

## Children & Young People Select Committee

A meeting of Children & Young People Select Committee was held on Wednesday, 12 January 2022.

**Present:** Cllr Carol Clark (Chair), Cllr Barbara Inman (Vice Chair), Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Sally Ann Watson

**Officers:** Martin Gray, Vanessa Housley (CS), Haleem Ghafoor (Comms), Judy Trainer (DS)

**Also in attendance:** Steve Thompson (Catalyst)

**Apologies:** Cllr Dan Fagan, Cllr Lauriane Povey, Cllr Stephen Richardson,

### 1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 2 Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2021

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 3 Scrutiny Review of Child Poverty

The Select Committee received a presentation from Vanessa Housley, Service Lead, Education and Wellbeing on the following areas:

- Challenges/ barriers identified in Pupil Premium Strategy Statements
- Education Improvement Service – What are we doing?
  - Strengthened partnership with Catalyst
  - Strengthened links with Infinity Partnership
  - Healthy Schools Programme
  - DWP vouchers (next slide)
  - Promotion of School Uniform Bill
- Empowering staff to promote FSM take up to vulnerable families
- Improving access to IT
- Sharing research and evidence-based action
- Solutions

The key issues highlighted and discussed were as follows:

- Around 800 devices were initially distributed to schools with additional devices distributed for siblings
- Devices were new and safeguarding elements were configured for school-based use
- It was up to schools to allocate devices based on need and co-ordinate “recycling” of devices to other students as appropriate

The Select Committee received a presentation from Steve Thompson (Catalyst Digital Inclusion Co-ordinator) on the following areas:

- What is Digital Inclusion?
- Why is Digital Inclusion hard to achieve?
- Devices  
The conversion of redundant laptops to the Chrome operating system was strongly advocated. The benefits being a lightweight system with free software and particularly useful in promoting the essential digital skills
- Digital Skills Framework
- Catalyst Video Resources

The key issues highlighted and discussed were as follows:

- It would be worthwhile to pursue a Tees Wide scheme to convert donated laptops for community use
- Old kit could be donated to Catalyst and Members queried whether old Council kit was or could be donated
- The bitesize skills videos were an excellent idea and would benefit from wider publicity and use for example through family hubs

AGREED that the information be noted.

#### **4 Initial Progress Update – Scrutiny Review of the Cost of School Uniform**

The Scrutiny Officer outlined progress in implementing recommendations arising from the Select Committee's previous review of the Cost of School Uniform. The Select Committee welcomed the new legislation putting the DfE best practice guidance on a statutory footing.

AGREED that the Progress Update be noted and the assessments of progress be confirmed.

#### **5 Select Committee Work Programme and Chair's Update**

The Select Committee agreed that a research paper on the link between child poverty and fuel poverty be prepared and included in the summary of evidence for the review. This would mean that the February meeting will focus solely on the overview report.

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.