

**Date:** Wednesday 13 December 2023 at 5.00 pm

**Venue:** Jim Cooke Conference Suite, Stockton Central Library, Church Road,  
Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1TU

**Cllr Carol Clark (Chair)**  
**Cllr Barbara Inman (Vice-Chair)**

Cllr Ray Godwin  
Cllr Stephen Richardson  
Cllr Emily Tate  
Cllr Katie Weston

Cllr David Reynard  
Cllr Paul Rowling  
Cllr Sally Ann Watson

## **AGENDA**

- 1 Evacuation Procedure** (Pages 7 - 8)
- 2 Apologies for Absence**
- 3 Declarations of Interest**
- 4 Minutes**  
To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 15 November 2023. (Pages 9 - 14)
- 5 Scrutiny Review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment**
  - To receive a presentation on the new team around the school partnership offer.
  - To consider engagement activity to support the Appreciative Inquiry Scrutiny.
- 6 Select Committee Work Programme** (Pages 15 - 16)

**Members of the Public - Rights to Attend Meeting**

With the exception of any item identified above as containing exempt or confidential information under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100A(4), members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting and/or have access to the agenda papers.

Persons wishing to obtain any further information on this meeting, including the opportunities available for any member of the public to speak at the meeting; or for details of access to the meeting for disabled people, please

Contact: Scrutiny Support Officer Rachel Harrison on email [rachel.harrison@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.harrison@stockton.gov.uk)

**KEY - Declarable interests are:-**

- Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's)
- Other Registerable Interests (ORI's)
- Non Registerable Interests (NRI's)

**Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance**



**Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation</b>	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain
<b>Sponsorship</b>	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
<b>Contracts</b>	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
<b>Land and property</b>	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
<b>Licences</b>	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.
<b>Corporate tenancies</b>	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
<b>Securities</b>	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

\* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

\* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

## Table 2 – Other Registerable Interest

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any body
  - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
  - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
  - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

This page is intentionally left blank

## **Jim Cooke Conference Suite, Stockton Central Library** **Evacuation Procedure & Housekeeping**

If the fire or bomb alarm should sound please exit by the nearest emergency exit. The Fire alarm is a continuous ring and the Bomb alarm is the same as the fire alarm however it is an intermittent ring.

If the Fire Alarm rings exit through the nearest available emergency exit and form up in Municipal Buildings Car Park.

The assembly point for everyone if the Bomb alarm is sounded is the car park at the rear of Splash on Church Road.

The emergency exits are located via the doors between the 2 projector screens. The key coded emergency exit door will automatically disengage when the alarm sounds.

The Toilets are located on the Ground floor corridor of Municipal Buildings next to the emergency exit. Both the ladies and gents toilets are located on the right hand side.

### **Microphones**

During the meeting, members of the Committee, and officers in attendance, will have access to a microphone. Please use the microphones, when directed to speak by the Chair, to ensure you are heard by the Committee.

This page is intentionally left blank



## Children and Young People Select Committee

A meeting of the Children and Young People Select Committee was held on Wednesday 15 November 2023.

**Present:** Cllr Carol Clark (Chair), Cllr Barbara Inman (Vice-Chair), Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr David Reynard, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Emily Tate, Cllr Sally Ann Watson, Cllr Katie Weston

**Officers:** Haleem Ghafoor (A,H&W); Eddie Huntington, Mandie Rowlands (ChS); Gary Woods (CS)

**Also in attendance:** Janet Bradley (Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees)

**Apologies:** Cllr Nathan Gale

<b>1</b>	<p><b>Evacuation Procedure</b></p> <p>The evacuation procedure was noted.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>There were no interests declared.</p>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Minutes</b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee meeting which was held on 19 July 2023 for approval and signature.</p> <p>AGREED that the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 19 July 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Progress Update – Scrutiny Review of Care Leavers EET</b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the assessments of progress on the implementation of the recommendations from the Committee’s previously completed review of Care Leavers EET. This was the third progress update following the Committee’s agreement of the Action Plan in September 2021, with developments in relation to the three outstanding agreed actions noted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Recommendation 2 (Redefines its approach and commitment to getting a young person in care or leaving care into education, employment or training by retraining and refocusing the workforce):</u> Action considered fully achieved. Progression Advisers work with Personal Advisers to seek opportunities regarding EET, with the latter continuing to take on the lead professional role for care leavers. Those young people who need most support could now be identified.</li> </ul> <p>Referencing the previous update on progress, Members queried whether the percentages quoted in February 2023 for young people moving towards EET had changed, and how many individuals this involved. Officers reported that</p>

the figures remained broadly similar to date, with around 33 individuals aged 17-18 years (67%), and around 68 individuals aged 19 years (66%). It was also noted that, by the end of November 2023, confirmation of the status of all care leavers should be known in terms of whether they are in education, employment, or training (or none of these).

- Recommendation 6 (Has a corporate commitment to creating a sustainable model to increase access to work experience and apprenticeship opportunities within SBC for young people leaving care): Action considered fully achieved. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) would continue to review and evaluate its approach around care leavers obtaining employment within the Council itself, and examples of young people successfully gaining apprenticeships, qualifications and, in the case of one individual, a full-time role were testament to the progress made on increasing access to opportunities. Encouragingly, young people were reporting that the opportunity provided had allowed them to create some stability, focus and drive towards improving their aspirations.

The Committee asked if, as potential advocates for the aim to increase access to opportunities for care leavers, those young people who had completed a work placement / apprenticeship with the Council were asked to get involved in the recruitment process for others. Officers stated that whilst not formally part of subsequent recruitment, care leavers who had experienced opportunities within SBC were consulted in relation to the support they had received in the past, and any learning (e.g. how any issues were managed during a placement) was incorporated into plans for the next cohort. Some had also come forward to assist with the interviews for the SBC Director of Children Services replacement and had provided positive contributions towards other Council initiatives.

Despite the small number of care leavers who had benefitted (two within Children's Services and one within Community Services, Environment and Culture (Care For Your Area)) / were due to benefit (two within Children's Services) thus far, Members were encouraged by progress around this recommendation, particularly given the fact that there were often complex circumstances involved. Building self-esteem / self-value was a crucial by-product of providing such opportunities.

- Recommendation 7 (Has a Borough-wide commitment to creating a sustainable model to increase access to work experience and job opportunities with local employers and partner agencies for young people leaving care through the creation of a dedicated brokerage resource which will focus on pro-actively finding, placing and maintaining young people in education, employment and training): Progress was ongoing but further work was required at a corporate level to ensure there was commitment across all directorates to provide opportunities. Children's Services had the evidence of how this had been successful, and this needed to be used as the blueprint across the Council.

Reflecting on the overall update, the Committee enquired as to how the

	<p>current situation regarding care leavers within EET compared to historical figures. Officers responded that, for school years 12-14 (16-19-year-olds), around 5% of care experienced young people were not in EET (NEET). Care leavers were given an increased level of input from Council services until the end of year 14 (more information on this could be provided if desired), though officers were careful to ensure that such young people were not being pushed into anything they were not ready for.</p> <p>AGREED that the Care Leavers EET progress update be noted.</p>
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Progress Update – Scrutiny Review of Child Poverty</b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the assessments of progress on the implementation of the recommendations from the Committee’s previously completed review of Child Poverty. This was the second progress update following the Committee’s agreement of the Action Plan in July 2022, with developments in relation to the four outstanding agreed actions noted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Recommendation 1 (That a family poverty profile is compiled and updated annually from available data and input from those with lived experience and is used to identify a key priority for targeted action each year; an initial focus being take up of Free School Meals for those eligible and in need):</u> Action considered fully achieved. Multiple strands of progress evident including an increase in places on the Holidays Activities Fund (HAF) Programme, the continuation of the Supporting Families Programme, increased take-up of Free School Meals, and the establishment of the Free School Meal Auto-Enrolment Project Group and the Anti-Poverty Strategy Group.</li> </ul> <p>Referencing the mapping of schools across the region which offer breakfast clubs, Members stressed the importance of children having adequate food prior to the start of the school day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Recommendation 2 (That support offered to families in poverty is enhanced through: a) a more integrated and visible offer for families experiencing poverty focusing on information, advice, financial and other support; b) roll-out of Poverty Proofing the School Day across all Stockton Schools; c) establishing a mutual aid / giving scheme, in partnership with Catalyst, to facilitate community giving; d) ensuring an enhanced support offer is available for communities and areas targeted through the Fairer Stockton-on-Tees Framework):</u> Action considered fully achieved. Again, several areas demonstrated progress on this action, including the implementation of ‘The Bread and Butter Thing’ (providing families with cost-effective, healthy food options), the continuation of the Community Spaces (previously Warm Spaces) initiative, and the development of outreach Here to Help events to provide communities with a range of support, referrals and advice. Developments around this recommendation would continue to be picked-up as part of the wider Scrutiny Review of Cost-of-Living Response that was currently being</li> </ul>

	<p>undertaken by the People Select Committee, a piece of work which was also considering progress on the costs of school uniform.</p> <p>Focusing on the ongoing concerns in relation to school uniform costs, Members expressed disappointment that there was still a need to look at this issue again given the Committee undertook an in-depth review on this very topic in the previous Council term – officers were therefore urged to ensure the findings and recommendations from the Committee’s previous work were not overlooked. Assurance was subsequently given that momentum around the school uniform agenda was still being maintained off the back of the Committee’s past review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Recommendation 4 (That, subject to funding, a direct payments scheme is developed for those identified as in need, building on the examples of vouchers during the pandemic):</u> Action considered fully achieved. Currently exploring auto-enrolment options for Free School Meals with the support of members from the North East Child Poverty Commission.</li> <li>• <u>Recommendation 5 (That all subsidy policies are reviewed and revised as appropriate to provide streamlined and enhanced support for families):</u> Action considered fully achieved. Working in-line with SBC ‘Powering Our Future’ and ‘ABCD’ initiatives to support communities and gather information through those with lived experience, findings will be fed through the Anti-Poverty Strategy Group and be shared with the Child Poverty Project Group which meets every six weeks.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee noted the multiple elements which had either been achieved or were ongoing around the issue of child poverty (even in the face of limited resources) which, in cumulation, contributed to providing significant and much-needed help to a number of the Borough’s residents and their families.</p> <p>AGREED that the Child Poverty progress update be noted and the originally agreed Action Plan be signed-off as complete (no further updates required).</p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Scrutiny Review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment</b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the brief and scope for the Scrutiny Review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment. Following the ‘appreciative inquiry’ methodology, the overall aim of the project would be to work collaboratively with schools and partners to explore what good practice already exists and what could still be done to support families, establish innovative ways of working, and make better use of resources through a renewed approach.</p> <p>Focusing on the specific factors of a) attendance, and b) community outreach and connected Children’s Services, the review would seek to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve identification of disadvantaged, CIOC and SEN pupils.</li> <li>• Better understand the issues around disadvantaged, CIOC and SEN pupils’ educational outcomes.</li> </ul>

- Identify what more can be done locally to tackle these issues.
- Assess how well current policies, services and interventions address the issues and identify potential gaps.
- Identify the changes needed to policies, services and interventions based on best practice, national recommendations, evidence base and data.
- Establish what more should be done to provide support in early years, in particular to new mothers / families.
- Review the effectiveness of the strategic and local approaches in place to tackle lower disadvantaged, CIOC and SEND outcomes.
- Identify how the Council can, together with its partners, collectively respond to tackle the issues identified.

For both these specific factors, potential stakeholders and proposed ways in which to engage with the identified organisations / groups / individuals were outlined – this involved a mix of workshops and visits to established entities such as family hubs, foodbanks / baby banks, and youth clubs.

To provide additional context, an '*Early Help Transformation & Improvement Programme: Project Initiation Document (Brief & scope of the work)*' paper was tabled for Members' information. One of the aims within this piece of work was to narrow the gap of educational attainment, improve school attendance and reduce school-based exclusion.

Officers acknowledged that the appreciative inquiry approach was not wildly different to how reviews had been conducted in the past and that, whilst some of the findings would perhaps be uncomfortable, the Committee needed to hear and understand the existing situation. Schools had a good working knowledge of their pupils, but they could not be expected to do everything around the factors influencing attainment – as such, there was a desire to work in partnership with schools and help them wherever possible. Indeed, support from the community was a vastly underused resource, part of which was already reaching out to help.

Linked to the child poverty update received earlier in this meeting, Members again raised the issue of breakfast clubs within schools. Officers stated that, in the future, every school would be obliged to provide wraparound care (or signpost to somewhere providing before and / or after-school support), though current provision within the Borough was very positive.

Members queried if exclusion / isolation rates were being monitored and heard that the SBC Early Help Team worked with schools to prevent / minimise such issues (though it could not dictate to them). In related matters, officers noted that special education needs and disability (SEND) considerations would also be involved as part of the review, though off-rolling (the practice of removing disadvantaged and struggling pupils from the school roll before they took their final exams so their poor results were not included in the school statistics) was not within scope, even though this did need to be challenged.

With reference to the suggested stakeholder list, the Committee proposed

	<p>the addition of Thirteen Housing Group since they were likely involved with a proportion of people who may be associated with this scrutiny topic. In having responsibilities as a social landlord, Thirteen had a resilience team and were also currently tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Thornaby which had been well-received.</p> <p>The Committee was informed that dates for subsequent evidence-gathering sessions would be organised and circulated in due course. In the meantime, a forthcoming session in Manchester on 5 December 2023 regarding disadvantage was highlighted, something which Members had the opportunity to access if interested.</p> <p>AGREED that the scope for the Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment review be approved.</p>
--	---

**Children and Young People Select Committee  
Work Programme – 2023-2024**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Attending</b>
19 July 2023	Children's Services Overview  Action Plan – Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships	Martin Gray Cllr Lisa Evans  Adele Moore
15 November 2023	Review of Educational Attainment  Progress Update – Care Leavers EET  Progress Update - Scrutiny Review of Child Poverty	Vanessa Housley Eddie Huntington  David Willingham  Haleem Ghafoor
13 December 2023	Review of Educational Attainment  Presentation – New Team around the School Partnership Offer	Vanessa Housley Eddie Huntington
17 January 2024	Review of Educational Attainment  Presentation – New Attendance Strategy	Vanessa Housley Eddie Huntington
14 February 2024	Overview Meeting	DCS
13 March 2024		

**Items to be scheduled each year**

**Annual**

Overview of Children and Young People's Services and Annual Safeguarding Report

**Six Monthly**

Children and Young People Performance Reports

**Progress Updates**

Progress Update - Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships July 2024

This page is intentionally left blank