

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

A meeting of Children and Young People Select Committee was held on Wednesday 8 March 2023.

Present: Cllr Carol Clark (Chair), Cllr Barbara Inman (Vice-Chair), Cllr Ray Godwin and Cllr Andrew Sherris.

Officers: Martin Gray (Ch'S) and Judy Trainer (DS).

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Dan Fagan, Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr Lauriane Povey, Cllr Stephen Richardson and Cllr Sally Ann Watson.

CYP/44/22 Evacuation Procedure

The Evacuation and Housekeeping Procedure was noted.

CYP/45/22 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

CYP/46/22 Minutes

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CYP/47/22 Employment and Training Hub

The Select Committee received a presentation from the Economic Development Team on work around employment, education and skills with schools, colleges and universities. The all-age hub provided partnership support and advice covering:

- employability support (CV writing, interview techniques)
- job searches
- apprenticeships
- skills, education and training
- English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- funding and benefits advice
- 1-to-1 support

The presentation outlined provision for young people and plans for the future which included enterprise workshops and the Bridge to Apprenticeship Programme.

AGREED that the presentation be noted.

CYP/48/22 Children and Young People - Performance Update

The Select Committee received a performance update on children's services covering:

- Change and improvement
- Inspection and action planning
- Improvement priorities by service area
- Key performance data:
 - Help and Support and Children’s Social Care
 - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
 - Schools

Members recognised the innovative and positive changes that had been implemented and paid tribute to the work of children’s services staff.

Key issues highlighted and discussed were as follows:

- Demands on children’s services were complex and increasing and there were well recognised national challenges around capacity and funding
- Having received a positive focused visit in December 2021, the September 2022 focused on the “front door” was less positive and pointed to a number of areas for improvement. Building blocks for an effective response and key actions already implemented were outlined
- Work was underway for the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Inclusion (SENDI) Inspection which would take place in the next three years
- The Help and Support offer continued to evolve in line with relationship-based practice model
- There continued to be a significant demand pressure across children’s social care services. Priorities for the year ahead included implementing the actions from the Focused Visit and the current visit and implementing the recruitment and retention plan
- There were extremely good relationships with schools and Stockton schools performed well overall. Priorities would include narrowing the gap for children from disadvantaged backgrounds
- A lot of work had been carried out to ensure sufficiency of school places and there were high rates of children being allocated their first choice of school
- The Schools Capital Programme had implemented significant investment at Stockton schools
- Progress against the SEND strategy was being monitored through the multi-agency SEND Strategic Group which would evolve into the Local Inclusion Partnership

AGREED that the report be noted.

CYP/49/22 Overview and Scrutiny - End of Term Report (2019 - 2023)

The Select Committee considered a report providing details of the work undertaken by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council’s Overview and Scrutiny function over the previous four years.

Members highlighted the vast range of topics completed against an extremely challenging four-year period.

AGREED that the report be noted.

CYP/50/22 Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.