

Report of:	Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Children's Services Executive Director of Children's Services
Submitted to:	Executive
Date:	12 July 2022
Title:	Final Report of the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel - Locality Working from a Children's Services Perspective - Service Response
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Strategic priority:	Children and young people
Key decision:	No
Why:	Decision does not reach the threshold to be a key decision
Urgent:	No
Why:	N/A

Executive summary

This report gives an overview of the investigation by the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel to examine what impact the locality working pilots in Newport and North Ormesby are having on Children's Services and specifically on the outcomes for the children and young people living in these wards.

It is recommended that the Executive notes the content of the scrutiny panel's final report on Locality Working from a Children's Services Perspective (Appendix 1) and approves the action plan (Appendix 2) developed in response to the scrutiny panel's recommendations.

The Executive could decide not to approve the report and therefore its recommendations and action plan but this would miss a valuable opportunity to contribute to the future development of locality working and improve outcomes for the vulnerable children living in the wards where the locality working model is in place.

Purpose

1. To seek the Executive's approval of the final report of the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Committee Locality Working from a Children's Perspective (Appendix 1) and the resulting action plan (Appendix 2).

Background and relevant information

2. On 8th October 2019 the Council's Executive approved proposals to implement two locality working pilot programmes in Newport and North Ormesby which would run for a two year period.
3. The locality working model, a place based approach, involves a systems change to the current operational delivery model in Children's Services and across the Council as a whole.
4. Newport was chosen as a site for a pilot programme because it is the fifth most deprived ward in Middlesbrough moving from the 123rd most deprived ward nationally in 2007 to the 38th most deprived ward nationally showing a significant deterioration and amongst other reasons it has a high rate of female victims of crime and high levels of anti-social behaviour.
5. North Ormesby was chosen as a pilot site because it is the most deprived ward in Middlesbrough and the second most deprived ward in England and has the highest number of looked after children with unemployment levels more than six times the national average and more than 60% of children living in poverty.
6. There are some differences between the two pilot programmes, mainly in terms of their management and the partners involved. For example, the Neighbourhood manager in North Ormesby has a Thirteen Housing contract of employment and the post holder in Newport is a Middlesbrough Council employee.
7. The aim of this investigation by the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel was to examine what impact these locality working pilots are having on Children's Services and specifically on the outcomes for the children and young people living in these wards. Better outcomes for Children is one of the nine main themes of locality working and has its own action plan that is reviewed on a monthly basis.
8. The terms of reference for this work were as follows.
 - a) To examine how Locality Working operates and will be developed in the pilot areas
 - b) To understand how the impact of Locality Working for Children's Services will be measured and how any future roll out of the model in other areas of the town will be determined
 - c) To identify best practice from other local authorities where locality working for Children's Services is working well.

9. In line with the terms of reference the Scrutiny Panel gathered a range of evidence in relation to the Locality Working pilot model currently operating in Newport and North Ormesby.
10. The following representatives from a range of Council Services and partner organisations attended scrutiny to discuss their involvement in the locality working pilots in order to provide a better understanding of how a multi-agency approach is working to improve outcomes for children and families:-
 - a) Early Help
 - b) Children's Social Care
 - c) Public Health South Tees
 - d) Selective Landlord Licensing/Public Protection
 - e) Newport Primary School
 - f) Newport Neighbourhood Police
 - g) Youth Focus North East
 - h) Together Middlesbrough and Cleveland
 - i) North Ormesby Primary Academy
 - j) North Ormesby Neighbourhood Police
 - k) Children's Centre
 - l) Community Safety/Street Wardens
11. The Locality Working Better Outcomes for Children action plan has the key objectives of
 - a) Creating stronger families,
 - b) Increasing educational attainment,
 - c) Reducing child sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation
 - d) Reducing the numbers of looked after children.
12. Staff from Children's Services have been in situ virtually with the localities for some time including dedicated officers from children's social care and Early Help. All attend weekly officer meetings and the Children and Families working groups to look at key issues as they arise.

13. Resourcing. Staff from Children’s Services deployed in the Locality Working Areas are as follows

Post (Fte)	Newport	North Ormesby
Early Help Senior Resource Worker	2	1
Social Worker	2	3
Team Manager	0.5	0.5

14. Early Help and Social Care staff work closely together within the localities, and across Middlesbrough, to ensure that any ‘step up’ or ‘step down’ of services is seamless. Staff generally feel locality working is a positive step with real benefits, such as:-

- a) Joint visits with other professionals working in the same area
- b) Families in the respective localities recognising staff when they are in the locality
- c) Greater knowledge of the community and partners particularly with neighbourhood wardens and housing colleagues
- d) Improved relationships with schools in the localities as practitioners are working with children attending the same few schools and can therefore build up stronger relationships
- e) More effective use of professional time
- f) A reduction in mileage

15. In terms of feedback from staff and service users, a quote provided from a Senior Early Help Practitioner (a) and from families receiving support (b, c, d,) in relation to their views on locality working, states:

- a) *“I do really think the concept works, or if I put it another way I really would not want to go back to Town Wide working.”*
- b) *“It brought A out of himself and he is doing a lot better than he was, she was really nice to talk too.”*
- c) *“The support has been well received and everything is going well.”*
- d) *“This time last year I was so depressed, now I am working and have a nice house, I don't struggle to get out of bed anymore.”*

16. Based on the evidence provided throughout the investigation, the Panel’s conclusions are as follows:-

- a) The Panel feels that, despite some delays mainly due to the pandemic, the locality working pilot programmes in Newport and North Ormesby are working well and are making good progress.

- b) It notes that the locality model has had a positive impact in both areas, including:-
- I. A reduction in anti-social behaviour and crime.
 - II. A significant increase in the number of residents who report feeling safer, both during the day and at night.
 - III. an increase in the number of people who state they intend to continue living in the area for longer
 - IV. Noticeable improvements in the physical environment.

17. The Panel welcomes the concept of locality based working and supports its continuation within Newport and North Ormesby and is supportive of the locality working model being rolled out to other areas of the town where it is identified there is a priority need based on analysis of demand and community consultation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

18. Based on the evidence gathered during the investigation, and the conclusions above, the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel makes the following recommendations for approval by the Executive:-

- a) The Panel supports the continuation of Locality Working in both Newport and North Ormesby and further supports the roll-out of the model to other areas of the town based on priority need, to be determined through demand analysis, community surveys and led by the evaluation report for consideration by the Executive.
- b) In supporting the Locality Working model in Middlesbrough, the Panel recommends that discussions with senior managers and directors of finance within all public sector partner organisations takes place with a view to appropriately and proportionately funding each locality working area to ensure sufficient staffing allocations to meet demand. The Panel would further recommend that appropriate core structures are in place within the locality teams to ensure that Neighbourhood Managers are fully supported and deputised for during periods of absence/holidays.
- c) The Panel acknowledges the high numbers of early help cases in both Newport and North Ormesby and notes the views of the Early Help Practitioners that they feel there are not enough practitioners to meet demand. The Panel therefore recommends that, subject to further analysis, consideration be given to the number of Early Help workers allocated to each area.
- d) The Panel notes the impact data in respect of Children's Social Care Services within the localities and that the number of children looked after remains high. The Panel acknowledges that, whilst social workers have been in place for some time in the locality areas, they have only fairly recently been moved into one team to ensure consistency of approach and management oversight. The Panel, therefore, recommends that impact continues to be monitored and reported to the Panel in six months' time.

- e) That Early Help Practitioners and the Social Workers be introduced to appropriate staff within each of the areas' schools to build up relationships and discuss children/families requiring support through regular dialogue and that the work of the locality teams is promoted and regularly discussed with school leadership teams.
- f) That school readiness and children's centre registrations continue to be monitored and promoted in a range of languages to maximise reach and take up of nursery places to ensure that children are ready for school to optimise their learning potential.
- g) That relevant community and voluntary organisations, including schools, are equally involved in the locality teams and that appropriate information sharing takes place to ensure:
 - i) That access to a 'signposting directory' of all services and organisations available to support families within the localities is available to all partners via the Neighbourhood Manager/designated co-ordinator.
 - ii) That programmes of activities and events designed to support children and families are planned, discussed and co-ordinated in advance between partners within the localities to avoid unnecessary duplication and ensure those who need help and support receive it. (For example, that the Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) provision is co-ordinated in conjunction with Feast of Fun activity to maximise appropriate take-up and avoid duplication).
- h) That stronger links are made, through Public Health colleagues if and where appropriate, between primary care and acute care providers including GPs, mental health provision, midwife and health visiting services with improved referral pathways to Early Help and Children's Social Care Services where appropriate.
- i) Ensure that all partners are familiar with Middlesbrough's threshold of need document when making referrals to children's social care to improve the quality of referrals and ensure that the correct level of support can be determined and provided as quickly as possible and that the document be readily accessible via the Neighbourhood Manager/designated Co-ordinator.
- j) The Panel considers that Locality Working in Middlesbrough should be better promoted and clearly branded to ensure that all partners, and the community, are aware of how it operates, who is involved and how to make contact. The Wigan Deal is a good example of this where each priority area has an 'our part' (the borough's public sector organisations and partners) and a 'your part' (residents) so that the principles of working together to achieve joint ambitions is realised with each partner aware of what is expected of them.

What decision(s) are being recommended?

- That the content of the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel's final report on Locality Working from a Children's Services Perspective (Appendix 1), be noted.
- That the action plan (Appendix 2), developed in response to the scrutiny panel's recommendations, be approved.

Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

19. By approving the attached action plan (Appendix 2) the Executive is endorsing the value of locality working from a Children's Services Perspective as identified by the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel.

Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended

20. The Executive could decide not to approve the action plan (Appendix 2) but this would miss a valuable opportunity to contribute to the future development of locality working and improve outcomes for the vulnerable children living in the wards where the locality working model is in place.

Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Legal

21. There is no legal impact to be considered

Strategic priorities and risks

22. This report related to the strategic priority VUL 04. Implement and extend locality working and CYP 05 Consolidate and build on recent Children's Services progress to improve Ofsted rating

Human Rights, Equality and Data Protection

23. Protected groups would not be adversely affected by this decision.

Financial

24. No financial impact currently in report.

Due to the outturn position of Children's Services, 2021-22, we are not in a position to find additional budget or resource to fund any additional resource requirements for this if identified in evaluation.

Finance will support the evaluation of the impact of the next 6 months around cost avoidance and any benefits of moving resources across existing teams

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Please see accompanying action plan.	The Executive Director of Children's Services has the overall responsibility for this plan.	Please see accompanying action plan

Appendices

1	Final Report of the Children and Young People's Social Care and Children's Scrutiny Panel: Locality Working from a Children's Services Perspective.
2	Children and Young people's Social care and Services Scrutiny Panel: Locality Working from a Children's Services Perspective - Action plan

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