

## SHARED SERVICES PROGRAMME UPDATE

### Report of the Director of Children's Services

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To update members on progress with Tameside and Stockport's shared services programme which aims to improve outcomes for children and families by delivering the best possible services through challenging times and within diminishing resources, supported through an emphasis on collaboration and partnership. The programme aims to explore and realise the opportunities to do things differently to build capacity and share best practice across traditional boundaries.
- 1.2 To also update members on outcomes of a scoping exercise that took place over the Summer 2021 and the recommendations for a phased approach to reviewing opportunities for shared services.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Building on the strong partnership work between Stockport and Tameside through the Partners in Practice (PIP) programme and the strong shared ambitions between both authorities, a shared Director of Education was appointed from 1 April 2021. Working across both councils he is bringing sustainable leadership supported by existing relationships and knowledge of Stockport.
- 2.2 Through a shared services programme of options have been explored and scoped to deliver enhanced and sustainable services to improve the life chances for individuals 0-25 years. This to draw on the experience and learning already gained to develop a model, which aligns with the GM Framework for Integrated Public Service Reform, and the Greater Manchester Children and Young People's plan 2019-22.

#### 2.3

This work will:

- **Build** upon the strong foundations of partnership between Stockport and Tameside
- **Support** a proactive response to the porous borders between each local area and those children crossing the boundaries for settings/schools and care arrangements
- **Secure** significantly better outcomes for children and young people through sharing and rolling out of best practice and innovation and co-creating solutions to system issues.
- **Identify** potential economies of scale and savings.
- **Maximise** the learning, experience, and successes from both Stockport and Tameside developments. For example
  - the Stockport Family model, including scale and spread of What Works evaluated programmes; Team around the School (TAS), social workers in schools in Greater Manchester, and Partners in practice (PIP) and sector led improvement programme (SLIP) and
  - the improvement that leaders in Tameside have delivered through clear improvement priorities ([Tameside Loves Reading](#)) and increasingly strong early

help offer, recently peer reviewed by colleagues in Stockport. Tameside is committed to an evidence informed school improvement model with school-to-school support at its heart and enjoys strong partnerships with its schools and with local and national (EEF, Ogden Trust) partners.

- **Establish** the conditions for further innovation and reform.

- 2.4 There are challenges and issues facing both authorities around capacity and resources as a result of multiple factors not least the challenging financial landscape and the impact of the pandemic.
- 2.5 The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) in Stockport is in place to deliver a resilient budget and this sets out robust prioritisation and ambitious changes in the way we work if we are to continue to meet the needs of local people today and in the future. We know we need to be radical, brave and ambitious – reimagining what we do, how we do it and being clear on why we are doing it, putting local people and businesses at the heart of our new way of working at all times.
- 2.6 As part of the MTFP, within the Value for Money proposals there is £270k identified for delivering shared and traded services and this saving will be realised through the efficiencies realised through this programme as well as income generation from sharing our good practice with other authorities.
- 2.7 The pandemic has significantly affected our children, young people, and their families, whether that is through the pressures of remote learning, the cancellation of exams, missing going to university, not being able to attend local baby groups or simply being unable to spend time with friends and family. Whilst we continue to understand the longer-term impact of Covid-19, the collaboration between Stockport and Tameside will enable us to work together on our response. Harnessing the best practice and capacity in each borough to ensure there is both breadth and quality in the offer of support, we make available to school leaders, children, and families. Stockport's review of the early help offer in Tameside identified key strengths within their blended offer to children and families, high take up of online provision, excellent family feedback and effective communication strategy all of which can benefit our families in Stockport.

### **3. INFORMATION**

#### **Activity to Date**

- 3.1 A shared services programme board has been established with representatives from both councils including lead members, DCSs, finance, legal, human resources and school representation to explore areas for collaboration, scope and options. The board will:
- Oversee and steer the programme of work to explore and scope the options available to deliver enhanced and sustainable services to improve the life chances for individuals 0-25 years.
  - Receive feedback from an initial scoping exercise undertaken jointly across both councils' education and SEND departments to enable the development of detailed options appraisals.
  - Agree the phasing of this programme and priorities for the first stages of collaboration. To advise and inform more detailed evidence-based proposals and then approve for taking through wider decision-making governance processes of each council.
  - The programme board is advisory and all decisions will be brought through the governance processes of each Council.

- 3.2 The programme board has had two meetings to date. The initial meeting to establish terms of reference, membership, aims and objectives of the scoping exercise; the second to approve recommendations from the scoping exercise. The third meeting is taking place 23 November to receive initial proposals and agree next steps.
- 3.3 Workstreams were established with membership including service leads from both authorities to explore opportunities and identify required action to understand feasibility in the following areas: SEND; school improvement, sufficiency and school place planning, virtual school, external places and commissioning, quality improvement and out of hours service.
- 3.4 This work will enable the development of detailed options appraisals. This will seek to identify ways to improve services and improve outcomes and introduce efficiencies from economies of scale. This more detailed evidence-based proposal will be subject to the decision-making governance processes of each council.
- 3.5 As the proposals are developed, they will be presented to this committee for members to have the opportunity to inform and shape.
- 3.6 It is anticipated that this partnership approach will bring other benefits and these will require further exploration and evidencing through this initial phase of scoping and options appraisal prior to bringing them through each council's governance process for agreement.

### **Phasing**

- 3.7 Considering the outcomes of the exploration and scoping phase the board has decided that there is merit in taking a phased approach to development and implementation of shared services across Stockport and Tameside. Whilst the development work will continue across all workstreams, implementation will be phased as follows:

Phase 1 – 21/22 focus on

- a model of school improvement across both authorities
- quality and improvement hub
- a shared out of hours service

Phase 2 – 22/23 onwards

- Focus on SEND, Virtual School and School Place Planning

### **Phase 1 - 21/22**

- 3.8 To explore a model of school improvement across both authorities which could release leadership capacity and realise opportunities across data sharing, early years foundation stage, leadership and governor services. This will also support an improved approach to offering support to all school types across both authorities and ensure the continued and improved relationship with schools in our communities. This strengthening of services will enable integrated knowledge and local experience to improve services to children and their families.
- 3.9 Secondly, to explore a **unique quality, improvement and innovation hub**, as a centre of excellence to review and consider all services provided across the two local authorities that support improvement and quality across the children's system, including but not exclusive to quality in safeguarding and learning, inspection preparation and income generating external improvement support.
- 3.10 Finally, to consider opportunities for a **shared Out of Hours service** to maximise capacity and skills across both authorities. This service provides emergency help out of normal office hours staffed by people with a good working knowledge and understanding of health and

social care services. The team works in partnership with other professionals and aims to make difficult situations safe and provide emergency social work support to people in crisis. In pooling resources, a more resilient service can be offered with opportunity for contingency in the event of sickness absence and leave. This also will support a more effective utilisation of time to cover the peaks and troughs of demand

- 3.11 Proposals for the areas in focus for phase 1 are being worked on and detailed information will be brought to this committee for discussion in January.
- 3.12 As further opportunities emerge within the other workstreams members will be updated.
- 3.13 This is careful and deliberate work which is progressing at a pace which will allow considered and detailed analysis of the opportunities as it is important that we are satisfied in every case that this is the right thing for the residents of Stockport.
- 3.14 Once the proposals are developed a further report will be presented to members setting out a detailed business case. Depending on what the proposed options are, advice will be provided to the board as to financial considerations as well as the appropriate decision-making governance process (e.g. in the event it may be considered a Key Decision under Stockport's Constitution). There may well be consequential impact on policy that may require changes to be agreed and implemented. Impact on human resources, environment and equalities will also be detailed at that stage.

#### **4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

That members note the report and provide any comments and observations.

For further information please contact [carolyn.anderson@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:carolyn.anderson@stockport.gov.uk)