

## Council – 22 November 2023

### Cross Party Alteration to motion 9e – Council supports the exploration of for a Greater Manchester-wide Trial of the Baby-box

This Council notes:

- Across Greater Manchester, more than one in every three children grow up in poverty. Three of the 20 local authorities with the highest levels of child poverty nationally, are in Greater Manchester.
- As many as 10 children in every classroom of 30, are not getting the start in life that they deserve.
- The pandemic has compounded this situation, leading to a spike in child poverty rates of approximately 6% during the ‘pandemic years’ – 2020 and 2021.

This council believes in the power of early intervention and in the positive difference that can be made when health services provide meaningful support to families and children from birth.

The Baby Box **scheme** is a care package which is delivered to expectant parents, carers and guardians in the early stages of a child’s life. It is loaded with essentials such as clothing, reusable nappies, maternity pads, blankets, wraps and slings, as well as books, vouchers and advice for new parents. The box itself doubles as a small cot.

The principle behind the Baby Box is that every child should be offered the best possible start in life.

Finland and Scotland have long since adopted the Baby Box. Each have seen **this contributing to** a steady and sustained positive impact on child poverty rates, as well as **on** infant mortality rates and rates of post-natal depression, among other positive health impacts.

The universal nature of the baby box in both countries means that ~~no child is left behind and that~~ no stigma is placed on families for receiving support.

Whilst a universally implemented Baby Box could deliver **positive transformational** outcomes for children and families across Greater Manchester, this council recognises the current strain on public sector finance and therefore advocates for a proportionate universal approach to be **explored** ~~adopted~~ in developing a Greater Manchester-wide trial of the Baby Box.

**This Council also acknowledges and values the support already offered to new parents in Trafford by community and voluntary services such as The Little Green Sock Project and our Trafford Community Hubs, as well as the role of businesses in driving positive health outcomes for the people of Greater Manchester. We would seek to engage with such communities when exploring options for a Baby Box scheme.**

~~This Council also believes in the importance of the role of businesses in driving positive health outcomes for the people of Greater Manchester.~~

This Council resolves to:

- **that the Leader of the Council, the Executive Member for Health and Care and Executive Member for Children and Young People engage with Council Officers and Children’s Scrutiny committee to explore the feasibility of introducing a Baby Box scheme in Trafford, comparing this with other assistance already in place, in alignment with our existing strategies to tackle poverty.**
- **If it is assessed that a Baby Box offer is feasible in Trafford, report our findings to the Mayor of Greater Manchester and the Deputy Mayor for Health, calling for the exploration of sources of funding and options for the delivery of an ethical and sustainable Baby Box trial in Greater Manchester.**
- ~~— Support a Greater Manchester-wide trial of the baby-box based on the principle of proportional universalism and ask the Leader of the Council, and representatives from all parties to send an ‘all-party’ letter to the Mayor of Greater Manchester and his deputy with responsibility for Health, calling for options for a trial to be developed and expressing our shared belief that the public and private sectors can work together in the delivery of an ethical and sustainable baby-box trial.~~
- ~~— Write to the Leaders of the other Greater Manchester local authorities calling on them to add their support for a trial.~~
- ~~— Undertake consultation here in Trafford to hear suggestions from parents and professionals about their needs and how a baby-box could best provide the right support.~~