

Summary of Quarter 1 2021/22 Overview and Scrutiny performance discussions

1. Framework

- 1.1 Quarter 1 2021/22 performance was discussed at the following Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) meeting.

Children and Young People O&S: 30 September 2021
Regeneration, Culture and Environment O&S: 14 October 2021

The Health & Adult Social Care O&S committee will be held after this committee so no summary can be provided.

2. Items referred to Business Support O&S

No items have been referred to Business Support O&S by the chairs of the other O&S Committees.

3. O&S Performance Discussions

- 3.1 This section provides a summary of the discussion at the Children and Young People and Regeneration, Culture and Environment O&S Committees.

3.1.1 Children and Young People O&S committee discussion summary.

Discussion:

The Director of People introduced the report which set out how the Council had performed on the delivery of two priority areas relevant to the Committee for the first quarter of 2021-22. Officers drew Members' attention to the indicators that were red including:

- excess weight – officers explained that there was a long term whole system approach in place to address this measure, which was a focus for the Council and a number of partner agencies, not least the NHS.
- Number of days between a child entering care and moving in with an adoptive family – officers explained this was slightly improved and was a figure significantly affected by sibling groups and children who were older or who had complex needs. Covid had also impacted this measure due to delays in the Court process.
- S47 and S17 assessment visits – there had been a drop in performance during quarter 1 which related to a small number of families and was attributable to the availability of families as well as partners (particularly over the summer holiday period) and to some vacancies in the assessment team.
- Children Social Care audits – officers explained this was a stretching target and a part of the improvement journey. Small improvements were being made but work was ongoing in this area.

- Persistent absence – officers explained that this was largely attributable to covid and the way a child’s absence is marked depending on whether they were absent because of isolating due to being in contact or because they had covid themselves. It was also reiterated that the figures provided were unvalidated figures.
- Young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) – officers explained that despite the red, performance in this area had been very good, particularly as the number of un-knowns (where a child’s destination in terms of EET was un-known) had dramatically reduced. Equally the percentage for Medway, although above national, was below the average for the South East. The pandemic had also been a factor in being a barrier for some NEETs to access employment, education or training.

Members then raised a number of questions and comments which included:

- Smoking at time of delivery – it was suggested that this target be reviewed to be a more stretching target.
- Number of days between a child entering care and moving in with adoptive family – in response to a question about how this was calculated officers confirmed this was the longest period of time measured and was from when the child entered care to when they go to live with an adoptive family. Other measures were taken around time to match etc but these were reported elsewhere and not part of the Council Plan Monitoring data set.
- Underweight children – Members asked to receive information in relation to children who were underweight in Medway, which officers undertook to provide.
- Unknowns – despite the large reduction in the percentage of children whose destination was unknown, Members still raised concern in relation to the children left. Officers recognised that but explained that the majority of the young people were likely to have moved out of area. There was a national system to track the information but there would always be a small number of children who would be difficult to track due to moving locations as an example.
- Be Yourself Project – Reference was made to the project, which provided additional support for young people around employability, education and training, and whether an extension to the project beyond October had been agreed. Officers undertook to report back to members with an update.
- Weight management programme – in response to a request for more detail on this, officers explained that this was a programme delivered through Public Health and children were mainly referred into the service as a result of the outcome of the national child measurement programme. Families could also self refer and Public Health worked with a wide range of partners to raise awareness and support appropriate referrals. The aim for children and families at the end of the programme is for them to be more active and eat more healthy and for at least 75% of the children and young people completing the programme to achieve that.

- Number of children on a Child Protection Plan per 10,000 – in response to a question about whether this target was set at the right value, officers explained that Medway was still on its improvement journey and were yet to determine exactly where the target should be. The service had worked hard to address drift and delay in this area but there was expected to be more movement of the numbers before settling as improvement is continued.

Decision:

The Committee noted the response.

3.1.2 Regeneration, Culture and Environment O&S committee discussion summary.

Discussion:

The Committee received a report setting out performance for Quarter 1 against the Council's two priorities Place and Growth insofar as they fell within the remit of this Committee, along with a review of the Council's Risk Register.

The following issues were discussed:

- **Green Flag Applications** – It was suggested that when mentioning the eight sites which were the subject of Green Flag applications, in addition to praising the work of Greenspaces and Medway Norse, the volunteers and various Friends Groups should also be recognised.
- **Climate Change Member Advisory Group** – It was noted that the Climate Change Member Advisory Group had not met for a while. The Assistant Director Front Line Services advised that a forward plan of meeting dates for the next year was in the process of being drawn up and she agreed to inform the Member concerned as to the date of the next meeting.

In addition, she informed the Committee that a Member Briefing on Climate Change was scheduled for 6.30pm on Wednesday 20 October 2021 commencing at 6.30pm.

- **Air Quality** – Concern was expressed as to the air quality in parts of Medway and in particular around schools with the emissions from buses.

In response, the Assistant Director Front Line Services informed the Committee that a report on the National Bus Strategy, Enhanced Partnerships and Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIP) would be considered by Cabinet on 19 October 2021. If approved there would be enhanced partnership working with bus operators which would involve close monitoring of performance. In addition, there would be opportunities to bid for funding streams for improvements to the fleet to make the vehicles more environmentally friendly in line with the Council's Climate Change agenda.

The Committee was also informed that discussions were taking place concerning bus concessions. This was in response to concerns raised around elderly residents in rural communities getting to hospital appointments.

Decision:

The Committee:

- a) noted the Quarter 1 2021/22 performance against the measures used to monitor progress against the Council's priorities.
- b) noted that the Assistant Director Front Line Services will inform the Member concerned as to the date of the next meeting of the Climate Change Advisory Member Group.