

Date:

Monday 13 April 2026 at 2.00 pm

Venue:

Council Chamber, Dunedin House, Columbia Drive; , Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees TS17 6BJ

Cllr Marilyn Surtees (Chair)

Cllr Paul Weston (Vice-Chair)

Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr David Reynard, Cllr Hugo Stratton, Cllr Sylvia Walmsley and Cllr Barry Woodhouse

Agenda

1. **Evacuation Procedure** (Pages 7 - 10)
2. **Apologies for Absence**
3. **Declarations of Interest**
4. **Minutes** (Pages 11 - 14)
To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 2 March 2026
5. **Scrutiny Review of Post 16 Provision** (Pages 15 - 46)
6. **Chair's Update and Work Programme 2026-27** (Pages 47 - 48)

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 Officer Michelle Gunn on email michelle.gunn@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

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain
Sponsorship	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.
Contracts	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.
Land and property	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.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	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.
Securities	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

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Council Chamber, Dunedin House Evacuation Procedure & Housekeeping

Entry

Entry to the Council Chamber is via the Council Chamber entrance indicated on the map below.



In the event of an emergency alarm activation, everyone should immediately start to leave their workspace by the nearest available signed Exit route.

The emergency exits are located via the doors on either side of the raised seating area at the front of the Council Chamber.

Fires, explosions, and bomb threats are among the occurrences that may require the emergency evacuation of Dunedin House. Continuous sounding and flashing of the Fire Alarm is the signal to evacuate the building or upon instruction from a Fire Warden or a Manager.

The Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point is in the overflow car park located across the road from Dunedin House.

The allocated assembly point for the Council Chamber is: D2

Map of the Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point - the overflow car park:



All occupants must respond to the alarm signal by immediately initiating the evacuation procedure.

When the Alarm sounds:

1. **stop all activities immediately.** Even if you believe it is a false alarm or practice drill, you MUST follow procedures to evacuate the building fully.
2. **follow directional EXIT signs** to evacuate via the nearest safe exit in a calm and orderly manner.
 - do not stop to collect your belongings
 - close all doors as you leave
3. **steer clear of hazards.** If evacuation becomes difficult via a chosen route because of smoke, flames or a blockage, re-enter the Chamber (if safe to do so). Continue the evacuation via the nearest safe exit route.
4. **proceed to the Evacuation Assembly Point.** Move away from the building. Once you have exited the building, proceed to the main Evacuation Assembly Point immediately - located in the **East Overflow Car Park**.
 - do not assemble directly outside the building or on any main roadway, to ensure access for Emergency Services.

5. await further instructions.

- **do not re-enter the building under any circumstances without an “all clear”** which should only be given by the Incident Control Officer/Chief Fire Warden, Fire Warden or Manager.
- do not leave the area without permission.
- ensure all colleagues and visitors are accounted for. Notify a Fire Warden or Manager immediately if you have any concerns

Toilets

Toilets are located immediately outside the Council Chamber, accessed via the door at the back of the Chamber.

Water Cooler

A water cooler is available at the rear of the Council Chamber.

Microphones

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

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People Select Committee

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

Present: Cllr Marilyn Surtees (Chair), Cllr Paul Weston (Vice-Chair), Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Nial Innes, Cllr Tony Riordan (sub Cllr Hugo Stratton), Cllr Sylvia Walmsley (sub Cllr Ian Dalgarno) and Cllr Barry Woodhouse

Officers: Noel Dennis (Stockton Sixth Form College), Erika Marshall (Education Training Collective), Vanessa Housley (Children Services), Kirsty Grundy and Michelle Gunn (Corporate Services)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr David Reynard and Cllr Hugo Stratton

PEO/54/25 Evacuation Procedure

The Committee noted the evacuation and housekeeping procedure.

PEO/55/25 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

PEO/56/25 Minutes

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PEO/57/25 Scrutiny Review of Post 16 Provision

The Committee received a presentation regarding the Post 16 Partnership Communications and Marketing Working Strand from the Business Development Director at Atomix Educational Trust and the Marketing and Business Engagement Director at the Education Training Collective (ETC). The presentation included:

- Schools that the providers engaged with, which included not only the secondary schools within Stockton-on-Tees Borough but also schools across the Tees Valley area.
- The type of activities that took place, which ranged from attending school assemblies/events, open events for young people and their parents/carers, taster sessions and campus tours, mock interviews, and career guidance. Holding sessions with successful graduates and digital marketing via the website, social media and digital campaigns were also taking place. While the providers were engaging with all year groups, with ETC highlighting the Your Future workshop designed to engage younger year groups in career choices, the main focus was Years 9, 10 and 11.
- The growth in applications and enrolments. ETC reported a 24.4 % increase in active applications, with a 6.6% increase in Stockton-on-Tees 2026 school

- leavers application, while Atomix reported an 89.4% year-on-year increase in active applications for Stockton Sixth Form.
- ETC highlighted the challenges they faced in managing capacity at their sites, building new facilities at Bede Sixth Form and NETA.
 - Atomix noted that there was a new team at Stockton Sixth Form College, which were in their second year of their new marketing strategy.
 - Partnerships with industry and alignment with local skills. It was noted that local employers, including businesses and the NHS, worked well with local providers. ETC highlighted that employer demand was driving the balance between academic and vocational training, while Stockton Sixth Form highlighted their partnerships with employers to co-create their T-Level curriculum. When members questioned local employer involvement in T-levels, it was noted that it was important to get a round table of employers together to understand the skills and knowledge required for the next generation.
 - The collaborative approach to develop a communications and marketing initiative promoting studying in Stockton-on-Tees Borough. This collaboration between providers, careers, and industry, was believed to be key to promoting local provision.
 - Data collection that was taking place with students who had left the borough and then returned to study at local colleges as well mystery shopper exercises to competitor colleges. This would provide insights into retention and attraction points. The report on findings from data collection was expected in March 2026.
 - Completed initiatives, which included mapping engagement activity with parents and schools and identifying growth sectors and businesses. It was stressed that it was important to promote creating a life in Stockton-on-Tees, e.g. the value of living, working, playing and studying in the Borough, and place brand messaging had been developed.
 - Planned work and next steps to develop resources to encourage school leavers to stay in-borough for their post-16 education. This included a staff engagement toolkit to enable those who came into contact with school leavers throughout schools pose questions and advise on the options available, identifying successful alumni to help promote the offer, and a digital ambassador scheme to help post out positive messages. A Post Secondary Pre-Open event was planned in September, with representative from all in-borough providers in one venue.

Apprenticeships were discussed with members questioning the messaging around the courses and employer engagement. It was noted that apprenticeships had seen an increase in popularity. Stockton Riverside College made it clear to students that to be enrolled on an apprenticeship they needed to be employed and carrying out the job, attending the SRC for the learning part of the apprenticeship only.

It was questioned how the mystery shopper exercises were undertaken and what information was gaged from them. It was explained that colleagues who were attending open events with their own children who were leaving school were asked to report back. The initial findings suggested that colleges from outside the borough had similar offers to the in-borough providers, and there was some duplication. It was noted that the goodie bags offer of some providers acted as a simple visual prompt and therefore an important incentive for potential students.

When questioned on barriers to attracting school leavers to Stockton-on-Tees, building “stickability” was discussed. Providers were building networks through their engagement activity, so that even if a young person’s cohort from school were not

attending the same provider, they would be aware of who their new cohort would be. The importance of ensuring the student was on the right course at the right provider regardless of whether they lived in-borough or out of borough was also raised. Where students had specific interests and career aspirations not catered for by a provider, they were signposting to the colleges that provided the appropriate course and would expect this to be reciprocated.

It was questioned what data analysis took place for Stockton Sixth Forms website. The Committee were informed that Stockton Sixth Form College had a data dashboard for their website, which included if the people looking at their website were returning, how long they were on the website, and how many clicks/pages were being looked at. This information was helpful in their strategic marketing planning and decision making.

AGREED the information provided be noted.

PEO/58/25 Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme

Consideration was given to the Committee's work programme.

AGREED the work programme be noted.

Chair:

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People Select Committee

13 April 2026

Scrutiny Review of Post 16 Provision

Summary

The third evidence gathering session for the Committee's review of Post 16 Provision will consider evidence from the Post 16 Partnership Careers Working Group Strand.

Detail

1. As part of the scoping process for the Scrutiny Review of Post 16 Provision, the Committee identified representatives from the Post 16 Partnership Working Group Strands as key contributors. Representative from the Careers Strand, the Team Manager - Careers and the Employment & Training Hub Manager, will therefore be attending the April meeting.
2. The representatives have been asked to provide the following information:
 - Collaboration with Stockton's Careers Leaders, including detail of how Careers Teams work with schools e.g. the new Careers Network
 - Careers advice available both within schools and within Post-16 provision
 - Relationships with local businesses
 - Early intervention with students at risk of disengaging – Skills for Success
 - Breakdown of NEET data by socio-economic background e.g. CIOC, CWSW et al
3. In addition, there will be a presentation regarding the Transformation Review taking place regarding Opportunities for Young People into Employment and how that links to the Scrutiny Review.
4. Presentations are attached along with a copy of the agreed scope and project plan for the review for information.

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Post Title: [Scrutiny Officer](#)

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Email address: michelle.gunn@stockton.gov.uk

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Post-16 Strategic Board Careers Strand

Ian Caley, Team Manager – Careers

Fallon Dunleavy, Employment & Training Hub Manager

Page 18 Careers Network

Careers activity in schools

For a decade Secondary schools and colleges have held a duty to provide Careers Education to all their young people KS3 to KS5

Gatsby Benchmarks

- 1 A stable Careers programme (includes having a Careers Leader)
- 2 Learning from Career and Labour Market Information
- 3 Addressing the needs of each young person inc challenging stereotypes, Destinations data
- 4 Linking Curriculum learning to Careers
- 5 Encounters with employers and employees
- 6 Experiences of workplaces
- 7 Encounters with Further and Higher Education
- 8 Personal Careers Guidance

The Benchmarks were given greater clarity and higher expectations last year – most notably for #5 and #6

Careers Network

What we set out to achieve

Avoid duplication – there is an existing network for schools, TVCA / CEC’s Careers Hub. We were asked to do some time-specific pieces of work with our schools and colleges.

Specific focus and support – SBC is facilitating and supporting the schools and colleges; it is schools and colleges who deliver Careers Education so how can we best help them learn from each other and achieve better outcomes for our young people?

Identify and fill gaps, share good practice on the areas of greatest priority for our schools and colleges.

Bring innovative and inspiring opportunities to the group, for them to decide if and how it fits into their school or college.

Careers Network

Key priorities for schools and colleges

1 Build a directory of businesses who engage well with school aged young people and can deliver various engagement activities

Progress = TVCA is relaunching their Business Directory, Network updated March 2026 & discussed how our schools and colleges could influence how this works

2 Key Stage 3 “Work Experience week” activities to inspire and inform young people in Years 7-9

Progress = “roadshow” activity utilising development of the Tees Valley Care and Health Innovation Zone and Regeneration work at Tees Central, and building on Skills For Success

3 Key Stage 4 Work Experience week support including identification of duties, contacts with businesses, potential coordination of weeks across schools

Progress = had further meetings, shared “how to” guide with schools, arranged TVCA Work Experience Coordinator meeting with the Network March 2026

4 Parent & Carer guide to Careers with tips on how to prepare young people for life after school

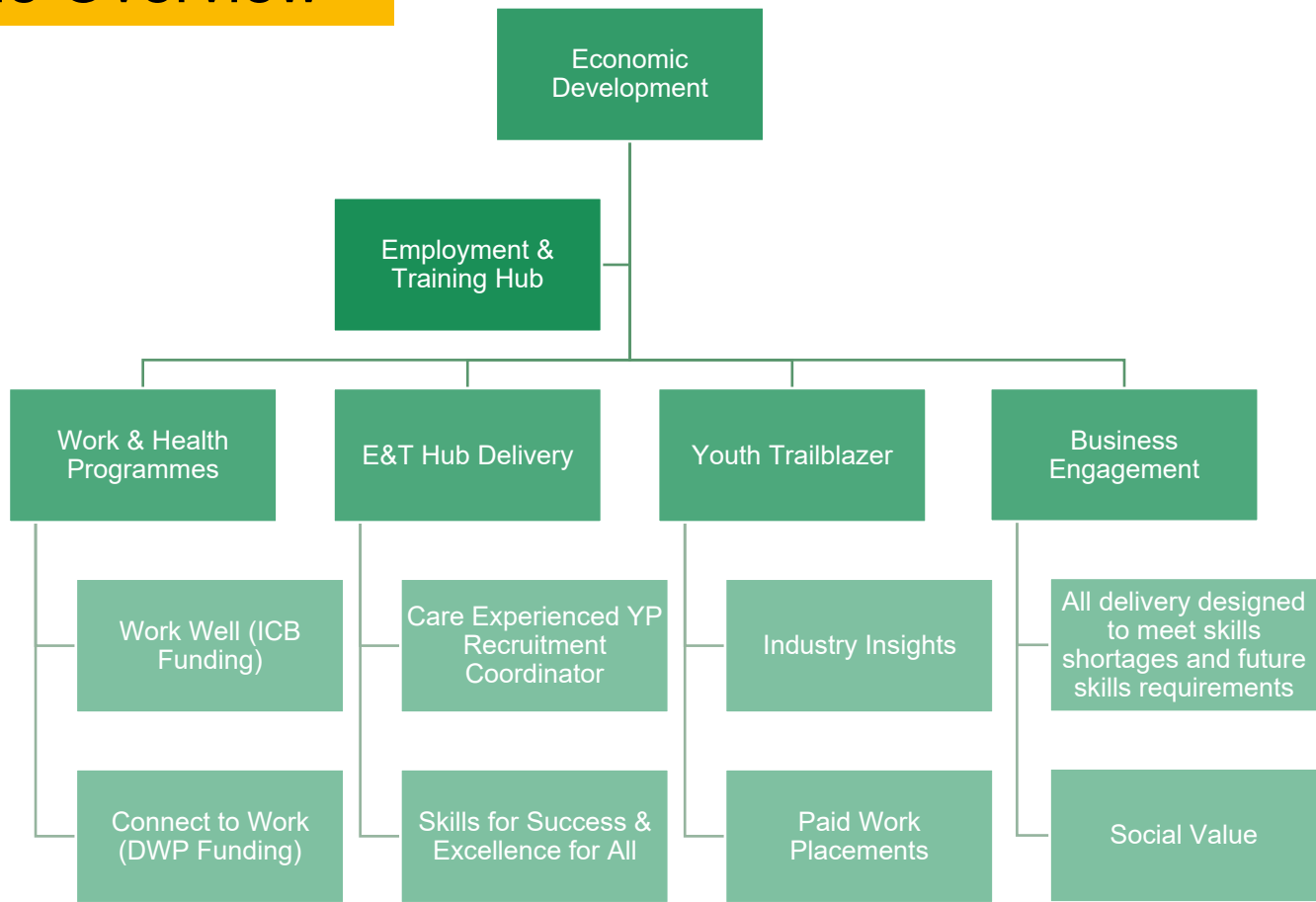
Progress = content agreed with Network, working with Comms group to design and produce guide

5 Careers Into The Curriculum support in developing “off-the-shelf” resources, how do skills and qualities advanced by each subject translate into the world of work?

Progress = lowest priority for the Network, not yet started; TVCA already provide support with this, including resources through www.teesvalleycareers.com

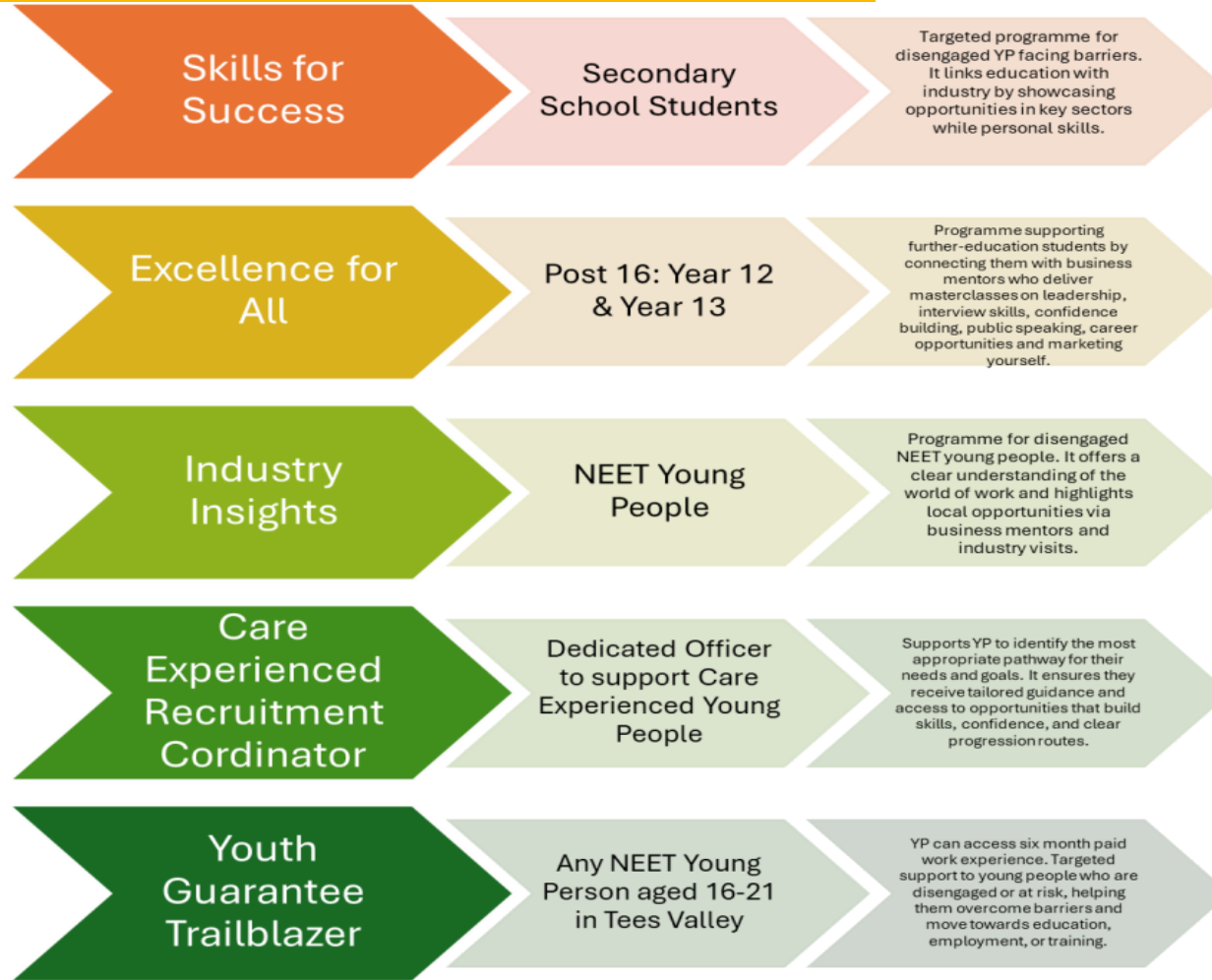
Employment & Training Hub

Project & Programme Overview



Business links

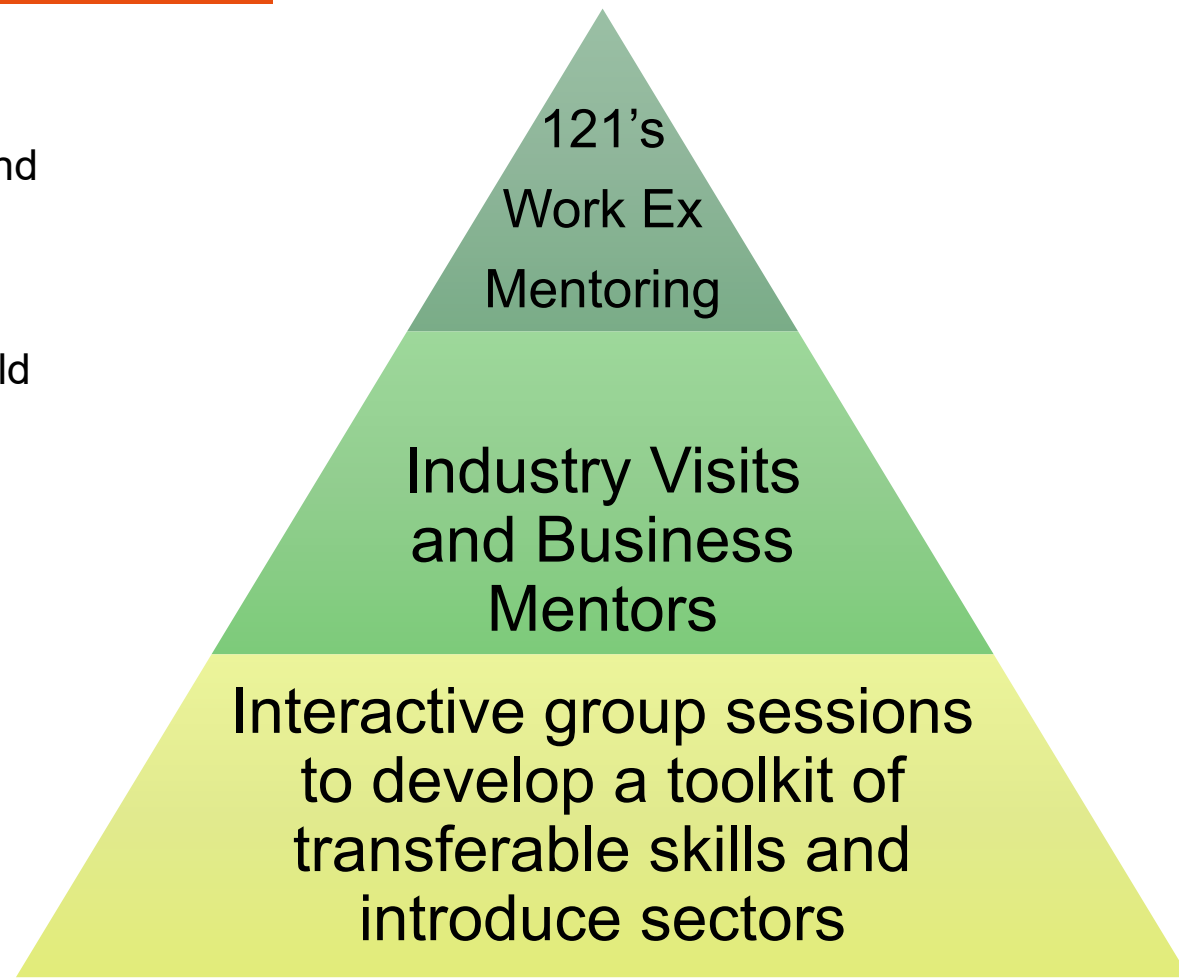
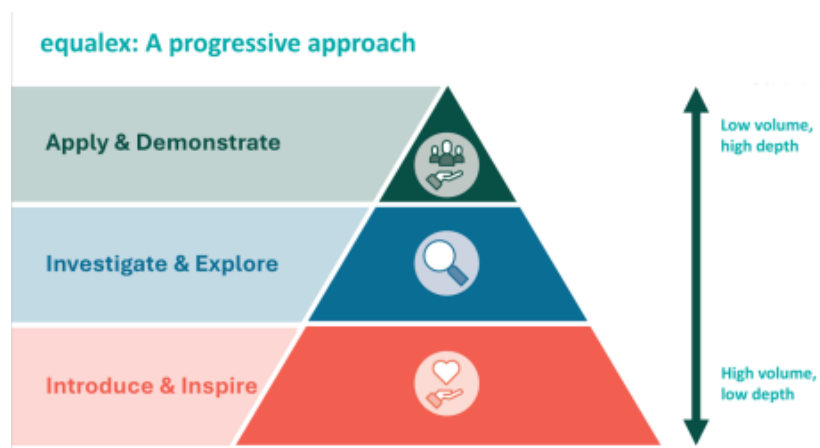
Support for young people through the E&T Hub



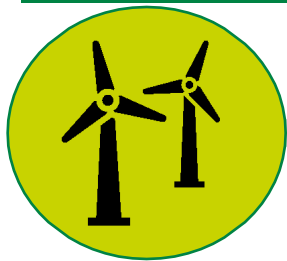
Model of Delivery

The hub approach

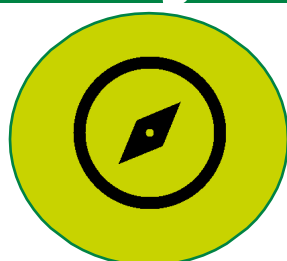
The Equalex framework is a comprehensive, structured, and inclusive model for delivering modern, meaningful careers education. It ensures young people progressively gain the skills, knowledge, insight, and confidence needed to make informed decisions and transition successfully into the world of work.



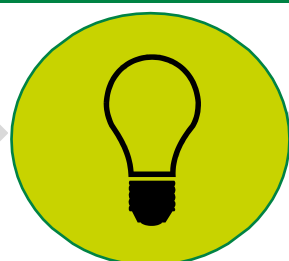
Skills for Success Programme - Secondary School



Masterclass sessions from UKSTEM & Businesses



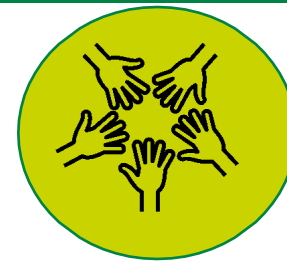
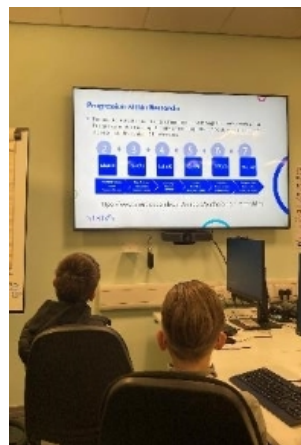
Guidance & Support from Business Mentors



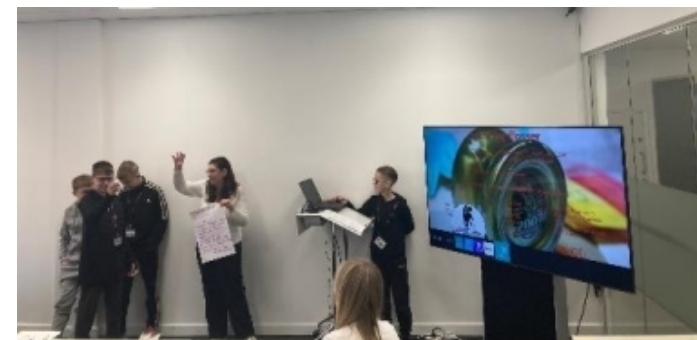
Industry Visits



Sharing Business Intelligence



Team Building & Individual Activities



Celebration Event

Student Impact

Attendance

Overall attendance figures increased by 3.6% (with the current average overall figure 93%)

Attitude to Learning

Schools reported that students had improved school attitude and engagement resulting in improved learning and progress.

Positive behaviour points increased by 60%

Negative points decreased by 82%

Student Progress

93% of students are now on target in English

71% of students are now on target in maths.

Career Aspirations

Students completed a survey at the end of the programme and 100% of the students have a clear aspiration for their chosen career based on the input and visits throughout the project.



Northfield School Quote:

“The impact of this programme on the pupils and their families has been profound. We have noticed improvements in their attendance, engagement and behaviour in school. Over time, this will lead to them making better progress and having higher aspirations for the future”

St Michael’s Academy Quote:

“The impact on the pupils has been great. We have noticed they have improved attendance. They are engaged in their learning and making progress.”

“The cohort have improved their resilience and developed their social skills and life-skills.”

Excellence for All Post 16

The **Excellence for All** initiative is a pilot programme designed to support students in local sixth forms and colleges to achieve their full potential, both academically and personally. The programme aims to bridge the gap between education and the world of work by connecting young people with experienced professionals from our local business community.




Business

- Talent Pipeline Development
- Strengthening Industry-Education links
- Innovation and Fresh Perspectives
- Staff Development
- Corporate Social Responsibility – brand perception



Young Person

- Career Awareness & Inspiration
- Skills Development
- Networking, Connections & Opportunities
- Academic and Career Guidance
- Increased Employability
- Breaks down barriers/ raises aspirations



Wider Economy

- Enhance student outcomes
- Improved reputation
- Economic uplift
- Positive role models
- 'Stockton' brand and awareness
- Reduced NEET
- Future-ready workforce
- Reduced skills shortages

Page 28 Careers Guidance in schools

Consistent delivery across schools

Targeted support to Year 11s SBC Careers enjoy excellent working relationships in every school where Stockton residents attend – academies, maintained, free, special, PRU, we also support those in EHE, EOTAS, Home & Hospital, Alternate Provision, whether in Stockton or out of the Borough.

This cohort has grown from **325** young people in 2013, to **over 700** this year. Proportion of Y11s Targeted in each mainstream school varies from c.3% to c.40%.

This support is mainly 1:1 Careers Guidance discussions but also includes work with parents and carers, with small groups, home visits, tracking progress, supporting applications and visits to providers, identification of barriers to progression and support to overcome these.

We average 12 interventions per Targeted young person in Y11 through transition into Y12.

That's around 8500 interventions in total, around 4800 of these are 1:1 with young people.

Our activity can support all 8 Gatsby Benchmarks, but we are very focused on:

#3 – identification of needs to facilitate accurate targeting of support (RONI), and providing Destinations data to our schools; and

#8 which is so everyone has individual Careers Guidance by the end of Year 11 (Feb half term really) and Targeted young people will be offered support until settled in Y12.

Page 29 Careers Guidance in schools

Varied delivery across schools

Universal IAG – schools are required to source this either by directly employing a Careers Adviser, or contracting with a Careers Guidance provider; there are four main providers in Stockton schools

CareerWave – specialist Guidance provider – Grangefield, North Shore, Thornaby

“In house” – school directly employ a qualified Adviser, usually an existing or former member of staff – All Saints, Conyers, OLSB, St Michael’s

Prospects – specialist Guidance provider – Ingleby Manor, Outwood Bishopsgarth

SBC Careers – we offer a traded service – Egglecliffe, Ian Ramsey, Northfield and from Sept 2025, St Patrick’s and Red House

Universal young people should have one Career discussion; some will have access to more, depending on the contract / staff time.

Y12 & Y13 NEET rates for the Universal cohort from schools vary considerably:

External IAG companies = 3.6% NEET

In-house = 2.5% NEET

SBC Careers = 1.8% NEET

Page 30 Careers Guidance in colleges

Universal and targeted support

All colleges have Careers staff who work across the whole college. Sometimes called Careers, sometimes have other titles or sit in other departments, but all are available for their students. Some are involved in recruitment to the college as well as progression from college to another opportunity.

SBC Careers also have Progression Advisers in colleges. For colleges with low drop out / leave at end of year to NEET rates, we work as and when requested by a student, parent or carer or college staff, but proactively offer this service at the start of Y12 and towards the end of Y12, which are the times we're likeliest to see students becoming NEET. We also have a Guidance contract with SSFC to complement their in-house Careers support.

For the colleges where we see higher rates of NEET we have a weekly presence all year round – Progression Advisers based in the college, working alongside the college's student support or Careers teams. Aiming to develop or enhance systems across colleges where we are made aware of declining attendance, low attainment or behaviour issues early, so we can offer support before crisis or the student leaves – this is not yet consistently embedded across these colleges.

(Not) in Education, Employment or Training

Challenging times

From an all-time best NEET & Not Known performance of **5.0% in 2020**, we saw NEET rise slightly to **5.2%** after the pandemic (**early 2023** data) and then we experienced a very large and sudden increase in **September 2024** to **over 7%**, which rose again to peak at **7.4% last year**, though this has improved to **7.2% currently**, which is 127th of 151 Local Authorities.

For **Care Experienced** young people resident in Stockton, 35.9% are NEET – up from 29.7% last year and up significantly since early 2023's 16.9%. Yet to see impact on %rate of additional staff resource in Leaving Care team and Employment & Training Hub team though there are individual success stories.

For **SEN Support**, NEET has reduced from 21.5% last year to 17.4% but not yet down to 2023's 15.7%.

For those with an **EHCP**, NEET has reduced from 18.9% last year to 16.5%, but not yet down to 2023's 14.7%.

Smaller caseloads and increased proactive support in post-16 are having impact.

Opening the Trailblazer to 16- and 17-year-olds will also create more opportunities for young people with additional barriers to EET.

Context: These groups are affected by an issue facing the whole cohort - the data strongly suggests that we have more NEET because there aren't enough opportunities available for a significantly larger post-16 population...

Our NEET Challenge

Destinations other than Education

Destination comparison	Jan-20		Difference	Jan-26		Change
	4021	% of cohort		5180	% of cohort	
Full Cohort	4021	% of cohort	+1159	5180	% of cohort	As % of cohort
In Employment	371	9.2%	+37	408	7.9%	Down 1.3%
Apprenticeship	203	5.1%	-12	191	3.7%	Down 1.4%
Work with Study or Learning	125	3.1%	+12	137	2.6%	Down 0.5%
Work without Training	29	0.7%	-17	12	0.2%	Down 0.5%
Other Employment inc part time	14	0.4%	+50	64	1.2%	Up 0.8%
Training	152	3.8%	+63	215	4.2%	Up 0.6%
Reengagement	46	1.1%	-39	5	0.1%	Down 1.0%
NEET	201	5.0%	+167	368	7.1%	Up 2.1%
NEET Available	163	4.1%	+139	302	5.8%	Up 1.7%
NEET Not Available	38	1.0%	+28	66	1.3%	Up 0.3%
Adult Custody	0	0.0%	+1	1	0.0%	n/a
Not Known	2	0.1%	+4	6	0.1%	n/a
NEET + Not Known %	203	5.0%	+171	375	7.2%	Up 2.2%

Our NEET Challenge

Education activity

Destination comparison	Jan-20		Difference	Jan-26		Change
	4021	% of cohort		5180	% of cohort	
Full Cohort	4021	% of cohort	+1159	5180	% of cohort	as % of cohort
In Education	3249	80.8%	+928	4177	80.6%	Down 0.2%
School Sixth Form	597	14.9%	+49	646	12.5%	Down 2.4%
Sixth Form College	872	21.7%	-148	724	14.0%	Down 7.7%
Further Education	1773	44.1%	+998	2771	53.5%	Up 9.4%
Other Education inc part time	5	0.1%	+29	34	0.7%	Up 0.6%
Custodial inc Education	2	0.1%	n/a	2	0.1%	n/a

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Opportunities for Young People into Employment

Outcomes based review

Background

- A previous report to cabinet (Feb 2026) set out the approach to meeting outcomes including reducing costs.
- Phase 2 of Powering our Futures will cover three strands of work; efficiency reviews, council wide initiatives and outcome-based service reviews.
- Opportunities for Supporting Young People into Employment is an outcome based-review



OYPE Review

- Sustained levels of young people who are NEET
- A need to improve outcomes
- Phase 2 Reviews and cost-savings; focus on the Careers Service
- The system of careers support for young people has changed over recent years (TVCA offer/Youth Trailblazer/Academisation)



OYPE links to Post-16 Scrutiny

	Scrutiny Review	Outcome Based Review
Purpose	Member-led deep dive into the quality, experience and visibility of post-16 provision.	Council-led redesign of systems, workforce, funding, performance and governance to reduce NEET.
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision delivered <i>by post-16 education providers</i> Young people's experience, information, and transition Factors leading to early drop-out or becoming NEET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of the careers service in the context of the changing system of support for young people Alignment with corporate design principles; including early intervention and digital first
Output	Recommendations for improvement & policy	New service model, staffing structure options, savings proposals, operational redesign
Synergies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NEET reduction improving awareness of local opportunities strengthening transition, enhancing careers guidance, 	



Work to date

- Foundation; Project accepted by CMT and the review oversight group
- Currently in the discovery phase; understanding the evidence of what works, current operations, data and intelligence



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People Select Committee
Review of Post 16 Education
Outline Scope

Scrutiny Chair (Project Director): Marilyn Surtees Paul Weston (vice chair)	Contact details: m.surtees@stockton.gov.uk paul.weston@stockton.gov.uk
Scrutiny Officer (Project Manager): Michelle Gunn	Contact details: Michelle.gunn@stockton.gov.uk
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Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?

The topic of Post 16 Education directly addresses Priority one: The best start in life to achieve big ambitions Key Move Giving children and young people the best possible start, in an inclusive community where everyone can thrive, as it includes the action to work with Schools and Post-16 providers to increase the number of children and young people in Education, Employment and Training at ages 16 – 18 years, helping to grow their ambitions and meeting the needs of local employers.

What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?

There is a strong Post 16 offer in Stockton-on-Tees, with five providers offering a range of courses and qualifications to fulfil a variety of different passions and career aspirations. Achievement for young people at the end of their Post 16 Education is growing rapidly with a higher than national average A Level pass rate across the Borough of 97.7%.

However, enrolment figures for in Borough providers have been impacted in recent years with more Stockton-on-Tees students choosing to attend out of Borough providers in Middlesborough and Darlington, who offer similar courses. Only one out of Borough provider beats In Borough A Level A*-B outcomes.

A survey of Young People approaching the end of Year 11 by the Careers team, asking about their readiness for leaving school, found that 13.1% of students had not had a careers discussion at all in advance of sitting their GCSEs. A further 18.1% of students surveyed said they had not made a clear decision about their next steps after school. These findings suggest that Stockton students are largely unaware of the current offer available to them and improvements are needed to the existing communications strategy to effectively reach the providers target audience.

While the number of students completing Post 16 Education is growing, with an increase of over 300 students over 5 years, statistics show that a small minority of 16-17 year olds in the Borough are at risk of or have become NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) since beginning

Key Stage 5. Economic inactivity significantly impacts upon an individual's economic growth potential and is often associated with an increased likelihood of involvement in antisocial behaviour and crime. During the 2022/23 academic year, 1.6% more students who attended a Post 16 provider IN BOROUGH (5.3%) dropped out in Year 12 than those OUT OF BOROUGH (3.7%) Overall, 7% of our Year 13 students, whether they attended a Post 16 provider in or out of Borough were NEET by the end of November 2024. These numbers are much too high.

A minority of students choose to dropout within the first three months of starting a Post 16 qualification, therefore a core focus of the Post 16 enrichment strategy is to improve transitional support. Post 16 education involves an increase in independence, greater difficulty of work and a new structure to the day. These factors are often responsible for dropouts, but it is also important to consider other external factors such as health and wellbeing, financial situation, and access to transport. Transition from secondary school to Post 16 education need to be as seamless as possible, helping Young People to overcome some of these factors and avoid becoming NEET.

Therefore, areas that would benefit from development include:

- Attraction & Retention rates
- Current NEET statistics
- Internal awareness of strategic funding opportunities
- Communication & Marketing of our offer

The review aims to consider the current position, challenges, and proposed solutions in the Stockton-on-Tees post 16 provision. This will inform the Post 16 enrichment strategy currently in development.

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

- How well are stakeholders collaborating to minimise any challenges?
- What careers advice do school leavers receive prior to applying for courses/apprenticeships?
- How do school leavers find out about post-16 providers and courses available?
- What extra-curriculum activities do post-16 providers provide and how are these marketed?
- Are there any extra benefits that can be offered to school leavers by post-16 providers?
- What pastoral arrangements are in place at post-16 provisions?
- What financial support is available for school leavers to apply for?
- Which courses/providers are young people dropping out from?

Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?

Cabinet, Council, local schools, colleges and training providers, and young people of the borough

<p>Expected duration of review and key milestones:</p> <p>Eight months (reporting to Cabinet in September 2026)</p> <p>Approve scope and project plan – January 2026 Receive evidence – February 2026 – May 2026 Draft recommendations – June 2026 Final report – July 2026 Report to Cabinet – September 2026</p>
<p>What information do we need?</p> <p>Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):</p> <p>Partnership Strategic Aims (Word and PowerPoint documents) Current strategy/draft strategy Current Post 16 brochure List of courses available Children and Young People Scrutiny Review of Careers Provision 2020</p> <p>New information: Views of Partnership members Views of school leavers / findings from consultations carried out by careers service and Partnership Comparisons with the offer of providers from other Local Authority areas</p>

Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)	What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?
Council Officers	Introductory presentation
Post 16 Strategic Board Working Strand Lead – Excellence for All	Collaboration to drive further improvement in outcomes Engagement with local businesses Pastoral arrangements within providers Extra-curricular activities and opportunities provided Funding/benefit advice available from providers
Post 16 Strategic Board Working Strand Lead – Communications and Marketing	Joint messaging to strengthen communication of Stockton’s collective Post 16 offer When and how providers market their courses to school leavers The relationships between Bede, Stockton Riverside and Stockton Sixth Form colleges and local schools

<p>Post 16 Strategic Board Working Strand Lead – Careers</p>	<p>Collaboration with Stockton’s Careers Leaders Early intervention with students at risk of disengaging – Skills for Success Careers advice available both within schools and within post-16 provision Relationship with local businesses</p>
<p>Post 16 Strategic Board Working Strand Lead – Transitions</p>	<p>Measures in place to prepare for transition to post 16 education for all students Reasons why young people may become NEET</p>
<p>School leavers/students and their parents/carers</p>	<p>Their main priorities when choosing post 16 education The support they need to attend post 16 education Reasons why they may not continue with a course</p>
<p>How will this information be gathered? (e.g. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey)</p> <p>Committee meetings, attendance at partnership meeting, reports, desk-based research, focus group</p>	
<p>How will key partners and the public be involved in the review?</p> <p>Committee meetings, information submissions, focus group of service users</p>	
<p>How will the review help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duty?</p> <p>The Equality Act 2010 protects everyone from discrimination on grounds of nine Protected Characteristics (including – but not limited to – age, gender, disability, ethnicity), and advance equality of opportunity for those with Protected Characteristics.</p> <p>Public bodies must have due regard for advancing equality which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics • taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people <p>The review will contribute towards meeting the Council’s requirements under this Duty by reviewing the provision, and barriers to education, for all.</p>	
<p>How will the review contribute towards the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?</p> <p>The review will contribute to Focus Area 1 of the JSNA: All children and families have the best start in life as it will Post-16 Education will affect the Commitment of Transition: ensure there is a joined-up pathway that fully supports young people in their transition to adulthood. Ensuring that young people have access to good quality education and training after leaving school will give them the qualifications and skills that they need in the future to gain employment and begin their careers.</p>	

Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation:

In considering the challenges and proposed solution to the current Post 16 offer the review will aim to assist in increasing attraction and retention of post-16 education, reduce the number of young people becoming NEET, and lead to better outcomes for the young people of the Borough.

Project Plan

Key Task	Details/Activities	Date	Responsibility
Scoping of Review	Information gathering	November/December	Scrutiny Officer Link Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review	02.12.25	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Agree Project Plan	Scope and Project Plan agreed by Committee	05.01.26	Select Committee
Publicity of Review	Determine whether Communications Plan needed		Link Officer, Scrutiny Officer
Obtaining Evidence	Working Group Lead for: Excellence for all Communication and marketing Careers Transition Focus groups: students; parent/carers; stakeholders Attendance at Partnership meeting	02.02.26 02.03.26 13.04.26 11.05.26 TBC TBC	Select Committee
Members decide recommendations and findings	Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations	8.06.26	Select Committee
Circulate Draft Report to Stakeholders	Circulation of Report	June 26	Scrutiny Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss findings of review and draft recommendations	TBC	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Final Agreement of Report	Approval of final report by Committee	06.07.26	Select Committee, Cabinet Member, Director
Consideration of Report by Executive Scrutiny Committee	Consideration of report	21.07.26 or 22.09.26	Executive Scrutiny Committee
Report to Cabinet/Approving Body	Presentation of final report with recommendations for approval to Cabinet	17.09.26	Cabinet / Approving Body

People Select Committee – Work Programme 2026- 2027

Date (<u>2pm unless stated</u>)	Topic	Attendance
Monday 13 April 2026	Scrutiny Review of Post 16 Provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Group Lead for Careers 	Vanessa Housley, Aishah Waite, Chris Renahan Ian Caley & Fallon Duleavey
Monday 11 May 2026 (4pm)	Scrutiny Review of Post 16 Provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Group Lead for Transitions Monitoring: Progress Update – Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant Overview & Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Revenues, Benefits & Welfare Corporate Services 	Vanessa Housley & Aishah Waite Mike Mackin Sam Dixon Cllr Paul Rowling, Clare Harper, Michelle Connolly, Ged Morton, Leanne Dudhill
Monday 8 June 2026 (Informal)	Scrutiny Review of Post 16 Provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of Evidence / Draft Recommendations 	Vanessa Housley & Aishah Waite
Monday 6 July 2026	Scrutiny Review of Post 16 Provision - Final Report	Vanessa Housley & Aishah Waite
Monday 7 September 2026	Monitoring: Progress Update – Scrutiny Review of Partnership Working in Early Help Xentrall Annual Report	Kellie Wigley & Aishah Waithe Ian Coxon
Monday 5 October 2026		
Monday 2 November 2026		
Monday 7 December 2026	Overview & Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy, Systems & Improvement Customer Services & Digital Culture, Leisure & Events 	Cllr Norma Stephenson, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Reuben Kench, Tara Connor

People Select Committee – Work Programme 2026- 2027

Date (<u>2pm unless stated</u>)	Topic	Attendance
Monday 4 January 2027		
Monday 8 February 2027		
Monday 8 March 2027		

To be scheduled

Scrutiny Review of Procurement and Tendering Processes