

Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee

19 September 2017

Present: Councillor M Thirlaway (Chair)
Councillors P Brooks, J Cassidy, K Clark, M Green,
P Oliver and A Waggott-Fairley.

Mrs M Ord Parent Governor Representative
Rev. M Vine Church Representative

CES16/09/17 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Austin, K Lee, F Weetman and Mr G O'Hanlon, Church Representative.

CES17/09/17 Substitute Members

There were no substitute members reported.

CES18/09/17 Declarations of Interest

In relation to CES20/09/17 Adult Education in North Tyneside, Councillor K Clark declared a registerable personal interest as she was employed by Justice Prince which provided courses for adults in North Tyneside.

In relation to CES21/09/17 Special Educational Needs and Disability, Councillor P Oliver declared a non-registerable personal interest as a member of her family received this support from the Council.

CES19/09/17 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 July 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CES20/09/17 Adult Education in North Tyneside

The sub-committee received a report and a presentation on adult education in North Tyneside in terms of the options available, feedback on delivery, take up across the Borough and progression. Mark Barrett, senior manager Employment and Skills attended the meeting to make the presentation and answer questions.

The presentation provided information on the policy and funding context; key data; the North Tyneside Employment and Skills Strategy; the Adult Learning offer in North Tyneside and the Adult Learning Service's Performance.

The sub-committee was informed that Government had made a number of changes to

funding from 1 August 2016 with an aim to create funding systems that drove local growth and provided greater flexibility in how colleges and other training organisations focus on responding to local economic priorities and outcomes. The Adult Education Budget (AEB) now combined previous Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) participation and support funding including Adult Skills Budget (ASB) and Community and Family Learning. Its principal purpose was to engage adults and provide the skills and learning needed to equip them for work, an apprenticeship or further learning. It also enabled more tailored programmes of learning to be made available, which do not need to include a qualification, to help those furthest from learning or the workplace. Community Learning objectives are now included within the AEB to enable the funding of broader types of learning activities to assist disadvantaged and hard-to-reach learners re-engage in learning, build confidence, and enhance their wellbeing.

In recent years there had been a decline in the numbers of people participating in adult education, under 19 years more slowly, including participation in English and maths. The trend was reflected nationally and regionally. There are a number of reasons for this, including reducing budgets, reduced disposable income for learners to pay for courses and a reduction in demand from employers for training provision. In addition, an increased focus on Apprenticeships meant that more vocational training as part of Apprenticeship Frameworks was being delivered.

An Employment and Skills Strategy had been developed which set out key priorities of the Authority to provide a framework for colleges and providers. The Strategy, which was approved by Cabinet in January 2017, had been developed into an Action Plan. Workshops were currently being held with key stakeholders to develop the following broad priorities into more detailed work on its delivery:

- Young people: Universal and targeted offer
- Adults: Universal and targeted offer
- Employers – Universal and targeted offer
- North Tyneside Council as an exemplar employer
- Influencing the local, regional and national picture

Any provider could deliver a programme in North Tyneside and whilst the majority of courses offered in North Tyneside were from TyneMet College (6596 enrolments) or the Council's Adult Learning Service (5069 enrolments) some were from further afield, for example West Nottinghamshire College and the Bromley College of Further and Higher Education.

The Adult Learning Service (ALS) and TyneMet College had produced a joint prospectus for a number of years which had aligned their provision to gain maximum impact and value to the Borough. The ALS focussed on entry level courses, enabling access to college and higher courses and delivered the courses at 28 locations across the borough; TyneMet focussed on Level 4 qualifications and above and delivered the courses from their campuses in Battle Hill and North Shields. The offer has been developed over a number of years, responding to both learners and employers demand. Both providers have seen an increased demand from Jobcentre Plus for courses for the unemployed. This included Preparation for Work courses (not included in the prospectus) and basic Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) courses such as basic computing to assist residents looking for work and applying for benefits.

In addition, the ALS had made a strategic decision to retain its Community and Family Learning offer, when many other similar providers ceased to deliver this type of provision

due to changes in Government policy and guidance. However, to maintain this offer whilst complying with funding guidance, some courses had become a full cost recovery model, where learners paid the full cost if the course was not designed to i) support the most disadvantaged, ii) help people move into and progress in employment or iii) assist with economic wellbeing.

The sub-committee was informed that the service had improved its overall performance significantly over recent years. From 6,084 enrolments in 2015-16, the achievement rate was 93.3% (87.6% national average), an increase from 91.7% in 2014-15 and 83.5% in 2013-14. The equality and diversity profile was good; 28.2% of learners are adults with learning difficulties or disabilities (ALDD) (National average 17%) and tutors are qualified and experienced in supporting learners. 63 out of 612 (10%) ALDD Learners reported Dyslexia in 2016 and 17.95% of learners reported that they were satisfied with the support received in 2015-16.

In addition there were many examples of good practice of working with partners and local employers. For example:

- The Working Roots Programme. The programme engages with 15-25 young people (aged 16-18) per annum to participate in a work placement with Kier providing housing and estate repairs. The participants are supported by a programme of learning in construction and horticulture and a dedicated mentor provides ongoing pastoral support.
- A partnership with YMCA North Tyneside had seen the opening of a brand new Cafe and Training Kitchen in the centre of North Shields in June 2017.
- The ALS was now running a number of Sector Based Work Academies (SBWA) for employers in the Borough who have either a new recruitment need or ongoing recruitment difficulties. The programmes have recently been delivered for Premier Inn, Beefeater, The Range and Smyths Toys.
- The ALS had run a number of 'Get into' courses across a range of sectors including Get into Cobalt, Digital, Construction, Retail, Care, Catering and Hospitality. These short courses provided tasters and introductions to sectors for young people and unemployed adults. The courses involved local employers, for example the Get into Digital course was run with Accenture in August 2017, and provided progression routes into traineeships, apprenticeships and further learning.
- Recruit Silverlink was a new project delivered in partnership between the Employment and Skills Service, Crown Estates (who owned the Silverlink Retail Park) and Silverlink businesses. The project would see a Workplace Coordinator based on the park, who would work with local employers to identify and address their recruitment needs.

The presentation concluded with a summary of the challenges and opportunities for adult education in the borough, including the growing need for the ALS to be more flexible in accessing the funds it needed to deliver a high quality service to residents; accessing more external funding opportunities; the needs to improve the marketing of the current offer to increase the take up of adult education; and an impending Ofsted inspection.

The sub-committee was reminded that the young people not in employment, education or training was the lowest in the region at 2.8% and that the Council knew and was in contact

with all of them; 100% of the young people who had left Year 11 in the summer were either in employment, education or training.

During discussion Members were concerned to learn that the proposed merger between TyneMet College and South Tyneside College had gone ahead as planned in August 2017 without their further consultation as agreed at the meeting in October 2016 when representatives from the college attended a committee meeting to present the proposals (previous minute CES28/10/16).

Clarification was sought on the number of apprenticeships suitable for people aged over 25; what work was going on in schools to support those struggling with maths and English before they left; the number of local young people attending the Energy Academy in Wallsend; the monitoring of the quality of provision provided; how the length of courses could be extended for those who needed additional time; and the proportion of young people with a physical disability who continued into further education.

Members were assured that the Energy Academy did deliver for the borough's young people and more information on this could be provided; that work to improve English and maths in schools was always a priority for early years and the School Improvement Service and intervention programmes and training was provided to schools to allow them to identify underachievement in English and maths. There would always be some who won't achieve in maths and English and the focus was to ensure that these people were able to achieve their next step. Information on the proportion of young people with special educational needs and disability who go onto further education would be identified and circulated to the sub-committee; courses were extended for those who needed extra support.

It was **agreed** to note the information provided on Adult Education in North Tyneside.

CES21/09/17 Special Educational Needs and Disability Local Area Inspection

The sub-committee received an update on the work being undertaken to ensure the Authority met the requirements and was ready for the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Local Area Inspection (previous minute CES10/06/16). The SEND Senior Manager attended the meeting to present the report.

The national accountability framework had been established in 2014 to examine whether a local area identified and met the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities aged 0 to 25 years. This meant the inspection would examine the local authority and health commissioners and providers to ensure partners were working together. There would be no graded judgements but if there were concerns identified the local area may be required to produce and publish a written statement of action following the inspection. As part of the independent assessment, all local areas would be inspected, with an inspection interval of up to five years.

To implement local accountability in North Tyneside, the local authority had created a SEND and Whole Life Disability Board which would report to the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Children and Young People Partnership Board. The Board's focus would be on ensuring early identification so that parents, children and young people received the right support at the right time with planned and well managed transitions and the effective use of current resources to ensure a joined up transparent and accountable system.

A Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF) had been prepared by the local authority, the clinical commissioning group (CCG) and key partners.

The SEF was structured around the key themes of inspection

- a) Leadership and governance of SEND across the local area.
- b) Capacity and resources.
- c) The identification of children and young people who have special educational need and /or disabilities.
- d) Assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- e) Improving outcomes for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The SEF had identified strengths and key priorities and a series of consultation events had taken place. The SEND Strategic Board had been refreshed to include key partners from the local authority, Health and importantly representation from the Parent/Carer Forum. The Board has oversight of the SEF and would monitor future work required and the Action Plan.

A core group was in place to support the inspection process (using the learning from the recent Social Care Safeguarding Inspection). This included the setting up of key focus groups, gathering key documents and preparing the practical arrangements for the inspection and creating a communication strategy as the inspection might not happen for another four years. Outcomes from other Local Area SEND Inspections were being examined to improve learning within North Tyneside. Regionally Hartlepool, Middleborough and Gateshead had all undergone the inspection. As part of the preparations Gateshead Council had been requested to conduct a SEND Local Area Peer review in February 2018.

It was emphasised that this work was not being conducted just to get through the inspection and that the focus was on ensuring the policies and procedures in place and collaborative working was effective in providing the best outcomes for the young people involved; the work would never be 'finished'.

Clarification was sought on whether there were plans to change the provision of specialist schools in the borough; the involvement of social services in the inspections; the affect, if any, on the preparations of the implementation of Liquid Logic (a new case management system in social services); and whether transition from children's to adult services would be examined.

Members were informed that currently there were no plans to change the current status of any school within local authority control in the borough as the borough's needs were met by its offer; no child was educated outside of the borough. However, if the data indicated a change was required it would be considered. There was close, collaborative working with special schools and mainstream schools with the Schools Improvement Service and other services, like the Dyslexia team, and this would continue. All aspects of a young person's life from 0-25 years old would be covered by the inspection so transition and social workers would be included. Whilst Education, Health and Care Plans would be transferred to Liquid Logic when that system was operational, it was a separate recording system for social workers and should not cause any difficulty.

It was **agreed** to note the information presented on the progress made on preparations for

the Local Area Inspection on the new accountability framework for Special Educational Needs and Disability.

(Prior to the discussion on the above item, Councillor P Brooks left the meeting room.)

CES22/09/17 Transforming Children's Services

The sub-committee received a report on the implementation and delivery of the Council's work to transform children's services, improve outcomes and offer value for money.

The programme brought together a wide range of projects aimed at transforming the way in which children's services operated, increasing its ability to manage demand and, as a result, manage its resources in the most effective way whilst ensuring good outcomes for children, young people and families were maintained. The Authority had commenced work with partners in 2015 to develop a new model of delivery to support children with the following overarching aims for children and young people:

- a) Ensure, wherever possible, children can be supported to live safely at home.
- b) Ensure that families on the edge of care receive appropriate early help and targeted support to prevent avoidable entry into care.
- c) Ensure that, for those already in care, we focus upon their return to live safely at home at the earliest opportunity.
- d) Ensure decision making for high cost placements is in children's best interests – requiring evidence that all options for early help or family/carer reconciliation or crisis intervention have been attempted before any request is considered.
- e) Ensure young people leaving care are prepared for independence and their transition to adulthood.
- f) Increase school stability and successful outcomes for all Looked After Children of school age.
- g) Introduce a model of practice emphasising safe planning and partnership with families.
- h) Ensure a sustainable approach to managing children's social care resources is maintained.

As the report was an initial one it provided a brief description for all of the workstreams involved in the work and the projects which underpinned them with the suggestion that future reports looked at one of the following workstreams in more detail, as appropriate, each time:

1. Keeping children, young people safe at home
2. Keeping children and young people in school
3. Looking after children and young people safely
4. Enabling Projects
5. Innovation and New Models.

The title of the projects underpinning the workstreams were: Menu of Options; Dartington; Children with Disabilities; 5Q Model for Going Home; Mitford Gardens; Fostering; Elm House; Signs of Safety; Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub; Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing; Liquid Logic; Social Impact Bonds; and Regional Adoption Agency. Some information regarding these projects had been/ will be reported separately at previous meetings of the sub-committee.

Members welcomed the report and asked questions relating to some specific projects, including the presentation of the information on the progress of each project as a Traffic Light report to enable Members to comprehend the overall situation quickly and identify which projects should provide a more detailed report.

It was **Agreed** (1) to note the progress made with the transformation of children's services work;
(2) that the Chair and Deputy Chair determined which projects the next update report, planned for February 2018, would focus on nearer the time; and
(3) that the general update report be produced as a RAG report to allow members to see at a glance which projects were on track and which might benefit from more detailed attention from the sub-committee.

(Prior to the consideration of this matter Mrs M Ord, Councillors M Green and K Clark left the meeting room and took no part in the discussion.)