

## **Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee**

**19 June 2017**

Present: Councillor M Thirlaway (Chair)  
Councillors A Austin, J Cassidy,  
K Clark, M Green, K Lee, A Newman, P Oliver,  
M Reynolds and L Spillard.

Mrs M Ord                      Parent Governor Representative

### **CES01/06/17          Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Brooks and A Waggott-Fairley and Mr G O'Hanlon and Rev. M Vine Church Representatives.

### **CES02/06/17          Substitute Members**

Pursuant to the Council's Constitution the appointment of the following substitute member was reported:

Councillor L Spillard for Councillor P Brooks.

### **CES03/06/17          Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.

### **CES04/06/17          Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 March 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **CES05/06/17          Work Programme 2017/18**

The sub-committee received a report which detailed its proposed work programme for the 2017/18 municipal year.

The sub-committee was informed that the process of establishing the 2017/18 work programme had begun in February 2017 with an email to Cabinet Members, Councillors and Tier 1, 2 and 3 managers seeking suggestions for topics in relation to policy development for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its sub-committees to examine for the year ahead. An article was also placed on the Authority's web site and communication platforms inviting members of the public to raise issues that they thought would be suitable for scrutiny to investigate. The Scrutiny Chairs and Deputies also discussed the ideas which had been put forward.

As a consequence of this work a draft work programme with a range of scrutiny activities and topics for regular monitoring for the year ahead had been developed and discussed

with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Sub-committee at a pre-agenda meeting. Members of the committee had also been requested to put their suggestions forward.

The Chair and Deputy Chair had agreed that the sub group examining the transition process between children and adult services for disabled young people established at the January 2017 meeting of the sub-committee (previous minute CES46/01/17) should continue into the 2017/18 municipal year and once this work was completed the committee would decide upon a new subject for an in-depth review.

During discussion on the proposed work programme Members made additional suggestions for the work programme which included an update on the information provided in January 2017 on Dyslexia Services; the special education, additional needs and disability (SEND) service; school funding; eating disorder provision; and the impact of the changes to the school nurses provision and organisation.

It was also requested and agreed by Members that the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning be invited to the July meeting to explain to the committee his vision for the year ahead and to answer any questions.

**Agreed** (1) to approve the proposed work programme for the 2017/18 municipal year with the inclusion of the additional topics detailed above to an appropriate meeting in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Sub-committee; and (2) to invite the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning to the next meeting of the sub-committee to present his aims and aspirations for the 2017/18 municipal year and to answer questions from the sub-committee.

## **CES06/06/17 Children and Young People's Plan 2014-18**

The sub-committee received an end of year report on the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan. The Children and Young People's Plan provided the strategic framework for the integrated planning, commissioning and delivery of children's services in order to improve the lives of children and young people in the borough. The Plan was produced and owned by the Children, Young People and Learning Partnership. The Plan also served as the borough's Child Poverty Strategy, setting out how partners would work together to address the underlying causes of deprivation.

The Plan's priorities were aligned with the 'Our North Tyneside Plan', the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Safer North Tyneside Plan and set out three priorities and associated outcomes, which were:

### **1. Ready for School**

- a) A healthy early childhood.
- b) Children are ready to start school.

### **2. Ready for Work and Life**

- a) Narrow the gap in educational outcomes.
- b) Ready for employment.

### **3. Safe, Supported and Cared For**

- a) The most vulnerable children and young people are protected.
- b) Improved outcomes for looked after children.
- c) The right support for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs.

The Policy, Performance and Research Manager attended the meeting to present the report and answer any questions.

Under Ready for School the percentage of pupils reaching a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage has increased since 2013 from 48.3% to 69.7%. It was well understood that there were gaps in attainment within the Borough and the Plan was focused on reducing those gaps; the gap within North Tyneside overall had reduced to 12% and an improvement had been seen amongst pupils living in Riverside and Chirton. Currently the assessment of the readiness to learn of children between the ages of 2 and 2 ½ was carried out by health visitors and nurseries and the data focused on the number of assessments carried out. A more local measure was to be developed to highlight and monitor concerns identified by it. A gap did exist between boys and girls and this was to be the focus of schools and the School Improvement Service in the coming year.

Under Ready for Work and Life one of the aims was to narrow the gap in educational attainment between boys and girls. The gender gap in North Tyneside was generally smaller than national (8.2% gap) and although the gap varied between schools, attainment in Basics for both boys and girls in North Tyneside was significantly better than national attainment for each gender. North Tyneside girls exceeded the national attainment by 3.7% and North Tyneside boys exceeded the national attainment level by 6.3% and the attainment for both boys and girls had improved since 2013.

It was noted that in 2012/13 the gap was 7%, rose to 11% in 2013/14 and dropped again to 7% in 2014. The Policy, Performance and Research Manager agreed to investigate whether the cause for this change was known and to provide an answer to the sub-committee in writing.

Ensuring that young people in North Tyneside had the right high level skills and qualifications to progress and succeed in the job market was important for their happiness and the regions' prosperity. 88% of young people progressed to Key Stage 5 (A level), of those, 90% progressed into a positive destination after Key Stage 5. Young people were proceeding to a positive destination at an increasing rate and had continued the trend from the past few years. This continued to be a higher than national rate for this measure.

Alongside supporting local businesses to create jobs, the Plan also aimed to support local people to have the right skills to access these jobs. A measure highlighted the gap that was recorded from local employers about their perception of the skills gap with the aim being to reduce the gap recorded; this had increased from 5.6% in 2011 to 26.2% in 2015. It was important to note that this information was based on a national survey and the results were based on a small sample of North Tyneside businesses therefore further work was required to better understand the issue locally and a revised measure was being considered. Almost all of the skills shortage vacancies in between 2013 and 2015 were in skilled trades and machine operatives, with a smaller increase for caring, leisure and other services. These occupations accounted for 78% of the skills shortage vacancies in 2015 but for only 27% of those people employed in North Tyneside.

Businesses in the engineering and manufacturing sectors had indicated that they were facing skills shortages in particular niche and technically skilled roles. To help address this shortage and support replacement demand within the sectors a wide range of activities to promote these sectors amongst schools pupils and young people had been developed, for example Primary and Secondary Engineer. In addition the engineering and manufacturing sectors now represent the third highest sector for apprenticeship starts in North Tyneside

with 480 out of a total of 2,610 starts in 2015-16. This year's 'Get up and Go' apprenticeships fair featured around 35 employers and providers who were actively seeking to employ and support apprentices within their business. Kier North Tyneside, who now have 16 apprentices working across trade and business support, attended as well as Accenture, Capita, Owen Pugh, Northumbria Healthcare and North Tyneside Council.

It was noted the number of apprenticeships dropped 90 places from 2014/15 to 2015/16 and the Policy, Performance and Research Manager agreed to investigate if the cause for this change was known and provide the answer to the sub-committee in writing.

Under Cared for, Safeguarded and Healthy a key aim was to ensuring that the most vulnerable children and young people in the borough were protected. The data showed that the rate of contacts into children's social care had held steady with 23.5 in 2015, 22.8 in 2016 and 22.4 in 2017; it had been 28.3 in 2013. At the end of January 2017, there were 164 children on Child Protection Plans and 300 looked after children. Work was ongoing to understand the drivers behind the contacts with social care and to ensure that a partnership response was in place to improve outcomes for these children.

During discussion of the Plan comments were made about how schools used Pupil Premium funding and it was enquired whether any national studies had been undertaken on the benefits of free school lunches and what they showed. It was explained that each school decided how to spend the Pupil Premium funding and had to demonstrate the benefit of these decisions for the children; a number of schools did use it for breakfast clubs. The Policy, Performance and Research Manager stated that there were no local studies but he would look to see if any had been done elsewhere and provide the answer to the sub-committee in writing.

It was also enquired whether any assessment of the impact of leaving the European Union (Brexit) on local businesses' ability to recruit staff had been undertaken. The Policy, Performance and Research Manager stated that a lot of work was currently being undertaken to understand the profile of North Tyneside and its businesses and what exports and imports were required/provided by them so when the terms upon which the United Kingdom could trade with European Union member states after Brexit was agreed, the implications for the borough could be understood.

**Agreed** (1) to note the information on the mid year progress of the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan; and  
(2) that the Policy, Performance and Research Manager provide answers, in writing, to the various questions posed by Members and detailed above before the next meeting of the sub-committee.

## **CES07/06/17          Elective Home Education**

The sub-committee was informed that Cabinet on 12 June 2017 had agreed its response to the recommendations from the Elective Home Education Sub Group which had undertaken a review into current practices and the Local Authority role in relation to home educating.

Following discussions with officers and consultation with elective home educating parents, the sub-group had made eight recommendations. These recommendations included lobbying for a change to the powers of local authorities in relation to accessing electively home educated children and also to make some small changes to the way the authority currently engaged with parents to provide more efficient and effective support.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning had thanked the Sub Group for the report and all of the eight recommendations had been accepted. An Action Plan had been produced with timescales for when the recommendations would be implemented by.

**Agreed** to note Cabinet's response to the Elective Home Education Sub Group's report and receive an update on the implementation of the recommendations in the new year.