CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING, 30TH AUGUST, 2018

Present – Councillors Shaikh (Chairman), Murray (Vice-Chairman), Ayub, Bagnall, Dean, Flitcroft, Galloway (as deputy for Councillor Warren), Gibbon, Gillies, Ibrahim, Kirk-Robinson, Morris, Swarbrick and C. Wild.

Also in attendance

Councillor Cunliffe	-	Executive Cabinet Member – Children
Mr G. Rowney	-	Interim Director of People
Ms. S. Longden	-	Acting Director of Public Health
Mr P. Rankin	-	Assistant Director of People (Performance, Planning and Resources)
Ms L. Hellings-Lamb	-	Head of Service (Public Health)
Mrs. S. Bailey	-	Principal Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Irving, Parkinson and Warren

Councillor Shaikh in the Chair.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved - The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee held on 27th June, 2018 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

6. THE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report which put forward the Work Programme for the Committee for the current Municipal

Year which had been formulated following the workshop session that had taken place at the meeting in June, 2018.

Resolved – That the 2018/19 work programme, as now submitted, be approved.

7. CHILDHOOD OBESITY, HEALTHY EATING, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND YOUTH AND PLAY RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Ms S. Longden gave a presentation on childhood obesity, healthy eating and physical activity in Bolton and the initiatives that were underway to address the issues.

The presentation outlined the current obesity levels in Bolton compared with the North West and nationally, with particular reference being made to numbers in Reception and Year 6 classes. The statistics highlighted that Bolton was performing better than average in terms of the numbers of overweight children and slightly below average for children with obesity.

The key messages from the figures highlighted that:

- childhood obesity was increasing;
- childhood obesity tended to persist into adulthood;
- the causes were multiple and complex;
- being overweight caused ill-health; and
- there was a widening inequality gap.

A plan for action involving various measures had been introduced by the Government to tackle childhood obesity. They included sugar reduction, calorie reduction, advertising, promotions, empowering local areas and communities and schools initiatives.

Other measures that could be utilised by local authorities included:

- physical activity;
- prevention;
- pre-pregnancy nutrition;

- breastfeeding;
- changing the culture;
- joined up working; and
- supporting national measures.

Examples of current initiatives included the Blackpool Healthy Weight Summit/Food Active's GULP and Derbyshire's Forest Schools.

The presentation went on to focus on healthy eating and emphasised the importance of developing a pattern of good food for life rather than for weight loss. This included a healthy mix of fruit, vegetables, omega 3 fats, trace minerals, vitamins, reduced sugar intake and hydration.

Statistics for Adults (18 plus) eating the recommended '5 a day' in 2016/17 were 52.9% in Bolton compared to 54.8% in the North West and 57.4% nationally.

Contributors to healthy eating included:

- education;
- cooking skills;
- kitchen facilities;
- local shops; and
- affordability.

The presentation then went on to discuss physical activity together with the various associated advantages, and identified the following key messages:

- contributes to healthy weight;
- clear health benefits;
- exercising at the recommended levels;
- being active every day;
- enjoying exercise; and
- environmental matters.

Physical activity in Bolton for adults (18 plus) in 2016/17 was 60.3%. This was below the figures of 65.1% in the North West and 66% nationally.

Initiatives to promote physical activity included:

- local planning with schools – supporting investment in sport through dedicated pupil premium funding, promoting guidance for schools to meet national initiatives, Active Schools accreditation, bikeability and improved school to club links with pathways for continued development in sport and physical activity in the community' and
- community interventions – bikeability plus, daily mile, healthy eating programmes, accreditations for sports clubs and groups, good practice and future non-traditional settings, promotion of hard to reach young people and maintaining participation.

Mr P. Rankin then gave a presentation to members on youth and play recreational facilities in Bolton and outlined the initiatives that were in place, or being planned, in order to meet the statutory obligation placed on local authorities to secure the provision of sufficient leisure time activities for young people's wellbeing, including youth work.

The presentation advised members that funding for youth provision had been gradually reducing since 2010. Nationally, provision was delivered by a mix of voluntary, community and faith sectors and some councils.

The presentation went on to outline the local picture and current provision within Bolton. This included:

- Council run Youth and Play Services;
- strong voluntary sector provision with CVS support;
- good partnership working - focus on expertise and experience;
- the Council grant programme; and
- hundreds of sports clubs and groups.

The current services offered by the Council were delivered from nine dedicated centres, a mix of community buildings, schools, parks, mobile boxes, play vans and a mobile skate park.

The activities included:

- arts and crafts – themed arts, card/gifts, graffiti art, glass painting, printing;
- the arts – drama, music, video, dance;
- games – team games, non-competitive games, group games, team building;
- sports – traditional and new sports, competitions, promotion of physical activity; and
- cooking/life skills – good health and wellbeing, reducing social isolation.

The presentation also provided examples of current schemes including multi-use games areas, recreational areas, jam pods, crafts, cookery, a mobile skate park and boxes.

With regard to 2017/19 play provision usage, the presentation informed members of the following figures:

- 3,130 different 5 to 12 year olds had attended;
- there had been 32,959 cumulative attendances;
- 1,350 had attended regularly;
- of the regular attendees, 20% had SEND and 12% were Children who are Looked After.

With regard to 2017/18 Youth Schemes:

- 2030 different 13 to 19 year olds had attended;
- 40% had attended regularly;
- there had been 17,859 cumulative attendances; and
- of those regular attendees, 12% had SEND and 13% were Children who are Looked After.

The presentation went on to outline the existing challenges which included:

- ensuring the most vulnerable children had access to provision; and
- maintaining provision with reducing budgets.

Following the presentation, members deliberated the issues at length and made a number of comments/observations:

- it would be helpful for Ward Councillors to receive regular reports on obesity levels and statistics to help them target resources;
- in terms of play provision, it would be helpful to receive information on which wards were active and which schools were participating in activities which would allow for the better direction of resources and identification of gaps in services – members were advised that national data was collected annually and analysed by officers locally and this information could be forwarded to members and to schools – schools were also required to publish how they had spent the pupil premium for exercise and this was being used to assist in getting better outcomes;
- the potential for smaller play schemes to have greater impact;
- the need for more a scientific based approach to food education – it was noted that food sports science was linked to PE classes in schools;
- the impact of green space development on play areas and the need to maintain existing recreational spaces to ensure they were fit for purpose – more joint working across departments was needed in order to coordinate grass cutting and maintenance to ensure green spaces were useable;
- the need to ensure breakfast clubs were providing nutritional food that conformed to nutritional standards - it was advised that schools were encouraged to provide food standards and the 5 a day;
- optimising joint working with voluntary sectors and the local cadets;
- ensuring that the commissioned activities with the Bolton Lads and Girls Club were available to all children in the Borough and encouraging more outreach working;
- it would be helpful to have a full breakdown of figures over the last 10 years on obesity levels and those overweight to try and better understand the causes of the increases;

- the need to educate parents on the high sugar levels in energy drinks and to encourage the use of more healthy options – it was noted that there was currently no legislation governing the sale of energy drinks to children although the Council did offer advice on the dangers and suggested alternatives;
- information on how the money from sugar tax was used - members were advised that schools would receive the income and be accountable to their respective governing bodies on how it was spent although, as it was a relatively new tax, there was limited data how monies were being utilised- it was noted that the Council had no control over the use of monies in academies or voluntary controlled schools;
- the advantages of smaller play facilities in more localised estates and parks for children from deprived wards – it was noted that current outreach was taking place e.g. in the Johnson Fold area, and more estate based activities were being planned;
- a need to better promote and publicise events to reach a wider audience – it was noted that material was available on the Council's website and in public buildings and it was intended to make more use of social media going forward;
- serious concerns about reducing resources and the closure of valuable facilities such as children's centres as a result;
- the need to ensure that those in deprived areas and those with less disposable income had equal access to recreational facilities;
- the issue of takeaways near to schools – it was noted that the supplementary planning guidance limited the distance in which a new takeaway could operate within a 400 metre distance of a secondary school;
- it was noted that access to healthy food was linked to deprivation; and
- training should be given on managing lifestyles and food preparation.

Resolved – That further details be provided to members by way of an informative note prior to the next meeting, on the issues

raised during the Committee's deliberations, with particular reference to:

- a full breakdown of obesity figures over the last 10 years;
- details of work being undertaken to ensure access to recreational facilities for all, particularly provision at Bolton Lads and Girls Club and by other partners, for those in deprived wards or on reduced incomes;
- the coordinated approach by Council Departments to ensure that green spaces and recreational facilities were usable and fit for purpose at all times; and
- a list of activities available in individual wards.

9. MEMBERS BUSINESS

The Committee received the extracts of minutes of other meetings of the Council relevant to the remit of this Committee:-

- the Executive Cabinet Member – Children's Portfolio held on 9th July and 13th August, 2018; and
- the Children's PDG held on 16th July, 2018.

Resolved – That the minutes of the various meetings be noted.

(The meeting started at 6.00pm and finished at 7.15pm)

N O T E S