the previous Final report in respect of the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel's investigation into Early Help Improving Outcome for Children, Young People and Families to see if the recommendations contained in the report were still relevant and if the recommendations had been implemented. The outcome of the Task and Finish Group would be reported back to the Board.
2. That a copy of the finalised Parenting Strategy be submitted to the Board, for information, once it had been agreed.

5 **KEY STAGE 4 UNVALIDATED DATA**

The Head of Learning and Skills submitted a report, the purpose of which was to explain the unvalidated data for Key Stage 4 for all Middlesbrough secondary schools with mainstream pupils and indicate the support received in the academic year 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. The validated data would be available in December 2016. In 2016, new progress and reporting measures had been implemented which resulted in difficulties in measuring trends. National comparative data was not yet available.

The Assistant Director for Learning and Skills and the Head of Learning and Skills were in attendance at the meeting to provide further information in respect of the above.

The Board was advised that the unvalidated data could be subject to change as a result of some exam papers being re-marked. Following the OfSTED inspection in 2014, Middlesbrough Achievement Partnership worked with Ian McAllister to manage a project which was part of the LA response to the following findings of the OfSTED inspection:

- The Local Authority has no established effective partnerships with schools, particularly

- secondary schools.
- Attainment at each key stage remains well below national averages.
- None of the secondary schools succeed in ensuring that pupils achieve well enough given their prior performance.
- Over half of secondary-aged pupils, attend a school that is less than good. This is unacceptable.
- The authority does not know the schools well enough to bring about the rapid improvement that is urgently needed.
- Support and challenge are not focussed sharply on the schools most in need.

The project, which was funded by money agreed with the School Management Forum, commenced in October 2014. Support to the individual schools was delivered on a consultancy basis at the request of schools. Consultants with specialisms were appointed by agencies and matched to each school based on the school's individual needs. Each school received a termly visit from Ian McAllister to ensure that the local authority were aware of the performance of its schools and that any improvements to be made were implemented without delay.

The consultants responsible for the core subjects established regular network meetings for staff and the local authority. The Head Teachers of the schools attended the Secondary Education improvement Partnership meetings which consisted of representatives from the local authority and invited professionals. The Partnership facilitated networking opportunities and sharing of best practice.

The OfSTED re-inspection in 2015 had noted that the local authority had strengthened its arrangements for school improvement particularly in respect of KS4. It was noted however that there were still issues surrounding the weaker outcomes, particularly in respect of KS4 maths.

The Middlesbrough local authority KS4 outcomes in 2016 were as follows:-

5+A* to C inc E & M% representing a +8.4% improvement

A* to C E & M % representing a +7.9% improvement

A* to C English % representing a +11.6% improvement

A* to C Maths % representing a +0.2% improvement

EBACCS representing a -3% fall

It was noted that there had been improvement across the majority of subjects, particularly in English. It was highlighted that the reason for the fall in EBACCS could be as a result of less pupils being entered for the exams.

The Board was advised that 73% of secondary pupils attended a school judged to be good or outstanding at the last OfSTED inspection, which represented a 30% increase since 2014, and this was predicted to increase following school inspections. It was noted that Acklam Grange School had experienced a very good OfSTED inspection.

It was acknowledged that there was still a significant amount of work to do in many schools to improve the consistency of results in Maths and English. The results in Maths were generally weaker than English at KS4 but at KS2 the results were equal to the national average. The aim of the local authority was to continue to monitor progress, predictions and outcomes on a term by term basis via visits from a secondary consultant.

Some schools had achieved very good results in maths. The local authority was looking at teaching practices and test techniques. The authority had held discussions with the teaching schools and the University regarding teacher training. It was noted that there was currently a lack of Maths teachers coming through the training process and re-training current teachers in maths was being considered as an option. Many people who trained as maths teachers were attracted to work in industry as the pay was generally better. The authority were looking at schools across the Tees Valley area to ascertain which schools were using non-specialist teachers to teach maths.

The Government had recognised that there was an issue with recruitment of maths teachers and the Northern Powerhouse Education Strategy was looking at further ways to recruit and retain the best teachers.

A member commented that many Councillors were unable to establish close links with schools particularly in respect of those schools that had become academies. The Board was advised that the local authority now held management meetings with schools and they also attended the Secondary Head Teacher Forum. There was a general willingness from the schools and the local authority to work together and representatives from the local authority made regular visits to schools to meet with the Head Teacher and walk around the school. The Chair advised that it was up to individual Councillors to establish contact with schools within their own Ward if they wished to visit the schools.

A member commented that it was encouraging to see the improvements in KS4 results and the dedication of the staff and Head Teachers was obvious.

ORDERED that the information presented in respect of the KS4 unvalidated data be noted.

6 **REVISED TREE POLICY - UPDATE**

The Assistant Director for Environment, Property and Commercial Services provided the Board with an update in respect of the Council's amended Tree Policy.

The previous Tree Policy was adopted by the Council in 2010. The Tree Policy covered the management of trees in Middlesbrough and gave advice to residents on dealing with all arboricultural issues and in turn dealing with any issues that may arise with trees.

The policy review looked at legislation to ensure it was still relevant to the policy. It also looked at any ambiguities from the previous policy and clarified the Council's position. The new policy considered any advancements in technology not included in the previous version, i.e. solar panels and modern telecommunications. There was also a new section on planning, which took into consideration any new housing developments.

An important change, was that the new policy introduced a new element in the disputes section of the policy. The new policy allowed members of the public, in special circumstances, to seek the view of the Executive Member for Environment in respect of tree disputes.

The Board noted the Council's updated Tree Policy.

7 **FINAL REPORT OF HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL - CANCER SCREENING AND REDUCING CANCER RELATED DEATHS**

The Chair of the Health Scrutiny Panel outlined the Panel's main findings, conclusions and recommendations following a scrutiny investigation of the topic of Cancer Screening and Reducing Cancer Related Deaths.

The Board considered the following recommendations of the Panel based on evidence submitted and conclusions reached:-

That the Health Scrutiny Panel recommends to the Executive:

a) That the Council's Public Health Team:

i. Establishes a regular public health presence located in Community Hubs in order to promote prevention initiatives and instigate screening services.

ii. Work with young people in colleges to bring awareness about screening programmes and in particular cervical screening amongst young women.

iii. Ensure that resources be sourced to assist in undertaking further work to target GP

practices with low screening uptake.

b) That NHS England ensure that:

i. A system should be established in GP practices for all three screening programmes to remind people whenever they visit for other types of appointments that their screening may be due or overdue. Or where they exist ensure that the process for doing so is shared amongst GP practices in Middlesbrough.

ii. That people should be given information about screening and screening drop-in sessions when they attend their NHS Health Check.

iii. GP practices should be further supported and assisted to develop initiatives around early diagnosis.

c) The Council should:

i. Ensure that screening programmes are publicised to our own workforce and staff should be encouraged to take the time to attend.

ii. Utilise its links with private sector to ensure that they adopt a similar approach.

iii. Ensure that Love Middlesbrough Magazine features regular articles that will include information on screening programmes and initiatives such as - Be Clear on Cancer.

d) That the South Tees Health Scrutiny Joint Committee include a recommendation, as part of their response to the Urgent Care Review, to ask that screening services are included in the South Tees CCG's proposals for the new extended hours at GP Hubs. Special attention should be given to contracted GP services to improve screening take up at their practice.

e) That the issue of improving breast screening rates across the Tees Valley be submitted to as a potential work topic for the Tees Valley Health Scrutiny Joint Committee.

ORDERED that the findings and recommendations of the Health Scrutiny Panel be endorsed and referred to the Executive.

8 EXECUTIVE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Chief Executive submitted a report which identified the forthcoming issues to be considered by the Executive as outlined in Appendix A to the report.

The report provided the Overview and Scrutiny Board with the opportunity to consider whether any item contained within the Executive Forward Work Programme should be considered by the Board or referred to a Scrutiny Panel.

NOTED

9 SCRUTINY PANEL PROGRESS REPORTS

The Chair queried whether there were any issues that the Scrutiny Chairs wished to raise. The Chair of Health Scrutiny Panel requested that a copy of the update in respect of Health Scrutiny be emailed to the Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

NOTED