

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

8 November 2023

-: Present :-

Councillor Twelves (Chairwoman)

Councillors Brook, Cowell (Vice-Chair), Douglas-Dunbar, Harvey, Long, Barbara Lewis, Jacqueline Thomas and Tolchard

(Also in attendance: Councillors Bye, Chris Lewis, Maddison, David Thomas and Tyerman)

28. Apologies

It was reported that, in accordance with the wishes of the Conservative Group, the membership of the Board had been amended to include Councillors Barbara Lewis, Brook, Jackie Thomas and Tolchard in place of Councillors Hutchings, Bryant and the two Conservative vacancies.

An apology for absence was received from the Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services, Public Health and Inequalities - Councillor Tranter, who was represented by the Leader of the Council – Councillor David Thomas.

29. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of the Board held on 5 and 10 October 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairwoman.

30. Draft Key Performance Indicators for the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Local Area Strategy

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Bye, Director of Children's Services, Nancy Meehan, Head of Service Inclusion & SEND and Learning Disability, Hannah Spencer, Divisional Director of Safeguarding, Becky Thompson and Lead Officer from NHS Devon (Integrated Care Board), Susan Masters provided an update on the development of the Key Performance Indicators (Key PIs) for the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Local Area Strategy which were being developed across the partnership with parents, carers and young people. The vision for improvements to SEND was set out through the following five priority areas:

1. SEND is everyone's business – embedding our values through education, health and social care, changing culture and reforming our workforce;
2. Identify and act on children's needs at the earliest opportunity, through valuing lived experience and expertise;

3. Understand the needs of our children, young people and families and make sure joint commissioning supports service delivery and we make best use of all resources;
4. Make sure that all early years providers and mainstream educational settings support an inclusive approach to education; and
5. Improve transition planning for young people moving into adulthood.

The Board discussed the initial proposed measures for each priority area as set out in the submitted report and asked the following questions:

- what does preparing for adulthood look like;
- do schools share good practice on reducing exclusions and suspensions;
- was there a good response from the training offered to teaching staff and assistants regarding SEND;
- how was post 16 education and transition managed;
- how does the Integrated Children's Services communicate with potential employers about support they may receive and need to give to help employ people with SEND;
- what can we do as an Integrated Children's Services to support employers more to increase the number of people with SEND to secure suitable employment and receive the support they need;
- was Torbay's Integrated Children's Services and the approach to co-designing and co-producing solutions unique;
- how does the Integrated Children's Services ensure that good practice was maintained and succession planned to ensure that it continues to improve year on year;
- how does the dashboard link to the vision and Key Performance Indicators (reassurance was given that the full complex dashboard was monitored weekly to ensure that any issues were promptly addressed, this also fed into reports to Government and delivery of the Safety Valve);
- how frequently were we monitored on the Local Area Strategy;
- how were early years providers being picked up in the Key PIs to ensure that they understand about the help available and know how and when to report concerns;
- was it proposed for a Key PI around consistency of staffing, this was an area of concern which causes parents and families a lot of anxiety if they have to keep forming relationships with new support staff;
- the report covered children from 0 years old to 25 years old, what percentage of children and young people have SEND; and
- how many young adults were leaving being cared for to move into independent living.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Director of Children's Services be requested to work with SEND Partners to ensure that the key performance indicators include measures:

- relating to early years teachers and providers, especially within the private sector, to ensure that they are aware of the support available and how to report any concerns regarding SEND and are signposting parents, carers and family members to the relevant support;
- to try to reduce the number of changes of support worker, social worker or key contacts to increase consistency and reduce anxiety of change;
- to raise awareness of the Tell Us Once App; and
- to increase the number of employers who are aware of the support available to help them employ young people with SEND and also raise awareness to employees of the support that is available and can be put in place to help them secure employment.

31. Budget Monitoring Quarter 2

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Finance and Corporate Services, Councillor Tyerman, the Director of Finance, Malcolm Coe and the Deputy Director of Finance, Ian Rowswell outlined the submitted budget monitoring report which provided a high level summary of the Council's forecasted revenue and capital expenditure for the 2023/2024 financial year. The report was based on figures as at the end of Quarter 2 which predicated a £1.3m overspend, a £200k reduction on the forecast made at Quarter 1. Work would continue throughout the year to manage a break even position by the end of the financial year.

The Board raised the following points:

- what would the length of the loan for St Kildas be;
- would St Kildas impact on assisting people with move on accommodation;
- does St Kildas have an impact on wider Council budgets;
- what was the reason for the report not including much detail about the capital budget and the approved capital projects;
- were the Collection Fund figures worse for people in receipt of Council Tax Support;
- did the significant delays in updating changes to people's Council Tax accounts impact on Collection Fund levels;
- what progress had been made in reducing the time to update changes to Council Tax accounts;
- it would be helpful to see the change from the previous Quarter in future reports;
- how much was the proposed contribution from the Council to Shoalstone Pool;
- what was the general feel that the Council would have a balanced budget by the end of the financial year;
- the report states that 26 properties for temporary accommodation had been purchased with 21 occupied, what was the situation regarding the other 5 (it was noted that 29 properties had now been purchased); and
- what happens to the families who were housed in the new temporary accommodation properties to enable them to move into permanent accommodation.

The Board noted the Council's forecasted revenue outturn position and mitigating action identified in the submitted report and the new capital schemes. However, whilst recognising works were ongoing to amend the Capital Programme Members felt due to a lack of detailed information that they were unable to fully scrutinise the capital budget at this current time.

(Note: Councillors Bye, Barbara Lewis, Chris Lewis, Maddison and Tyerman left after discussion of this item.)

32. Safer Communities Torbay Annual Review

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence:

Shirley Beauchamp, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Commissioning and Strategy Lead, Torbay Council and Collette Eaton Harris, Interpersonal Trauma & Violence Lead, NHS Devon provided an update on domestic abuse and sexual violence and responded to the following questions:

- how were officers reaching out to the LGBTQ+ community to engage with them on work on domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- it was taking longer to house people from safer accommodation to permanent accommodation, what was the timescale for this;
- were officers talking to the safeguarding teams to encourage them to be more diligent to identify domestic abuse and sexual violence rather than safeguarding issues;
- what provision was there for victims not to face their perpetrators in court;
- was 22 properties for safe accommodation sufficient;
- what action was being taken to raise awareness of sexual violence and appropriate behaviours for children and young people;
- how can we reach those people who do not have access to social media to raise awareness and encourage reporting; and
- do we work with other authorities to move people out of area or take people from out of area so that they can be further away from their perpetrators.

Torbay Combatting Drugs Partnership:

Bruce Bell, Consultant in Public Health provided an overview of Torbay's Combatting Drugs Partnership which was locally titled Torbay Drug and Alcohol Partnership (TDAP) and responded to the following questions:

- the paper focuses mainly on drugs, how was alcohol being included;
- what was being done about the smell of some drugs around Torbay, especially in our town centres;
- once drug dependency had been identified there was a need for support, was Torbay following other areas using alternative drugs to treat dependency;
- what support was there around drugs in prisons and the impact on repeat offending; and
- had there been a shift in the type of drugs being used.

Operation Loki and Safer Streets:

David Hammond and Hayley Costar, Devon and Cornwall Police provided an update on Operation Loki and Dave Parsons, Strategic Lead for Community Protection outlined the Safer Streets project and responded to the following questions:

- there seemed to be an increase in antisemitic graffiti in the Bay was this being done by a small group of people and has there been any outreach to the Muslim community;
- does the funding for CCTV include money for staffing behind the scenes;
- Police do not always attend Community Partnership meetings, how do Councillors ensure that community based issues were being addressed by the Police and that you have the resources to support our communities in their homes; and
- what can Councillors do to help the Police and how can we get the messages out to the community.

Members acknowledged the importance of community intelligence and getting information to the Police and encouraging members of the public to report information online, or by calling the Police or reporting to Crimestoppers. This was then used by the Police to prioritise their responses but they were not always able to respond back to individuals but did use the information to look at patterns of crime and disorder.

Antisocial Behaviour and Key Areas of Work

Victoria McGeough, Partnership Lead Manager outlined her submitted report on antisocial behaviour and other key areas of work, this included: Prevent and Channel; Modern Slavery; serious violence; youth antisocial behaviour and Domestic Homicide Reviews and responded to the following questions:

- how big a problem was modern slavery in Torbay compared to other areas;
- Ward Councillors were not aware of the work in Foxhole regarding youth antisocial behaviour, how can we ensure that Ward Councillors are informed of projects in their communities; and
- has there been a pattern identified nationally on the increase of Domestic Homicide Reviews.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that an update on Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment be included in the next Safer Communities Annual Review and the revised Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy be presented to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board;
2. that an update on the Torbay Drugs and Alcohol Partnership (TDAP) be included in the next Safer Communities Annual Review and that this includes the TDAP performance dashboard;

3. that the Consultant in Public Health be requested to circulate a written update on the drug trial to the Board in six months time to see the effectiveness of the trial;
4. that Councillors consider areas to introduce Crimestoppers in their communities where they feel this would be beneficial;
5. that a copy of the letter on different ways of reporting be shared with Councillors so that they can share this with their communities; and
6. that Partners be requested to ensure that Ward Councillors are kept informed of work taking place in their communities so that they can raise awareness and engage with these projects.

Chairman/woman