

TRAFFORD PANDEMIC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 AUGUST 2020

PRESENT

Councillor D. Acton (in the Chair).

Councillors Dr. K. Barclay, Miss L. Blackburn, G. Coggins, J. Dillon, J. Holden, J. Lamb (Vice-Chair), J. Lloyd, J.D. Newgrosh, R. Thompson, D. Western, A.M. Whyte, A.J. Williams and B.G. Winstanley.

In attendance

Councillor Ross	Executive Member for Finance and Investment
Councillor Slater	Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Equalities
Councillor Wright	Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration
Richard Roe	Corporate Director of Place
Jill McGregor	Corporate Director of Children's Services
Diane Eaton	Corporate Director of Adult Services
Eleanor Roaf	Director of Public Health
Jane Le Fevre	Corporate Director of Governance and Community Strategy
Claire Ball	Specialist Commissioner
John Addison	Governance Manager and Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Alexander Murray	Governance Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S.B. Anstee, A. New and B. Shaw

29. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held 29 July 2020 be agreed as an accurate record.

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No additional declarations were made.

31. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions had been received.

32. HOMELESSNESS

The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration introduced the item. The Committee were told that there had been a significant increase in homeless applications since mid-June when the lockdown came to an end. The executive member stressed the need for the Council to lobby government to extend the eviction ban to avoid a homelessness crisis. A bed every night was working well and funding was secured until the end of the year. Through the next steps

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accommodation fund Trafford was bidding for capital funds to bring an empty property into use to support homeless people with complex needs.

The Corporate Director for Place added that during the early days of the COVID 19 pandemic there had been a reduction in homelessness applications, which then increased when lockdown ended. There was continued concern of a potential backlog of evictions and repossession action. There had been a significant reduction in the turnover of social housing stock, which the council used to house homeless people, and available affordable housing. Due to the lack turnover it was likely that the Council would see demand increase throughout the year.

Councillor Lamb asked about people being placed at the Amblehurst in sale and the number of people being placed in Trafford from other authorities. The Councillor noted that some people who had been placed at the Amblehurst had taken part in anti-social behaviour. The report stated that the Council did not always receive the section 208 notification from other Councils and the Councillor wanted to know why that was and whether anything could be done about it. The Councillor also asked what Trafford could do to ensure that the people placed in the borough but then took part in antisocial behaviour were addressed by the local authority that placed them in Trafford. The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration responded that Trafford had performed two days of action Sale town centre recently and had found that the majority of those taking part in antisocial behaviour were not from the Amblehurst.

The Executive Member stated that many of the people placed at the Amblehurst were particularly vulnerable people with drug, alcohol, and mental health issues. The Executive Member noted that Manchester City Council could have performed better when placing the residents in the Amblehursts and asked the Committee to take into consideration that Manchester was a hub for homelessness and had more homeless people than the rest of the GM authorities. Manchester had some responsibilities for the individuals placed in other areas although anti-social behaviour and similar issues were not part of those duties.

The Corporate Director of Place added that Trafford were working with GMP, the community strategy Team and the Housing Team to address issues. With regards to section 208 notices work was ongoing across the GM authorities on how to manage placements better. The vast majority of authorities had a poor performance on the completion of 208 notices and authorities could not refuse a person that an authority wanted to place in their area, even without a 208 notice.

The Chair noted the response from The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration and the Corporate Director of Place and requested that the Council continue to work on the completion of 208 notices for people placed in Trafford to ensure that the Council could meet their responsibilities to those people.

Councillor Williams informed the Committee that Trafford did not have as many people placed in the borough as other areas due to the high cost of accommodation and that Trafford also placed people in other authorities when trying to house homeless applicants. Councillor Williams noted that Salford Council had started work with registered providers of social housing to implement

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additional pre action protocol where they contacted the authority whenever a case went to court and not just when a warrant was issued. Councillor Williams then asked whether this was something the Council could consider. Councillor Williams noted that the Council had been excellent at sharing performance data with the Committee and elected members during the pandemic and asked that information be shared regularly on this issue so that members were aware of the situation.

Councillor Winstanley supported the statements made by Councillor Williams and asked whether there was anything that the Council could do to support residents when the suspension on evictions came to an end.

Councillor Blackburn asked for clarification as to whether support needed by people placed within Trafford was provided by Trafford or the placing authority. The Corporate Director of Adult Services responded that the responsibility lay with the placing authority for any ongoing social work activity. Councillor Blackburn asked whether that support was being provided. The Director of Adult services responded that support was being provided for all the people that Trafford were aware of and if it was found that a placing authority was not providing support Trafford would approach the authority to ensure support was provided. The Corporate Director of Children's services added that the responsibility did lay with the placing authority but if a safeguarding issue arose Trafford had a duty to act and make sure that safeguarding was in place. If such an event occurred then the case management would then be passed back to the placing authority.

The Corporate Director of Place responded to Councillors Williams' and Winstanley's points. Trafford had something similar Salford's approach in place and were working with registered providers at a GM level around protocols and understanding the current position around rent arrears within the stock to enable forward planning. The Council's greatest concern was around private landlords and the issuing of section 21 notices rather than seeking rent arrears. Using a section 21 notice a tenant could be evicted within two months of the notice being granted so it was expected that there would be an increase of evictions two to three months after the end of the suspension. Work was ongoing at the GM level with representatives of private landlords but unfortunately not all private landlords were represented by those groups. The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration added that the solution to the problem was in Central Governments hands and that the Council would continue to lobby for action to be taken.

Councillor Coggins supported the comments made by Councillor Williams and the Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration. Councillor Coggins welcomed that Trafford had gone a number of nights with no rough sleepers and hoped this would continue. Councillor Coggins also noted that a further suspension of evictions would only be a temporary solution and that the Council and Government needed to consider long terms solutions to these issues.

Councillor Barclay thanked officers for the report and the work that was being done. Councillor Barclay noted the report stated Trafford met with Manchester and other local authorities on a regular basis. The Councillor asked given this regular contact why it had taken so long to provide support for people placed at

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Amblehurst. The Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration responded that Trafford had been working with the Ambelhurst and Manchester throughout the pandemic and issues around the Ambelhurst had come up on a number of occasions during that time. Trafford were committed to supporting the residents placed at the Ambelhurst and would continue to work with Manchester to identify and resolve any further issues that may arise.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the update be noted.
- 2) That the Committee request that the Council work alongside other Local Authorities to ensure 208 notices are completed before a person is placed within the borough.
- 3) That the Committee requests information on homelessness in Trafford be shared regularly with Councillors so they are aware of the Council's position.

33. CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The Corporate Director of Children's services gave a brief introduction to the report that had been circulated with the agenda. The Committee were informed that there were a number of services which provided support for Children and Young people's mental health and wellbeing and that the report was focused mainly upon the Council's CAMHS service, which was a commissioned service. During the Pandemic there had been increased demand for mental health and wellbeing support both among children and young people's services and adult services.

Following the Corporate Director of Children's Services introduction the Specialist Commissioner provided a response to the questions that had been received in advance. The Committee were informed that the CAMHS service had been functioning as usual during the pandemic taking new referrals and continuing to meet with children and young people on a face to face basis where clinically necessary. Telephone and video appointments were used where appropriate and the services had linked in with schools to ensure appropriate support was available. Duty workers had contacted all new referrals to ensure that they were going to the most appropriate service. The Council had seen a reduction in the number of referrals compared to the previous year; this reduction had been seen across all mental health services the council provided. While the number of referrals had decreased the level of activity within the service had increased as staff strove to contact service users to ensure they were coping. Waiting times had reduced from the previous year and as of July no child had waited longer than 5 weeks to receive an appointment. The level of referrals had increased to normal levels in recent weeks and the referrals that were coming through were more complex, which had been seen across all mental health services.

In relation to recovery and surge planning the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, who provided Trafford's CAMHS service, had set up two groups. One group was developing the surge plan to cope with the expected increase in referrals as children returned to school after summer. The other group was reviewing the work done throughout the COVID 19 pandemic to see what the

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service would keep in place as it was unlikely that the service would go back to the way it was before. The service was likely to become a blend of the pre COVID service and the current service with increased provision of telephone and video based support on top of face to face support. The service had found that there were children and young people who preferred to access the service via telephone and video support and others who preferred to meet face to face with their clinician.

Another piece of work within the service was to employ a five subject matter expert who would be a key link for schools. A specific contact had been created for that worker so schools could go to them directly for advice and sign posting. All mental health services had been involved in the virtual mental health hub where a number of sub groups had been set up to ensure that services had plans in place for when schools reopened in September 2020. The support provided included videos schools could access which explained the range of services available to them. Schools welcomed the mental health toolkit that the Council had created to be provided to children when they returned to school.

Following the update Committee Members were given the opportunity to raise any questions. Councillor Winstanley asked for clarification around the terminology in the report and what constituted a first assessment. The Councillor also asked what a booked appointment was. The Specialist Commissioner responded that both appointments could be via telephone, video, or in person depending on the need. When a referral came in it was triaged and a first appointment made with a timescale dependent upon urgency and availability of the service and young person. The first assessment was not always carried out by a clinician and so the Council also measured the waiting time between the referral and when the young person received treatment.

Councillor Dillon asked what the qualifications of the triage team were, whether any children and young people had been hospitalised during the COVID 19 period, what the response time for children who had been hospitalised was, and whether the child or young person would be seen in hospital. The Specialist Commissioner responded that there had been hospital admissions during the pandemic and the route for those children and young people was the crisis care pathway. Trafford Commissioned the all age mental health service which delivered services at Trafford General, Wythenshawe, and Manchester Royal Infirmary. The standard waiting time for someone accessing this pathway was 1 hour to be seen by the all age mental health liaising team. The latest data showed that they had achieved that standard in June but had missed it in April and the exact data would be shared with the Committee following the meeting. The CAMHS team then performed a seven day follow up appointment with the child or young person. Again the data on the seven day follow up was not available at the meeting but would be provided afterwards. The Committee were informed that there had been an increase in the number of children and young people who had been hospitalised during the period. Regarding the qualification levels of staff the Specialist Commissioner needed to check with the service for the exact information but the Committee were assured that all staff were qualified mental health practitioners.

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Councillor Thompson asked whether the Committee could receive monitoring data on the outcomes that children and young people achieved through the service. The Specialist Commissioner responded that monitoring data could be provided for both the CAMHS service and the other mental health services. The Committee were informed that services used different methods of assessment with some using goal based outcomes, some used strength and difficulty questionnaires, and the CAMHS used CHIESQ which was Children's Experience of Service questionnaire. All services also recorded case studies and the Specialist Commissioner informed the Committee that an in depth report on performance data could be provided for all mental health services. The Commissioning Team ran an annual questionnaire with children and young people and stakeholders as part of the local transformation plan. Following the survey a "you said we did" plan was created to show respondents the impact that their feedback had on the service. The Specialist Commissioner told the Committee that she would prepare a document with all of the information in it.

The Corporate Director of Children's Services added that while the Council did not provide the service directly they were committed to understanding what the service was like for Trafford's children and young people. Trafford worked closely with providers to ensure that a robust performance framework was in place. The framework did not just look at waiting times but Children and Young People's experience of the services from first contact through to treatment.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Committee are to receive performance data on the 1 hour waiting time for the crisis care pathway and seven day follow up be sent to the Committee.
- 3) That the qualifications of the triage team be provided to the Committee.
- 4) That the Committee are to receive monitoring data for all children and young people's mental health services.

34. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Executive Member for Finance and Investment introduced the budget outrun report that had been circulated to the committee prior to the meeting. The Committee were informed that the projected shortfall for the year was £17.7M which comprised of £23.2M COVID 19 related costs and £5.5M underspend on the delivery of the Council's Corporate Services. There was an explanation on pages 16 and 17 within the report of the impact of COVID 19 on the budget. Since that report was written a third tranche of funding had been announced which consisted of £1.8M from central government. It had also been announced that the Council were able to spread the Council Tax and Business rates collection fund deficit over the next three years and support was being provided around lost fees and charges. The exact detail around this support had not been provided but the Council estimated that the Council would receive around an additional £4M. Together with an increase in Council tax collection the Council were looking at an in year gap between £1M and £6.4M. The Executive Member for Finance and Investment stressed that these figures were estimates and could all change during

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the course of the rest of the year. While the in year deficit had reduced since the last update the Executive Member for Finance and Investment drew the Committee's attention to the forecasted deficit in 2021/22, which was estimated at around £35M. The Executive were looking at possible plans to address that gap and a report was to go to the Executive in October. The Corporate Director of Finance and Systems added that the figures that had been presented would undoubtedly be wrong due to the early time in the year and the unpredictable nature of the COVID 19 pandemic.

The Chair requested that an update be provided for the Committee which laid out what may happen and what actions the Council were taking so that both Committee Members and the public understand the position. The Executive Member for Finance and Investment agreed with the Chair and assured the Committee that both the Committee and the public would continue to receive updates on the work of the Council going forward. The report going to the Executive meeting in October would lay out the Council's plans in greater detail.

Councillor Coggins asked for clarification around a number of points raised within the update including the spreading of the deficit across years, what the £4M reduction in the deficit related to, and whether the worst case scenario regarding Manchester Airport had been updated. The Executive Member for Finance responded that around £2M of the current year's deficit was being spread to next year and that the main increase in the 2021/22 deficit was due to expected recurring COVID 19 pressures. The £4M was an estimate of the support that Trafford would receive from the Government in relation to the loss of income. The Corporate Director of Finance and Systems added that some of the recurrent costs were around the increased social care costs which the Council were predicting as well as the spreading of the deficit over the next three years. The Corporate Director of Finance and Systems stated that the Council welcomed the ability to spread the deficit and would welcome further ability to spread other parts of the deficit to deal with the substantial in year budget gap. The Council had split costs related to COVID 19 into recurrent and none recurrent and it was hoped that the Pandemic would not continue into further years, but this was something that could not be predicted. The Executive Member for Finance informed the Committee that an IFS report had recommended that local authorities be allowed the use of short term borrowing facilities which would be welcomed by the Council. The Corporate Director of Finance and Systems informed the Committee that Manchester Airport were meeting regularly with stakeholders and were monitoring their income closely. It was currently predicted that the airport would get back to usual levels within two years but this was very difficult to predict.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for Finance and Investment and the Corporate Director of Finance and Systems for attending the meeting and answering the Committee's questions.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That an another report on the Council's position and action's being taken at the Committee's next meeting.

35. PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

The Director of Public Health gave a brief update on the position within Trafford. Trafford had seen a sharp rise in cases followed by a drop and now the number of cases was starting to rise again. Trafford had the 22nd highest rates of cases in England with 66 new cases since the 14th August with a rate of 27.9 per 100,000 population. Cases were spread across the borough and there did not appear to be any clustering with cases often being the only one within their household. In Trafford there were more cases among men than women and 18 – 40 year olds were the age group that had the highest number of cases. There had started to be some cases in the over 70 and over 80 population, which were the most at risk age demographics.

The Director of Public Health then answered questions that had been provided in advance. The first question related to the increased lockdown, why this had been done at a GM level rather than locally, and why Trafford had been locked down when the figures were below the 50 cases per 100,000 trigger. The Director of Public Health responded that it had been a national decision by the Government that the lockdown would be across GM and at the time when the lockdown was implemented Trafford had the second highest rates across GM. Germany had a national trigger of 50 cases per 100,000 people for lockdown but England did not have a national trigger level. The Chair stated that the lockdown had come as a surprise given the information that had been provided at the Committee's previous meeting and through national communications. The Director of Public Health agreed with the Chair and it had come as a surprise for everyone involved.

The next question was whether the lockdown restrictions would be lifted by local authorities or be done at the GM level. The Director of Public Health responded that it was unlikely that it would be done at a local level especially for an area like Trafford where a large number of residents from other areas came into the borough to work among other dependencies. Given the dependence of each local area upon the other parts of the conurbation it was very likely that a GM wide approach would be taken.

Councillor Lamb asked that if infection was spreading mainly within households would that mean that lockdowns would be lifted locally. The Director of Public Health stated that the pattern in Trafford showed that cases were not being spread among households with around 50% of cases being the sole case in their household. This may change going forward but was not what was currently being seen.

The Director of Public Health then responded to a question about the levels of infection among the BAME community. Within the most recent data there had been 286 positive cases of which 32 did not put their ethnicity. Out of the remaining 254 cases 70% were white (Compared to 85.5% of the population), 15% were from the Asian/Asian British (Compared to 7.9% of the Population) 6% in Black/Black British (Compared to 3% of the Population), 3.5% Mixed ethnicity (Compared to 2.9% of the population), and other nearly 5% (Compared to 1% of the population). These figures showed that people of Asian/Asian British and Black/Black British were over represented within the number of positive cases

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compared to their demographic of the population but the majority of positive cases were from the white population.

The next question that the Director of Public Health answered was why the Hale Barns ward consistently had some of the highest number of cases. The Director of Public Health stated that there was no definitive answer to this question but that the higher number of cases could result from the wards close proximity to a testing site or that it could be due to social or economic factors within the ward.

Councillor Barclay asked whether there was a way to measure compliance within the borough and whether Trafford were able to backwards trace infections to understand how it was being spread. The Director of Public Health responded that the Council only heard about people not abiding by the rules was when the police were called out to an incident. In the last week the police were called out around 38 times in Trafford. Other than those incidents the Council had no way of measuring compliance. With regards to backwards tracing the Council had not been able to do much of this so far due to not having sufficient data. The following week the Trafford's local contract tracing would start which would enable backwards tracing to be conducted.

Councillor Barclay enquired as to whether there were any trends in the number of incidents where the police had been called out. The Director of Public Health responded that this was not data that Public Health Held but that it could be gained from another team and could form part of the next update to the Committee.

Councillor Newgrosh asked what levers were within the power of the Council to combat the spread of the virus. The Director of Public Health responded that at the GM level work was ongoing to identify what measures would work across the area as there was not a consistent pattern of spread across the conurbation. There were a number of measures that would work across GM but it was then a matter of how to implement them locally. One such measure was the closure of bars that had been running as night clubs and other establishments breaking the social distancing rules. Trafford had not had to close down any establishments yet but had been working very closely with bars and businesses to ensure that they knew and understood the rules. Some businesses had closed temporarily while they implemented sufficient measures to ensure the safety of staff and customers with the help of Trafford's Environmental Support Officers.

Councillor Lloyd welcomed the local contact tracing and stated that the rules were vague and confusing which was leading to people not following them. The restrictions on people being able to see family members was particularly difficult for people especially when they felt that others were not following the rules. The Director for Public Health agreed with the Councillors points and added that as it did not appear that the pandemic would be over before winter and people had to start thinking about how they were going to live in a way that did not negatively impact their physical and mental health and wellbeing during those times with the restrictions in place.

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The Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing, and Equalities added that police officers were going out on weekends with enforcement officers visiting premises to make sure that people were following the rules. The Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing, and Equalities noted the excellent work that the Public Health Team had done throughout the pandemic and that the Council would have been in a much worse situation without their work and support. The Director of Public Health thanked the Executive Member for the feedback and support and added that the work of the health protection colleagues from Public Health England had been of great help throughout the pandemic.

The Chair thanked the Director of Public Health the Public Health Team and everyone else who had worked with them during this crisis.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the update be noted.
- 2) That the Director of Public Health and the Public Health Team be thanked for all of their work throughout the pandemic.
- 3) That the next update to the Board is to include figures of the number of incidents the police are called out to.

36. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The Chair noted that the Committee only had one more scheduled meeting left and while the Council may decide to continue the arrangements they also may decide to revert to the standard Scrutiny arrangements. The Chair informed the Committee that if anything was not covered within the next meeting it would either be covered in the additional meetings of the Committee or would be passed onto the most relevant Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair proposed that the meeting in September should cover the Council's finances, schools reopening, active travel, and public health. Committee Members raised possible issues with having a schools update on the 9th September due to the proximity to the schools re-opening and the lack of opportunity to gather meaningful information. Councillor Lloyd suggested that the update on public health should look at winter pressures and Councillor Barclay added that the Committee could ask for the Council's preparations for flu vaccinations.

The Chair noted the Committee Members comments and stated that the agenda setting panel was meeting on the following day and would consider the points that had been raised.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the proposals made by the Committee be noted for consideration by the agenda setting panel.

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and finished at 5.57 pm