

Children & Young People Select Committee

A meeting of Children & Young People Select Committee was held on Wednesday, 4th October, 2017.

Present: Cllr Carol Clark (Chairman), Cllr Barbara Inman (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Elsi Hampton, Cllr Di Hewitt, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr Paul Rowling, Cllr Sally Ann Watson

Officers: Martin Gray, Dianne McConnell, Helen Crawford, Joanne Mills (CS), Peter Mennear, Annette Sotheby (DCE)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Tracey Stott, Cllr Sylvia Walmsley

CYP 28/17 **Evacuation plan**

The evacuation procedure was noted.

CYP 29/17 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Barbara Inman declared a personal non-prejudicial interest as a Governor of North Shore School.

CYP 30/17 **Minutes of 26th April 2017 and 10th May 2017**

The minutes of 26th April and 10th May 2017 were approved by Members and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CYP 31/17 **Children and Young People Performance Report**

The Director of Children's Services reported on the Quarter 1 progress during the period April to June, based on priorities agreed by Cabinet in June 2017.

Key issues in relation to the priorities for 2017/18 included the following:-

- Early help pathways have been looked at – there are some issues around some processes and systems which is unclear for schools, in particular where to go for help. Work was ongoing with refreshing these issues, and discussions held including with Safeguarding Board.

- Work ongoing re-defining our educational role, with a report to be presented to Cabinet next week. The education services grant had been removed from Local authorities, funding which under-pinned a lot of work around our strategic education role, therefore some services would have to be reshaped due to this. The review of SEND had also achieved savings.

- Work was ongoing to manage numbers of looked after children. This included introducing a new edge of care approach and changing the model to avoid young people having to come into care. There was greater focus on preventative measures, including with foster carers and multi-agency partners. Staff consultation would highlight new opportunities for staff to be involved in this work.

- Tackling domestic abuse through a new strategy, with a co-ordinator recently appointed for 2 years to implement the strategy.
Children & Young People Performance Report

The Director of Children's Services reported on the Quarter 1 progress during the period April to June, based on priorities agreed by Cabinet in June 2017.

Key issues in relation to the priorities for 2017/18 included the following:-

- Early help pathways have been looked at – there are some issues around some processes and systems which is unclear for schools, in particular where to go for help. Work was ongoing with refreshing these issues, and discussions held including with Safeguarding Board.
- Work ongoing re-defining our educational role, with a report to be presented to Cabinet next week. The education services grant had been removed from Local authorities, funding which under-pinned a lot of work around our strategic education role, therefore some services would have to be reshaped due to this. The review of SEND had also achieved savings.
- Work was ongoing to manage numbers of looked after children. This included introducing a new edge of care approach and changing the model to avoid young people having to come into care. There was greater focus on preventative measures, including with foster carers and multi-agency partners. Staff consultation would highlight new opportunities for staff to be involved in this work.
- Tackling domestic abuse through a new strategy, with a co-ordinator recently appointed for 2 years to implement the strategy.

A similar approach around VEMT with a new co-ordinator to work through and improve the process. This would lead to work being more intelligence-led with trends being analysed

- Implementation of the S-WORK project. The regional agreement to cap agency rates was now in operation.
- Development of new model of delivery for CAMHS service – jointly working with CCG and Hartlepool to change model of delivery.
- Monitoring the roll-out of 30 hours of child care – this will increase over time as the number of parents register. There are enough places locally to meet demand, with current provision of 1600 places.
- Delivering effective Early Help - Stockton was one of the few authorities working with NSPCC working on Greater Care Profile 2 – a strengths-based approach identifying, measuring and resolving issues around neglect.
- Universal Youth Services - New model for open access youth provision continues to grow and develop. This was reported as going well, and Members were pleased to see previously identified issues around the new provision had been addressed.

- NEEP - there continued to be a strong focus in Stockton minimising the number of children not known to us. Work to maintain this figure, as well as improve the overall NEET figures, was challenging.
- Ongoing work to safely reduce the number of children on Child Protection Plans.
- Looked After Children - 27 authorities had exempted care leavers from council tax until age 25, with Stockton the first in north east to do so.
- Currently working with ARC on a set of creative engagement opportunities – ARC have made a bid on our behalf to broaden the range of opportunities for creative and cultural activity for looked after children.
- Tees Valley Regional Adoption Agency soft-launch from January 2018, to go live on 1st April 2018 - Stockton to host this on a similar basis to Xentrall.
- Safeguarding Children's Board to be replaced by March 2019 – new forms of local safeguarding arrangements based around local authority, CCG and police who must be involved and be at the heart of these arrangements. Approach is to work more closely with Hartlepool with a possible North Tees approach.

Members asked about the use of family therapy in supporting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing and what skills we have in this area. It was noted that an assessment process was delivered by TEWV and an approach was being tested with Alliance which had shown positive results. Currently no in-house expertise available in family therapy but looking at whether this would be more economical than outsourcing.

Members were pleased to note the positive Ofsted results in children's homes and the dedication and commitment of officers. One Member reported the lovely family atmosphere present following a visit to a children's home in the area. It was noted that the care given is outstanding.

AGREED – that the information be noted

**CYP
32/17** **School Performance 2016-17**

School Performance 2016/17

The Assistant Director of Children's Services gave an update on key stage data for 2016/17. Key points were as follows:-

- There had been widespread improvement over previous years, significantly in disadvantaged attainment which had been a particular focus.
- Good Level of Development was still not at national average, although ongoing work will continue to be priority and the trajectory of improvement is strong.

Members questioned the KS2 reading results of Mandale Mill Primary which

were showing as -2.9. The floor standard of -5 was explained and this showed that Mandale was well above that, and had gained in writing progress. Actual attainment levels of 75/76% were very good. However, additional support was being provided in the school. The last Ofsted inspection was carried out more than 4 years ago, so inspection now well overdue.

Comparisons were discussed, and it was noted that results could peak and fall depending on year groups. All Primary schools had maintained good or better in Ofsted inspections.

Members asked how changes were measured year to year. It was noted that recent Ofsted inspector training included looking at evidence in the classroom – talking to the children and their interactions, not just looking at data, as it was acknowledged that many changes had taken place and some children had only experienced new curriculum for two years.

Key stage 4 GCSE grading changes were discussed. Compared to the old lettering system, a 4 was regarded as a standard pass (roughly equivalent to a lower end grade C) and a 5 was a strong pass. Schools are benchmarked against these figures in the performance data.

- Some schools in our area are achieving grade 9 (up to 18%) - 2.8% of the country achieving this in English. Some schools have not performed well and reasons for this were explained.

It was noted that there was a range of results following the remark process, and there was some differentiation between outcomes depending on the Exam Board concerned.

- Details of the Progress 8 from secondary results were imminent.

- 6th form – Stockton Riverside and Stockton Sixth Form had performed better than ever before at academic A Levels. The difficult area had been for those youngsters who had to re-sit English and maths.

- Ofsted outcomes were strong in primary, and in secondary up to 89% of our schools judged good or outstanding. Young people attending good or outstanding schools were up to 91%. Some secondary schools have waited some time for their inspections – when an academy converts it can wait up to 3 years for inspection.

Details of schools that had been inspected and their improvements were shown. There were two primary academies requiring improvement and one secondary school, although some had not yet been inspected.

Members expressed concern that Thornaby Academy and St Patrick's were not performing as well as expected. In relation to Thornaby Academy, the Regional Schools Commissioner had been made aware of concerns. The Council had not supported the schools new Academy sponsor. In relation to St Patrick's, it was noted that a different solution/provider/ governing structure was being looked at by the Diocese, and that once schools convert to academies we can only influence and offer support.

Members discussed the number of children leaving Thornaby to attend Conyers and the effect this could have on the local community.

Members requested further details on the new GCSE exam grading regime and the full impact, once known, possibly at a Members Policy Seminar.

AGREED – that the information be noted.

CYP 33/17 Scrutiny Review of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) - Preparation for Adulthood

The Committee was presented with the latest versions of the draft leaflets on Pathway to Adulthood that had been produced in the last few months through the Preparing for Adulthood Operational Group. The Group had been working with Stockton Parent Group, youngsters and staff at Abbey Hill School, other schools and colleges and Youth Direction, with extensive feedback sought:-

Leaflet 1 was aimed at young people in secondary mainstream school.

Leaflet 2 was aimed at those in specialist provision (e.g. Abbey Hill) in Years 9, 10 and 11 with similar information as that of the mainstream leaflet.

Leaflet 3 was aimed at those in specialist provision in Years 12, 13 and 14.

Leaflet 4 was aimed at young people in Years 9 – 14 onwards with an EHCP.

Feedback had been gathered from consultees and had been used to improve the information. Further information was to be added about Youth Direction, relevant web links, independent travel, and decision making rights and responsibilities at age 16. It was important for parents to be reassured that they will be involved in reviews, decision-making and supporting their child. An Independent Advocacy Service is now available so that the voice of the young person can be heard.

In addition, guidance for professionals had also been produced.

Pathway leaflet is aimed at schools, colleges and professionals - this lists the topics to be discussed at reviews (taken from the Code of Practice) and advises about realistic achievable expectations, so that young people can make a choice around what they enjoy and can be helped onto the right pathway. In addition to education and training, discussions around independent living needed to take place, for example help with accommodation, benefits, social care, friends and accessing the community.

Members provided some feedback on the leaflets and asked for some amendments to be made:-

- There was a need to ensure the language was more inclusive and did not just refer to learning disability but all young people who may need to be considered during transition under the Care Act, including those with mental health needs and/or autism, for example.
- Capacity to decision-making aspect not clear in the leaflet, as it was felt

that sometimes parents were reluctant to let their child make independent decisions, finding it difficult to relinquish control.

- Some minor grammatical amendments were also requested.

Members asked if the leaflets would be made available digitally and noted that digital and paper leaflets would be available once finalised and formatted by Communications Department.

It was also suggested that the guidance should not just focus on routes in college, but also apprenticeships and similar schemes.

Information was to be included on supported internships. These were when a young person attended college for one or two days and in the workplace for 3 days a week. New opportunities had been developed in this area with Stockton Riverside College and Project Choice. There are currently 6 young people accessing this programme.

The Council was supporting lobbying government to offer access to lower level Supported Apprenticeships starting at Entry Level 3 as the minimum is currently Level 2, which restricts access when this model could have wider benefits.

Members asked if payment from internships was the same rate as that of apprenticeships and were advised that although one year internships were not paid, travel and lunch expenses and some bursaries of £30 per week were available. 70% of young people gained paid employment at the end of the internship and subsequently received the rate for the job.

Members asked how many businesses employed young people in internships. It was noted that currently only Stockton Riverside College and Daisy Chain in their shop, café and customer services. One young person wanted to work in refuse collection and is now enjoying an internship there and opportunities could be available at Ropner Park in an outdoor environment. A young person was employed for two half days per week in the SEN team through Steps.

Members felt that more opportunities could be given to young people within the Council and that more placements would give youngsters more choice. It was noted that work ongoing exploring internship options in our local authority. Members requested that this be included in the Committee's recommendations.

The Scrutiny Officer advised Members that the summary of evidence for the Review had been included in the papers, in order to assist Members draw up draft recommendations. These would be included in the draft report to Cabinet in November.

Members agreed the draft recommendations, subject to the addition noted above.

AGREED – that:

- a) information be noted.
- b) the suggested changes be considered in the draft leaflets
- c) the Committee's draft recommendations be included in the Committee's final

report
d) the draft report be brought to the meeting in November.

**CYP
34/17** **Work Programme 2017-18**

AGREED – that the Work Programme be noted.

**CYP
35/17** **Chair's Update**

It was noted that the latest Council Plan Annual Report was to be circulated by email, and the Committee was requested to review the section on Children and Young People.

AGREED – that the Chair's Update be noted.