

Children and Young People Select Committee Overview Meeting 2016

30 November 2016

Report from Director of Children's Services

Context

1. Members are well aware that as a Council we have had to adapt to funding reductions of £52 million over the last five years and that we are still confronted with having to find further savings.
2. Whilst we acknowledge that we have a strong track record of sound financial management and we have been dealing with these problems successfully for many years, it will not be easy to address the additional loss of government funding of over £20 million by 2019/20. Moving forward, expectations will need to be realistic as many more difficult decisions will need to be made.
3. It is both acknowledged and accepted that we can't continue to do all the things we currently do and that we won't be able to work in the same way.
4. The challenge for all Members is to ensure that decisions about the basis on which services will be delivered are within the resources available, taking account of a number of factors such as reduced budget allocation, changing demographics, increasing demand, new national legislation and policy direction. Members are reminded of the four policy principles that support our decision-making:
 - a. **Protecting the vulnerable through targeted intervention**, particularly those people in our communities who are subject to, or at risk of harm, people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and those who are financially excluded or whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
 - b. **Promoting equality of opportunity through targeted intervention**, specifically in relation to tackling health inequalities, meeting the skills gap and improving access to job opportunities, tackling fuel poverty, improving education and training opportunities, access to affordable housing and financial and digital inclusion.
 - c. **Developing strong and healthy communities** through the provision of mainstream and preventive services that are available to all those who choose to access them.
 - d. **Creating economic prosperity** across the Borough
5. It is within this context that the select committee is invited to undertake their overview duties.

What has been achieved?

6. This section outlines some of the key achievements in 2016 against the priorities in the Council Plan.
7. In 2016, the Council and its partners were inspected by Ofsted as part of the Single Inspection Framework. The overall outcome of 'Good' places Stockton in the top 25% of local authority areas nationally. Further references to the more detailed outcomes will be made throughout this report.

Ensure effective pre-natal and early years support for children and families

8. There continues to be a focus on the uptake of free education for disadvantaged 2 year olds. We have seen a significant increase in take up in 2016, with the latest figures indicating we have already achieved the target of over 80%.
9. Performance in the Early Years Foundation stage continues to improve, with 65% of children reaching a good level of development, a 24% increase in the past 3 years. 100% of childcare settings and 98% of childminders are now graded good or better by Ofsted.
10. A review of available childcare places has been undertaken to prepare for the extension of the free education entitlement to eligible 3 and 4 year olds in September 2017. This has identified a number of areas in the borough where additional provision will be required. Capital works will also be needed to support implementation. Four bids have been submitted to the Department for Education and additional funding provision has been set aside to support expansion or remodeling of existing provision in some locations, as well as new provision in others, such as the collocated nursery in Fairfield Library.
11. A major consultation on future role of early years and children's centres, as approved at Cabinet on 1 September, is drawing to a close. This consultation is seeking views on the proposal to create a smaller number of family hubs, and to move to a model focused more on outreach and working with families in a more flexible way, with closer working with health visiting services.

Ensure children and young people are safe and feel safe

12. Services for children in need of help and protection were found to be good. Ofsted Single Inspection Framework undertaken in May / June 2016

Early help

13. There remains a major focus on early help, with a new model agreed by Cabinet in July and a new performance framework in September. The establishment of an early help hub continues, with co-located services now

including Harbour, Citizens Advice Bureau, Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust (TEWV), Thirteen and the Health visiting services delivered by North Tees and Hartlepool.

14. Visioning and service design sessions are currently being held with all partners to support an embedding of the approach and to develop an enhanced focus on predicting and preventing vulnerable families from requiring more specialist support, building on the Troubled Families model.
15. The current reviews of early years and youth services are being undertaken within the framework and model for early help agreed by Cabinet.

Children in need and child protection

16. There continues to be demand pressure across children's social care services.
17. The first 4 months operation of the new shared Children's Hub indicates that the hub is providing very effective at securing effective partnership involvement and data analysis to support decision making. Levels of contacts into the children's hub remain high, though effective screening in the hub is reducing the number of assessments being undertaken as concerns are signposted back to agencies or to early help services.
18. Our numbers of Children in Need are reducing and latest figures would suggest we are now at a similar level to the regional average
19. Performance in relation to statutory timescales for assessments, reviews remains strong but continues to be monitored closely through performance clinics.
20. The arrangements for safeguarding Vulnerable, Exploited Missing and Trafficked children and young people (VEMT) remain strong and were commended by Ofsted in the inspection.
21. There are ongoing issues around the recruitment and retention of experienced social workers.
22. Numbers of children with child protection plans remain higher than regional and national averages and remain a focus, although numbers have remained more stable than the picture in some neighbouring authorities.
23. The Signs of Safety model has been implemented for new child protection conferences— this approach is leading to an improvement in the quality of care planning for children and will be rolled out across plans for children in need and for Looked After Children.
24. The performance of the Youth Offending Team remains strong. The last 3 years has seen a reduction of 77% in first time entrants. There are some signs that this pattern may now be reversing which will be monitored through the YOT Board. There have been more custodial sentences in this period, though they relate to the same murder/manslaughter case in Norton.
25. Performance on reoffending is showing a more mixed picture. Fewer young people have reoffended and they have committed significantly fewer reoffences than the previous year (reduction of 43% from the previous year).

However, national PNC data, shows a less positive picture. Reoffending and reoffender rates have both increased on the previous year and the frequency rate is above the regional and national averages.

26. Operation Encompass came into operation in January 2016, and results in notifications of incidents of domestic abuse where children are present being reported to early years settings, schools and colleges.
27. Work undertaken by the Local Safeguarding Children Board into the safeguarding of children in leisure and other activity related settings was commended by Ofsted and also cited as an example of good practice by the Association of Directors of Children's services.

Improve educational performance of all children and young people across the borough

Schools and school places

28. Cabinet agreed a schools investment strategy on 6 October, which sets out proposal to meet the demand for additional secondary school places to 2020 as well as working with schools on a range of improvements to conditions. £31 was secured from the Government's Basic Need Fund to support this strategy and detailed discussions are underway with schools to develop a detailed implementation plan.
29. Proposals for a new free secondary school in the Wynyard area are in development, with the launch of consultation by the Church of England Diocese. Other proposals are expected for this area.
30. There is a range of interest from Multi Academy Trusts in the creation of new special free schools across Tees Valley, and a new option for local authorities working in partnership to propose a new special free school. Tees authorities are working together on potential proposals.

School improvement and performance

Primary

31. Performance remains strong in our primary schools with results indicating achievement above national levels in many areas.
32. Given that assessments are based on a different curriculum and different criteria, comparisons with 2015 are not particularly relevant. However, comparisons with national outcomes show that the LA has exceeded the national average in most areas.
33. For key stage 2, the results present a generally positive picture in comparison with national averages. However, reading is a clear challenge with results overall 1% below the national average. Individual school outcomes vary widely, but overall indicate a widening of the gap in attainment for disadvantaged children. Outcomes from the new assessments cannot be compared to outcomes from previous assessments since the curriculum is significantly different and expectations have been deliberately raised.

34. Overall, 97.4% of primary school pupils in Stockton attend good or outstanding schools.

Secondary

35. The results this year demonstrate huge gains for some schools; Our Lady and St Bede, have improved dramatically - their results will be significantly above national and their Progress 8 score on 0.67 is exceptional. Egglecliffe has also performed particularly well and have their highest ever results.

36. Some schools have dipped, such as St Michael's whilst the Progress 8 measure for St Patricks, North Shore, Bishopsgarth and Thornaby are a concern.

37. Overall 67.5% of secondary pupils attend good or better schools.

Ofsted judgements

38. The performance of the primary schools in Stockton continues to be very strong. All maintained schools are presently judged by Ofsted to be good or better whilst two academies in Stockton are judged to be 'Requiring Improvement' in their recent inspection. Six primary schools were inspected by Ofsted in 2015-2016. Five of these were maintained schools all of which continued to be judged as Good under the new Ofsted inspection framework introduced in September 2015. The one Academy primary, which held a Good Ofsted judgment prior to academy conversion, was also judged to be Good. As more primary schools convert to academy, more schools have no current Ofsted judgement. (Five primary schools will have converted to academy status during 2015-2016 giving a total of 17 primary academies - 27% of primary schools). The challenge is, therefore, to ensure that the monitoring, challenge and support mechanisms of the Local Authority extend to academies to sustain effectively the high quality of performance and maintain the strong Ofsted outcomes.

39. During 2015-2016 four Stockton secondary schools had an Ofsted inspection; two maintained schools and two academies:

- a. Northshore Academy was judged as Requiring Improvement for a second time.
- b. Bishopsgarth School was judged to be Requiring Improvement for a second time and converts to academy status on 1st September 2016.
- c. Thornaby Academy was judged as Special Measures. This very disappointing result was not unexpected and the Local Authority has been pushing for a different sponsor for the academy for some time. Freeborough Academy have now taken over the sponsorship of the academy from September 2017.

- d. Northfield School was judged 'good' from its previous 'Requiring improvement' rating. This is a considerable achievement for the school, and demonstrates the improvements it has made.

Championing the needs of vulnerable pupils

40. Challenges remain on the performance of vulnerable groups. Significant gaps remain around the performance of SEN pupils and for disadvantaged pupils.

Disadvantaged pupils

41. In Early Years the attainment of a Good Level of Development (GLD) for disadvantaged students has risen over three years from 33% to 52% whilst Good Level of Development attainment for non-disadvantaged students has also risen from 57% to 69% over the same period. This rate of improvement is higher than the national equivalent. The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students is closing.
42. At the same time overall GLD attainment in Stockton Borough is below the national average and that of all other NE Local Authorities and remains an area for improvement. National GLD disadvantage data is not yet available.
43. At Key Stage 1, disadvantaged Stockton children achieved very favourably, outperforming disadvantaged children nationally in reading, writing, science and maths at the expected standard or above as measured for children on Free School Meals (FSM). Stockton non-FSM pupils also outperformed this group nationally in all subjects.
44. KS2 Disadvantaged pupils made most progress in writing and least progress in reading. 35% of disadvantaged Year 6 children in Stockton achieved Combined Reading, Writing and maths at the expected standard or above in 2016. Within Stockton the KS2 attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils is wider in comparison to 2015 however no national data for this cohort is yet available.
45. At Key Stage 4, based upon 2015 measures, overall LA attainment and progress of disadvantage Year 11 pupils has improved and progress gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils have narrowed for English and Maths GCSEs. Attainment gaps have widened. The new Progress 8 measure however shows that disadvantaged pupils achieved on average 0.29, i.e. a third of a grade, less than non-disadvantaged pupils in Stockton.
46. School level performance varies considerably, with some schools showing very strong performance and others a disappointing drop in performance.
47. Curriculum, assessment and performance measures have changed significantly in 2016 and national data is not yet fully available. Once national data for disadvantaged pupil gaps is released, it will be possible to make valid comparisons.

Special Educational Needs

48. There has been an increase in the % of SEN children achieving a Good Level of Development, though the gap in comparison to others has increased over the last 2 years as non-SEN pupils have made even greater improvement in GLD attainment.
49. At KS1, where there was an increase in pupils attending specialist SEN provision, SEN pupils made less progress than their peers.
50. At KS4, the SEN gap closes when pupils learn in a mainstream environment. For ALL SEN children (including those in Specialist provision) the gap has remained constant for the last 3 years at 51%-55%.
51. A transformation of SEN provision is being consulted upon at present which aims to ensure inclusive quality teaching and learning in inclusive mainstream provision, supported by early identification of need and intervention via hubs.
52. Strengthening SEN support in schools is also a focus for improvement.

Attendance and exclusion

53. Primary school attendance in 2015/16 is on a par with the latest available national average figure for 2014/15.
54. Secondary school attendance is 0.87% below the 2014/15 national average of 94.7%; 6 secondary schools have an attendance rate in line with or better than the national average.
55. The percentage of permanent exclusions has been maintained with none from primary schools and a steady number from secondary schools at a rate just above the latest available secondary national averages. Primary Fixed term exclusions (FTE) are in line with the 2014/15 national average.
56. Secondary FTEs, largely of boys, have increased to above the national average, largely due to the impact of an increase in FTEs at Bishopsgarth School and, to a lesser extent, at Northshore Academy.
57. This is set against a context of a national increase in both permanent and fixed-term secondary exclusion rates nationally in comparison to the previous year. There has not however been a national increase in primary school permanent exclusions.

Support young people to make a successful transition into adulthood

58. Youth service review was undertaken through CYP Select Committee to develop a new approach and model for support to young people.
59. Performance of the Youth Direction Careers Service remains strong, with recent results indicating significant added value in terms of the reduction of NEETs for those schools participating.
60. In terms of performance on NEETs, the latest scorecard data to January 2016 shows a combined NEET and Not Known rate for Stockton of 5.2%, lower than the national average of 7.1%. Performance is especially strong on the 'Not knows' who are considered to be the most vulnerable, with this rate at

0.3% in Stockton compared to 4.4% nationally. However, our NEET rate remains higher at 4.8% compared to 2.7% nationally.

61. The establishment of the Tees Valley Combined Authority's Education, Employment and Skills Board provides an opportunity to develop new strategic approaches around school improvement, post 16 provision, careers advice and support and wider engagement with employers on skills.

Improve outcomes for children and young people in care and care leavers

62. Ofsted found services for looked after children and for adoption to be: requires improvement.
63. The number of children in care has risen in 2016, and there has been an increase in the number of children located in out of borough residential agency placements.
64. Numbers of looked after children increased significantly from a relatively stable level of around 380 for the past 3 years to 411. This mirrors a regional and national trend.
65. In terms of educational outcomes, LACYP Early Years, KS4 attainment continues to improve and is above the national LACYP average for 2015. Due to national changes in assessment at KS1 and 2, in line with the new national curriculum, it has not been possible to make comparisons with data from previous years. Phonics attainment has however decreased.
66. At KS5 the Virtual School and Youth Direction are currently working on a coherent system to evaluate progression and retention of LACYP on post-16 pathways.
67. LACYP progression to University is pleasing, with 18 students now studying Higher Education courses.
68. Preliminary data indicates that LACYP attendance and exclusion remain very favourable in comparison to national averages.
69. There has seen a steady increase in the percentage of care leavers who are in education, employment and training, rising from 49% to 51%. A number of initiatives are in place to support this work including a specific 'EET Clinic' which examines individual cases and develops specific and customised support plans. As a result of discussions at the MALAP, work has also been undertaken to ensure more effective support through a specific placement scheme facilitated through Council as an employer, and also to trial a scheme where additional brokerage with businesses is used to identify and support potential placements.
70. Progress on the health of looked after children and young children remains an area of focus. Although the numbers of children who have received a health assessment remains an improving picture there are some issues in recording of this information. Work to streamline the process is underway with the CCG

and the Foundation Trust who provide the specialist nursing service for looked after children.

71. As part of the Big Ticket programme, a review of our approach to looked after children, including the options for development of an 'edge of care' service (an Ofsted recommendation) to prevent young people from coming into care is being undertaken.
72. Ofsted inspection identified some shortfalls in the quality of plans for looked after children. This is being addressed by rolling out the Signs of Safety methodology.
73. There remain challenges in meeting the adoption scorecard measures for timeliness of adoption matches and placements. However, there have been no placement disruptions in 2015/16, and Ofsted recognised the appropriateness of the arrangements that had been made for adoption.
74. Work continues on the development of a sub-regional approach to adoption, in the context of receiving less funding than anticipated.
75. Currently all of the Council's residential homes are graded 'good' or 'outstanding'. All of the Spark of Genius homes are rated 'good'.
76. Ofsted also praised the Council's work with care leavers as outstanding, based on the extent to which services continue to track, support and keep in contact with care leavers, and continue to support them.

Leadership management and governance

77. Work continues to embed the Children's Services Strategy agreed by Cabinet in July, including a range of transformational change projects as well as business improvement actions.
78. The Ofsted report recognised the effectiveness of leadership and management. An action plan to respond to the recommendations in the inspection is being developed for submission to Ofsted in November, and will be reported to Cabinet in December.
79. Ofsted recognised the strength of the performance management framework, and the Council's approach to quality assurance through its audit programme. It also commended the response to the workforce issues such as through recruitment and retention incentives.
80. The Ofsted report commended the strong role played by elected members through the Lead Member, Cabinet, Select Committee and through the Multi Agency Looked After Partnership. There was particular mention of the role of the CYP Select Committee in undertaking front line visits and reporting outcomes back to Committee.
81. Ofsted also recognised the sense of commitment to children, young people and families at all levels across the authority.
82. The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) has held a development day to consider the Ofsted judgment of Requires Improvement, and this will result in a refreshed business plan and some changes to the way the partnership

works which will be considered at its meeting in November. Discussions are also underway with Tees Valley authorities on options for moving to a new structural approach, based on the recommendations of the recent Wood Review. The proposal to abolish LSCBs in their current form is included in the Children and Social Work Bill currently before parliament.

83. The Children and Young People Select Committee review of the LSCB will conclude in November and report to Cabinet in December.

Voice of the child

84. The Youth Assembly continues to provide a strong voice for children and young people across Stockton-on-Tees, and elections for the new member of the Youth parliament will again be held early in 2017.
85. The Let's take Action Group, part of the Children in Care Council, recently planned and delivered a corporate parenting event attended by around 80 people to showcase their activity and to seek views on their priorities.
86. The support provided to the Children in Care Council (Positive Activities and Let's take Action Group) has also recently changed, with the responsibility passing to Youth Direction. The #answeralex approach is now live, with the views of young people being sought through social media on a range of issues in the coming months, including views on the current youth review.
87. Working jointly with Hartlepool and the Clinical Commissioning Group, a number of young people have been trained as peer researchers to help support the work underway to transform mental health services for children and young people.
88. The Council has recently invested in a new approach to engaging the views of looked after children and young people through the Mind Of My Own (MOMO) application which is a nationally recognised good practice tool which enables real time feedback from children and young people.
89. The recent wellbeing survey undertaken with year 8 and 10 pupils provides a rich level of detail on wellbeing which is being used to inform the further development of approaches to emotional wellbeing.

Challenges

90. The following key challenges have been identified for the consideration of the Committee:

Schools

- a. Our schools are gradually filling up as our population rises. Although the majority of children are able to get into their first choice of school, this is becoming increasingly difficult in some areas of North Stockton around primary school places and for secondary school places in Billingham. We have identified a programme of action to address the challenges over the next few years, with the development of the Investment Strategy.

- b. Our schools perform well overall, but there are issues about geographical variations in outcomes, and there are some issues about the gap between those children from poorer backgrounds, those with special educational needs and for children in care where outcomes are worse.
- c. There is also a need to redefine the role of the Council in education, in the context of increasing academisation, and the continued expectation from Government that Councils will have three main roles:
 - i. Ensuring the supply of 'good' school places
 - ii. Ensuring an effective system of school improvement, though not necessarily delivering it
 - iii. Championing the needs of vulnerable children
- d. Stockton-on-Tees can expect to receive an Ofsted inspection on our approach to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) by 2021. Hartlepool has recently been inspected and the learning from that inspection will help to support inspection planning and readiness.

Early help

- e. We want to make sure we are helping and supporting children and families as soon as they need it, and have developed our 'early help' proposals to support this work. We are having some success in identifying issues early through Early Help Assessments but we have more work to do to make sure this is more at the heart of what we do, and how we work, and that our partners are clear on the way services work together. This continues to be a major focus for the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Help and protection

- f. Compared to national and regional averages, we have high rates of children in the social care system – who have been assessed as having additional needs, or who are subject to child protection concerns or who are in the care of the Council. This creates pressure in terms of placement sufficiency ie finding suitable places for children.
- g. The rate at which children become 'in need' – that is when they are assessed as being in need, is lower in Stockton than in our neighbours, but, children tend to be receiving more specialist support and therefore stay in the system for longer. This suggests we need to do more to work with children, young people and families earlier to prevent them needing social care support often referred to as 'stepping up' and that we need to do more to help families to cope without social care support – often referred to as stepping down concerns.
- h. We have high rates of children in care, and although this has stayed stable in recent years, it is a much higher rate than comparable and neighbouring authorities. We also have a large number of children being cared for by independent fostering agencies, and increasing cost

associated with out of borough placements. Edge of care proposals are being developed to address some of these issues to provide more intensive support for families to avoid them coming into care.

- i. Domestic abuser continue to be a significant driver of demand across the system, and work is underway through the Domestic Abuse Steering Group to develop a new approach.
- j. Recruitment and retention issues for social care are likely to be significant ongoing issuers.

Emerging issues

91. Additional emerging issues also include:

- a. The potential implications of increasing emphasis being placed on alternative models of delivery for children's services, such as the establishment of Trusts. Whilst these have largely been contained to those areas with poor outcomes from an Ofsted inspection, there are an increasing number of models of shared and 'spun out' models such as the Achieving for Children model in Kingston and Richmond.
- b. Future of children's services post inspection and outcomes related. Continued pressure on finance.
- c. Potential focus in more integrated working across local authority boundaries, building on existing arrangements such as the Children's hub and the work on a sub-regional adoption model.
- d. The increasing challenge if managing a balanced budget for children's services in the face of demand pressures, and the requirement to consider more radical solutions to reform and reshaping of services.

Possible Areas for In Depth Review

92. The following areas are suggested for consideration as in depth reviews for 2017/18, based on the above analysis and commentary:

- a. **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**– as there will be an inspection of the way in which the Council and its partners before 2020. This would provide the opportunity to explore a number of areas related to the Ofsted process including:
 - i. Our understanding and intelligence;
 - ii. How we meet the needs of children and young people – meeting the needs against the Ofsted framework
 - iii. Outcomes
- b. **14-19 strategy, planning, offer and ways of working.** This would assist in the development of new approaches and potentially new provision. It would also provide an opportunity to ensure that the Council and partners are well placed to exploit the opportunities of

the Tees Valley Combined Authority and devolution. Areas of focus might include:

- iv. NEETs
 - v. Apprenticeships
 - vi. Careers guidance in schools
 - vii. Alternative provision
- c. **The educational role of the Council** in the context of the Government's policy agenda, and a focus on the three roles:
- viii. School places
 - ix. An effective school led improvement system
 - x. Championing the needs of the most vulnerable