

People Select Committee

A meeting of People Select Committee was held on Monday 2nd February 2026.

Present: Cllr Marilyn Surtees (Chair), Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Mohammed Mazi (sub Cllr Niall Innes), Cllr David Reynard, Cllr Marcus Vickers (sub Cllr Hugo Stratton) and Cllr Barry Woodhouse

Officers: Neil Gittins (Egglescliffe School and Sixth Form), Kellie Wigley, Vanessa Housley (Children's Services), Aishah Waite, Junita Agyapong, Michelle Gunn (Corporate Services)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Paul Weston (Vice-Chair), Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Niall Innes and Cllr Hugo Stratton

PEO/48/25 Evacuation Procedure

The Committee noted the evacuation and housekeeping procedure.

PEO/49/25 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

PEO/50/25 Minutes

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 5 January 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PEO/51/25 Action Plan for Agreed Recommendations - Review of Partnership Working in Early Help

The Head of Service – Early Help, Youth Justice and Youth Support presented an action plan setting out how the agreed recommendations from the Scrutiny Review of Partnership Working in Early Help would be implemented and target dates for completion. The recommendations aimed to build a more integrated and responsive Early Help system, and it was noted that progress had been made on the actions for implementation, including co-producing a Family First Strategy with partners, co-producing an assessment with partners, and discussions regarding effective data sharing systems.

It was further noted that the re-designed Integrated Front Door would include early help along with safeguarding and would use a triage tool to give links and information to those accessing the service. Training, information, and support would be made available for partners to ensure understanding of the roles in early help, as well as build confidence, consistency and capacity to support families early. It was envisaged that the online offer would include video testimonials from families that had accessed early help to give assurances to those looking for support.

Members raised online triage systems, questioning if there would be anything in place for those who could not or did not want to access online services. Officers informed that information and advice would also be available via telephone and face to face in the Family Hubs.

AGREED that the Action Plan be approved and a progress update be presented to the Committee in September.

PEO/52/25 Scrutiny Review of Post 16 Provision

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of School at Eggescliffe School and Sixth Form regarding the work of the Post 16 Partnership Excellence for All working strand. The presentation included:

- Eggescliffe School GCSE successes and A level results, with 100% A level pass rate in 21 subjects, 52% of Grades A*-B and over 25% of grades A*-A. It was noted that data and statistics should be considered along with the background and personal stories of the students to reflect the real achievements made, and the school was proud of the results achieved by their students.
- Recruitment to post 16 provision, which was historically very stable at Eggescliffe with a cohort of 160 – 170. Challenges for recruitment to post 16 provision included the curriculum offer, the curriculum success, and incentives offered by other providers.
- Collaboration between in borough post 16 providers to improve recruitment, ensuring that there was a strong offer with good outcomes across the borough that encouraged students to enrol at in borough providers. There was an ongoing trial with two strands to address the outcomes:
 - Business mentor support, led by the Employment and Training Hub to bring business and students together. The strand targeted students who were not academically achieving in Bede and Eggescliffe colleges providing a series of interventions to improve their confidence, study skills, leadership, employability and knowledge of sectors. To date masterclasses had been held regarding communication skills, interviewing the mentor, and understanding business sectors. Information from the sectors had been shared with colleges and schools previously, however the information was more powerful coming direct from businesses and the feedback from the masterclasses had been very positive.
 - Teach meet, held in November 2025 when staff across eight subjects areas came together to discuss, plan, and implement a series of interventions to approve outcomes. The feedback from staff was positive and another session was planned in February 2026. Members questioned whether Teach Meets would be used for more subjects and informed that they had been targeted at subjects which were underperforming or only had one class in the college which limited discussion with colleagues, e.g. sociology and economics.

The number of students coming out of borough to Stockton-on-Tees providers was noted. While Eggescliffe Sixth Forms intake was usually from the school itself, they did enrol a small number of students from other schools, including private schools. However, Stockton Riverside College and Bede College had 695 students from out of borough enrolled on their courses.

The Committee discussed recruitment, with members questioning whether the range of courses for in-borough providers differed from those outside the borough, and whether students were being signposting to vocational courses available in-borough. It was acknowledged that Eggescliffe Sixth Forms offer was A level courses however they invited local colleges into the school to promote vocational courses to those students who wished to choose that route. It was believed that there was a perception by students' the incentives and vocational offer from other colleges were better. A survey had been carried out to understand further why students were choosing out of borough providers and this would be presented to the Committee during the review.

It was noted Communication and Marketing working strand had developed a leaflet to promote the Post 16 offer in borough to Year 10 and 11 students. As a result, applications to all in borough providers was spectacularly high for this time of the year, with applications for Eggescliffe already at 170, this was 50 more applications than at the same point last academic year, while Stockton Riverside College had increased by 20% and Stockton Sixth Form College increased by 50%. The work of the Communication and Marketing working strand would be presented at the next Committee meeting.

AGREED that the information provided be noted.

PEO/53/25 Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme

Chair: