

CHILDREN'S SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

MEETING, 14TH JANUARY, 2019

Present – Councillors Kellett (Chairman), C. Wild (Vice-Chairman), Bagnall, Cunliffe, Dean, Flitcroft, Iqbal (as deputy for Councillor Harkin), Kirk-Robinson, McKeon (as deputy for Councillor Shaikh), Murray, Mrs Swarbrick, Warren and Watters.

Also in Attendance

Ms B. Brown – Interim Director of People
 Mr T. Birch – Assistant Director – Education and Learning
 Mr P. Rankin – Assistance Director – Performance, Planning and Resources
 Mrs S. Bailey – Principal Democratic Services Officer

Councillor Kellett in the Chair

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Gibbon, Harkin and Shaikh.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Children's PDG held on 24th September, 2018 and the joint meeting of the Children's and Adults PDGs held on 14th November, 2018 were submitted and signed as correct records.

6. EARLY HELP

Ms B. Brown gave a presentation which outlined the measures that were in place to deliver early help for children across Greater Manchester with a particular emphasis on the arrangements in Bolton.

The presentation outlined the key features at the Greater Manchester level which involved a whole neighbourhood working approach, as follows:

- geographic alignment;
- leadership and accountability;
- GM public service workforce;
- shared financial resources;
- programmes, policy and delivery; and
- tackling barriers and delivering on devolution.

The presentation went on to outline Bolton's proposed approach which would reflect and enhance the GM Model.

The presentation focused on Early Help and the review of provision that had taken place between September and December, 2018.

Members were informed that over 250 stakeholders, including young people, had been involved in reviewing:

- how Bolton's children and young people who would benefit from early help were identified including what was known about local needs and the type of early help required;
- the process for assessing the need for early help in Bolton including assessment for early help services;
- the cost and effectiveness of current early help services including identifying what was working well and existing problems and issues; and
- workforce development.

The next stage would involve the formation of outline options for future processes and services which would improve early help outcomes for children, young people and families. This would include an outline of the timescales and key tasks for further stages of the work.

The presentation went on to summarise initial thoughts on proposed outcomes and important matters, as follows:

- more children and young people thriving and living safely and well at home;
- improved school readiness and achievement;
- improved physical and mental health of children and young people;
- more parents being able to parent their children and young people well;
- families knowing what early help was available, being able to access services easily and confirm that services had made a positive difference;
- professionals knowing what early help services were available;
- minimise overlap and duplication with good coordination; and
- evidence that services were cost effective.

These were a good fit with GM TF strategic objectives of:

- a whole system multi-agency approach;
- improved outcomes by investing earlier;
- better and more support to vulnerable children and young people and families preventing the need for Children Act 1989 services;

- managing demand – reducing the number of children and young people looked after; and
- links with local vision and other GM initiatives such as Bolton 2030, place-based initiatives and CS innovation funding.

The presentation also gave details of six projects that would improve outcomes, serve Bolton well, empower citizens, manage key transitions and reduce demand, namely:

- communities and people as assets – a strengths-based approach to doing the work;
- getting help – process, thresholds and knowing what is available;
- the early help delivery model – communities and neighbourhoods;
- the early help delivery model – Bolton Council Services;
- proactive strategic commissioning – including best use of intelligence and shaping and managing services; and
- good governance.

Following the presentation, members made a number of observations and comments:

- the need for a special social work resource in schools with particularly high early help needs;
- the advantages of the three hubs working together to respond and assist with a variety of issues and services;
- it was good to see that schools had been proactively involved with the proposed new model;
- there was an opportunity to lower the thresholds to trigger eligibility – members were assured that this was being reviewed;
- the new systems would provide for more efficient use of staff rather than the need for additional staff;
- there would be a more coherent and coordinated approach to early help with a school and community faced response;
- the difficulties with the current process for ECHYPs which was lengthy and stressful– members were advised that work was ongoing with SEND regarding the funding structure which would be shared with the PDG in due course;
- it was felt that problems caught early were easier to address;
- the benefits of the three hubs being in the north, west and south of the Borough as all areas of the Borough would have dedicated resources rather than just central areas – members were advised that the first hub may be in place as soon as April, 2019 and that services would be provided on the basis of need for that particular area – ‘one size fits one’;
- the new systems would enhance the transition process from child to adult;

- there would be more accountability with services having a better flow to ensure that all children that needed help would receive it;
- the proposals were exciting and had provided an incentive for the Partnership to re-engage; and
- the need for shared financial resources and pooled budgets to ensure there were joined up responsibilities which would help to spread the burden of costs.

It was agreed that Ms Brown be thanked for her informative presentation.

(The meeting started at 6.00pm and finished at 6.45pm)