



**North Tyneside Council**

# Cabinet

15 May 2020

**Tuesday, 26 May 2020 commencing at 6.00 pm.**

**Location:** The meeting will be held virtually and will be live streamed – please use the link here. <https://youtu.be/yGPoxX14fJg>

Agenda Item	Page(s)
<b>1. Apologies for Absence</b>	
To receive apologies for absence from the meeting.	
<b>2. To Receive any Declarations of Interest and Notification of any Dispensations Granted</b>	
You are invited to <b>declare</b> any registerable and/or non-registerable interests in matters appearing on the agenda, and the nature of that interest.	
You are also invited to <b>disclose</b> any dispensation in relation to any registerable and/or non-registerable interests that have been granted to you in respect of any matters appearing on the agenda.	
Please complete the Declarations of Interests card available at the meeting and return it to the Democratic Services Officer before leaving the meeting.	
<b>3. Minutes</b>	
To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2020 (previously circulated).	
<b>4. Presentation on North Tyneside Council's response to the coronavirus pandemic</b>	
To receive a presentation on North Tyneside Council's response to the coronavirus pandemic.	

Members of the public are welcome to attend this virtual meeting – please see link above.

North Tyneside Council wants to make it easier for you to get hold of the information you need. We are able to provide our documents in alternative formats including Braille, audiotape, large print and alternative languages. For further information please contact [democraticsupport@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:democraticsupport@northtyneside.gov.uk)

Agenda Item	Page(s)
<p>5. <b>Statutory consultation on changes to provision at the Melrose Centre, Longbenton High School and to Southlands School</b></p>	5 - 20
<p>To consider a report on the outcome of the statutory consultation on the proposed changes to provision at the Melrose Centre, Longbenton High School and to Southlands School.</p>	
<p>6. <b>North Tyneside Trading Company - Strategic Business Plan 2020- 23</b></p>	21 - 34
<p>To consider a report seeking approval for the Trading Company's Strategic Business Plan 2020-23.</p>	
<p>7. <b>The findings of the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services</b></p>	35 - 58
<p>To receive a report on the positive findings of the Ofsted Inspection of the Authority's Children's Services, including the overall effectiveness of services being graded overall 'Outstanding'.</p>	
<p>8. <b>Exclusion Resolution</b></p>	
<p>This is to give further notice in accordance with paragraphs 5(4) and 5(5) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 of the intention to consider item 9 below in private.</p>	
<p>Cabinet is requested to consider passing the following resolution:</p>	
<p>Resolved that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and having applied a public interest test as defined in Part 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.</p>	
<p>Reasons for taking the item in private: The report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information).</p>	
<p>9. <b>Declaration of Dividend by North Tyneside Trading Company Limited</b></p>	59 - 64
<p>To consider a report seeking approval for the Authority, as sole shareholder, to approve the recommendation of the Board of Directors of North Tyneside Trading Company Limited to declare the dividend in respect of the year ended March 2020.</p>	

10. **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Monday 29 June 2020 at 6.00pm.

**Circulation overleaf ...**

**Circulated to Members of Cabinet: -**

N Redfearn (Elected Mayor)  
Councillor B Pickard (Deputy Mayor)  
Councillor G Bell  
Councillor C Burdis  
Councillor S Cox  
Councillor S Day  
Councillor P Earley  
Councillor R Glindon  
Councillor C Johnson  
Councillor M Hall

**Young and Older People's Representatives and Partners of  
North Tyneside Council.**

## North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 26 May 2020

**Title: Statutory consultation on changes to provision at the Melrose Centre, Longbenton High School and to Southlands School**

<b>Portfolio(s):</b>	<b>Children, Young People and Learning</b>	<b>Cabinet Member(s):</b>	<b>Councillor Peter Earley</b>
<b>Report from Service Area:</b>	<b>Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding</b>		
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>Jacqui Old, Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding</b>	<b>Tel: (0191) 643 7317</b>	
<b>Wards affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

### **PART 1**

#### **1.1 Executive Summary:**

The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet about the outcome of the statutory consultation on the proposed changes to provision at the Melrose Centre, Longbenton High School and to Southlands School and to seek permission to implement the proposal. The proposal is that the leadership of the Melrose Centre, currently the responsibility of Longbenton High School, should transfer to Southlands School. The location of the Melrose Centre would remain at the existing site at Longbenton High School. Southlands School would also increasingly offer places to children with autism at the main Southlands site, increasing the number of places available for these children in North Tyneside. These arrangements are proposed to be in place for September 2020.

#### **1.2 Recommendation(s):**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (1) note and endorse the outcome of the statutory consultation on changes to provision at the Melrose Centre, Longbenton High School and to Southlands School;
- (2) approve the proposal that that leadership of the Melrose Centre, currently the responsibility of Longbenton High School, should transfer to Southlands School; and that Southlands School should increasingly offer places to children with autism at the main Southlands site, gradually increasing the number of autism places available.

#### **1.3 Forward Plan:**

Twenty-eight days' notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 3 April 2020.

## **1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework**

This report relates to the following priority in the 2020-2024 Our North Tyneside Plan:

- Be ready for work and life.

## **1.5 Information:**

### **1.5.1 Background**

On 29 July 2019 Cabinet received an update on the education system in North Tyneside. The report described the need for change arising from the increase in the numbers of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and particularly children with autism. Cabinet agreed that the Authority should enter pre-publication consultation in relation to the amendment of the structure of provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs (minute CAB 31/07/19 refers).

Following Cabinet's decision in July 2019 an initial (non-statutory) consultation on the proposed changes was undertaken with school governing bodies, staff, parents and carers. The consultation ran from 13 November to 13 December 2019. On 20 January 2020 Cabinet received a report about the initial (non-statutory) consultation.

The January Cabinet report described the background to the Melrose Centre, why the proposal was being made, the pressure on places and the broader context of the proposal, including other measures being taken to respond to the increase in the need for educational places for children with SEND. Cabinet noted and endorsed the outcome of the initial consultation; approved the next phase of consultation and the publication of statutory notices; and requested a further report on completion of the statutory consultation (minute CAB 95/20 refers).

### **1.5.2 Statutory consultation**

The Department for Education's guidance, 'Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools: Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers' (see section 1.10), indicates that a statutory consultation period of a minimum of 4 weeks is required and that the period should avoid, as far as is possible, school holiday periods. The statutory consultation opened on 27 February and closed on 2 April 2020, avoiding the Easter school holiday. While the consultation closed after the national restrictions were introduced in response to COVID-19, the consultation materials were issued well in advance. Combined with the previous engagement work, the officer team are satisfied that the national restrictions did not preclude engagement from interested parties.

The statutory notice (Appendix 1, Section 1.8) was published in the press, posted on the Local Offer website and displayed outside Longbenton High School and Southlands School. Unlike the initial (non-statutory) consultation it is not appropriate to hold consultation sessions during a statutory consultation. Respondents were invited to offer written comments either by e-mail or by letter.

A letter dated 12 February 2020 (Appendix 2, Section 1.8) went to parents and carers of all children currently at the Melrose Centre; parents and carers of children in Years 7 to 10 at Southlands School; and parents and carers of children in Years 3 to 6 (Key Stage 2) at Benton Dene. This letter explained the duration of the statutory consultation, how parents could respond and informed them that the statutory notice to consult upon the

change to the status of the Melrose Centre and to the types of needs of pupils at Southlands School, could be found on the Local Offer website. The letter also offered the opportunity to request a hard copy of the Statutory Notice which could be posted out to them. It also informed them that a further letter would be sent to update them when the statutory consultation period had ended. This letter dated 8 April 2020 (Appendix 3, Section 1.8) informed parents and carers that Cabinet will consider a report recommending approval of the proposal on 26 May 2020 and that a further letter would be sent in June to inform them of Cabinet's decision.

Three written responses to the statutory consultation were received by e-mail. One from a parent, one on behalf of the governing body at Southlands School and one on behalf of the Governing Body at Longbenton High School.

Comments in the parental response included:

- A request that the same uniform be retained for pupils at the Melrose Centre. A question was asked about when the decision concerning the uniform would be made and a request that this information be shared in the Frequently Asked Questions which are posted on the Local Offer website;
- A request that no change should be made when a pupil is already in the right setting at the Melrose Centre and that there should continue to be access to mainstream GCSE provision and post-16 provision at Longbenton High School;
- A request that there should be no extra travel for pupils already at the Melrose Centre due to shuttling to the main Southlands School site and that the danger of having a fragmented school campus should be avoided;
- A request for no change to be made to the staff teaching children at the Melrose Centre; and
- Clarity was also requested about changes to the wording of Education Health and Care plans (EHC plans) should the proposal be approved and when this would happen. The point was made that any changes to EHC plans would need to follow the statutory process.

The respondent also asked for information about how parental feedback from the informal (non-statutory) consultation had been reported. They also asked about options for communication during the statutory consultation and whether there would be further one-to-one meetings or school level consultation events. This consultation response has been acknowledged and answers were given to the two preceding points.

The response on behalf of the governing body of Southlands school confirmed their ongoing support of the proposal to designate Southland as a school for children with autism and moderate learning difficulties and to see the Melrose Centre become part of the Southlands offer. Governors qualified this support with a request that North Tyneside Council offer an undertaking that, in adopting the Melrose Centre, Southlands would not suffer a financial deficit as a result of incurring additional costs associated with the transfer, or from undertaking essential work required at Southlands school to enable the needs of young people with autism to be met in a safe environment. This assurance has been given to the governors through agreement to continue the existing funding model for the Melrose Centre during the remainder of the current financial year as a transitional arrangement. From April 2021 the standard arrangements for funding places in special schools will apply.

The governing body of Longbenton High School have confirmed their full support for the proposed changes to take effect from 1st September 2020. If the proposal is approved, Governors and school leaders at Longbenton have confirmed that they will work with

Southlands governors and school leaders to ensure there is a smooth transition for both pupils and staff on 1st September 2020.

The parental response and the responses from the two schools have not identified any problems which would prevent the proposal from being implemented.

Both schools have continued to work with their Human Resources Business Partner to consult staff at the Melrose Centre who would transfer to Southlands School under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) should the proposal be approved. The consultation has not raised any problems relating to the transfer of staff which would prevent implementing the proposal.

The Parent Carer Forum has played, and will continue to play, a key role in the co-production of educational provision and services for children and young people aged up to 25.

To avoid creating unnecessary uncertainty or anxiety amongst the pupils already at the Melrose Centre while the proposal has been at the consultation stage, no formal discussions have taken place. This approach has been agreed by the Participation Team as being in the best interest of young people. Where individual pupils have raised concerns with a member of staff, reassurance has been given that there is nothing to worry about and that the same staff will be working with them. How children could potentially be engaged, should the proposal be approved, is also being discussed with the Authority's Participation and Engagement Team and with the schools. This will form part of the implementation plan which would be rolled-out from June.

## **1.6 Decision options:**

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

### Option 1

Approve the request for the proposal to be approved

### Option 2

Reject the request for the proposal to be approved

Option 1 is the recommended option.

## **1.7 Reasons for recommended option:**

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

It provides an appropriate curriculum offer and clarity to parents, stability and certainty about the future offer for pupils with autism. It provides clarity about the future for the staff involved. It enables the change to be implemented by September 2020 with no disruption to pupil's education. It allows the Authority to comply with the statutory EHC plan process in advance of September 2020. It allows the number of educational places for children with autism to increase over time, under appropriate special school leadership.

## **1.8 Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Statutory Notice

Appendix 2: Letter to parents and carers informing them about the statutory consultation.

Appendix 3: Letter to parents and carers following the statutory consultation period.

## **1.9 Contact officers:**

Jacqui Old, Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding, tel. (0191) 6437317  
Mark Longstaff, Head of Commissioning and Asset Management, tel. (0191) 6438089  
Diane Buckle, Assistant Director for Education, Learning & Skills, tel. (0191) 643 8581  
Kevin Burns, School Improvement Officer, tel. (0191) 643 8543  
Mark Mirfin, Assistant Director, Whole Life Disability and SEND, tel. (0191) 643 7706  
Mark Taylor, Strategic Commissioning Manager, Children and Families, tel. (0191) 643 8755  
Michael Johnston, Commissioning Manager, tel. (0191) 643 8681  
Claire Emmerson, Senior Manager Financial Strategy & Planning, tel. (0191) 643 8109

## **1.10 Background information:**

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

- Cabinet report, Education for North Tyneside, 29th July 2019
- Cabinet report, Consultation on changes to provision at the Melrose Centre, Longbenton High School and to Southlands School, 20 January 2020
- Cabinet Agenda and Minutes, 20 January 2020
- Equality Impact Assessment

### **DfE Guidance**

- Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools' Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers, October 2018
- Area guidelines for SEND and alternative provision: Including special schools, alternative provision, specially resourced provision and units, December 2015

## **PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING**

### **2.1 Finance and other resources**

The sources of revenue funding are the Dedicated Schools Grant and High Needs Block of the Dedicated School Grant. Revenue funding will be subject to the usual process for commissioning places and allocating resources to mainstream and special schools as part of the annual cycle through Schools Forum.

The transitional funding arrangement agreed with Southlands School will enable the current funding model for the Melrose Centre to continue for the remainder of the 2019/20 financial year. This provides for £10k per place plus a proportion of the annual top-up grant of £200k. Thereafter places at the Melrose Centre will be funded through the standard methodology for special school places.

There are no immediate plans for capital funding. Any requirement for capital arising from increasing need over time would be taken through the Investment Programme Board.

### **2.2 Legal**

Staff at the Melrose Centre would transfer to Southlands School under TUPE arrangements. TUPE refers to the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006, as amended.

TUPE gives an employee the legal right to transfer to a new employer with their existing terms and conditions of employment and with all their existing employment rights and liabilities intact. In basic terms the new employer steps into the shoes of the old employer. As the new employer is required to take on the employees on their existing terms and conditions of employment, it is prohibited from making any changes to the terms and conditions of employment of the transferred employees if the sole or principal reason for the variation is the transfer.

Longbenton High School and Southlands School are following the guidance on TUPE issued to schools by the School's HR unit and are being guided by their respective HR Business Partners and underpinned by advice from the Authority's Legal Service. As both Southlands and Longbenton schools are maintained schools and members of the Learning Trust staff will operate under current terms and conditions of employment were a transfer to take place.

There is a firm commitment by both schools to working together. This will be formalised through a legal operating agreement between the two schools.

## **2.3 Consultation/community engagement**

### **2.3.1 Internal Consultation**

The Cabinet member for Children, Young People and Learning has been fully consulted in relation to the proposal.

### **2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement**

Consultation has been undertaken with parents and carers and with the schools and their Governing Bodies as set out in section 1.5.2.

## **2.4 Human rights**

There are no human rights issues directly arising from this report.

## **2.5 Equalities and diversity**

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed on the proposed changes to the Melrose Centre at Longbenton High School and Southlands School. The EIA has not identified any negative impacts that cannot be removed or reduced.

## **2.6 Risk management**

Any risks identified in implementing the proposal will be monitored and appropriate steps will be taken to safeguard against those risks.

## **2.7 Crime and disorder**

There are no crime and disorder issues directly arising from this report.

## **2.8 Environment and sustainability**

There are no environment and sustainability issues directly arising from this report.

### PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive ☐
- Head(s) of Service ☐
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) ☐
- Chief Finance Officer ☐
- Monitoring Officer ☐
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service ☐

This page is intentionally left blank

# **THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF NORTH TYNESIDE**

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY**

### **Statutory Notice**

#### **Alteration of provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs in maintained mainstream and special schools.**

**Notice is hereby given** in accordance with section 19 (1) of the Education and Inspection Act 2006 that the COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF NORTH TYNESIDE intend to make a prescribed alteration to maintained schools as described below:

##### **Changes relating to Longbenton High School (DfES no 392/4039)**

- Discontinuance of provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs at Longbenton High school (392/4039), Hailsham Avenue, Longbenton, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE12 8ER, by removing the Additional Resourced Provision (known as 'the Melrose Centre') for 25 pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

The above proposals will take effect from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020.

##### **Changes relating to Southlands School (DfES no 392/7002)**

- An increase in the number of pupils for whom the school is organised, from 115 places to 151.
- A Change in the type of provision for Special Educational Needs Social, from Emotional and Mental Health & Moderate Learning Difficulty; to Autism Spectrum Disorder & Moderate Learning Difficulty.

The above proposals will take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020.

This notice is an extract from the complete proposal which is available to download via this link [North Tyneside SEND Local Offer](#). A hard copy can be obtained by contacting the Commissioning Team on 0191 643 8698 or by e-mailing [Commissioning@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:Commissioning@northtyneside.gov.uk)

Within five weeks from the date of the publication, any person may object or make comments on the proposals by sending them to:

Head of Commissioning and Asset Management, North Tyneside Council, Quadrant, The Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside, NE27 0BY or by e-mailing [Commissioning@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:Commissioning@northtyneside.gov.uk)

Bryn Roberts  
Head of Law and Governance  
Quadrant  
The Silverlink North Tyneside Council Cobalt business Park  
North Tyneside  
NE27 0BY

## **Full Proposal:**

### **Alteration of provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs in maintained mainstream and special schools.**

1 Proposer – Local Education Authority details:

392 – the council of the Borough of North Tyneside. North Tyneside Council, Quadrant, The Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside. NE27 0BY

2 The name, address, and category of the school (s)

392/4039 – Longbenton High School, Hailsham Avenue, Longbenton, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE12 8ER

392/7002 – Southlands School, Beach Road, North Shields, Tyne and Wear NE30 2QR

3 Description of the Proposed Alterations

It is proposed to discontinue the Additional Resourced Provision (ARP) for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder known as The Melrose Centre, located at and managed by Longbenton High School, with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020.

It is proposed to increase the number of places available for pupils at Southlands School from 115 to 151.

It is additionally proposed to alter the type of SEN provision at Southlands School from Social, Emotional and Mental Health & Moderate Learning Difficulty; to Autism Spectrum Disorder & Moderate Learning Difficulty.

The pupils formerly on the roll of Longbenton High School and attending the ARP noted above, will move to the register of Southlands School with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020.

4 Evidence of need or demand for additional places

There has been a notable increase in the numbers of children in North Tyneside with autism and/or social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The number of children with the primary need of autism increased by 79% between 2016 and 2019, the number of children increasing from 213 to 381. Of those children who have an Education Health and Care plan, autism remains the most common primary need. 28.2% of pupils with an EHC plan have this primary need.

The Melrose Centre at Longbenton High School was established in September 2009 as a 25 place ARP for pupils aged 11 to 18. The 25 places are part of the School's Published Admissions Number (PAN) of 180 places per year group and a total capacity of 1190 pupils. The ARP is well established and highly regarded. The Ofsted inspection report for Longbenton High School (November 2018) highlighted the ARP as a strength: 'The SEN resource area for autism, the Melrose Centre, provides good support for pupils.'

In the case of the Melrose Centre, most pupils spend a much greater proportion of their time in the centre than should be the case for pupils in an ARP. This is

due to the complexity of their needs. Parents often have an expectation that children with autism leaving Benton Dene Special School are accessing specialist secondary provision.

Although the Melrose Centre was not originally designated as specialist provision it has, in effect, become such in all but name. The high esteem in which the Melrose Centre is held is demonstrated by the number of parental requests for places, under the presumption that parents can request access to mainstream provision. Pupil numbers in September 2019 significantly exceeded the 25 places as demand for secondary autism provision across the borough exceeds current capacity.

Longbenton High School has confirmed their view that the increasingly complex needs of the children with autism in the Melrose Centre and the need for access to specialist teaching and resources requires the centre to be placed under the leadership of a special school. The governors at Longbenton High School have confirmed their commitment to continue to host the Melrose Centre on the Longbenton site, with a special school taking over the leadership of the provision. The intention would be for the existing teaching staff to continue under the new leadership.

5 Objectives of the proposal and educational standards

The proposal provides an appropriate curriculum offer and clarity to parents, stability and certainty about the future offer for pupils with autism. It provides clarity about the future for the staff involved. It enables the change to be implemented by September 2020 with no disruption to pupil's education. It allows the number of educational places for children with autism to increase over time, under appropriate special school leadership.

6 The effect on other Educational establishments in the area.

The proposal will benefit other schools by providing a specialist progression route from primary to secondary special provision for children with ASD.

7 Project costs

Capital Costs – The physical capacity to accommodate pupils at Southlands School, on main school site at Beach Road, North Shields and at the Melrose Centre at Longbenton High School site already exists. It is not anticipated that any significant additional capacity or capital expenditure is required at this stage.

Revenue Costs – These will be met through the Dedicated Schools Grant.

8 Implementation and any proposed stages for implementation

It is proposed that the ARP provision at Longbenton High School ceases to operate on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 and the proposed increase in capacity via Southlands school is implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020.

9 Procedure for responding to this proposal

Any person wishing to submit any comments either in support of, or objection to the proposals may do so by sending them to:

Head of Commissioning and Asset Management, North Tyneside Council, Quadrant,  
The Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside, NE27 0BY or by e-  
mailing [Commissioning@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:Commissioning@northtyneside.gov.uk)

Any objections or comments must be received on or before 1700 hours on Thursday  
2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020.



**North Tyneside Council**

Diane Buckle  
Assistant Director for Education Learning and Skills  
North Tyneside Council  
Langdale Centre  
Langdale Gardens  
Howdon  
Wallsend  
NE28 0HG

**Tel: (0191) 643 7100**

12 February 2020

Dear

**Statutory consultation on changes to provision at the Melrose Centre and Southlands School**

I wrote to you in January following our informal consultation about the proposed changes to the Melrose Centre and Southlands School. My letter explained that the changes, if approved, mean that the Melrose Centre would be led by Southlands School. It would stay in the same location at Longbenton High School. This would provide stability for the pupils now at Melrose, who would remain there, and the existing staff team would continue to support them.

On 20 January the Council's Cabinet considered the outcome of the informal consultation and decided that there should now be a period of statutory consultation. This will begin on Thursday 27 February and end on Thursday 2 April 2020.

A Statutory Notice will be posted outside Longbenton High School and Southlands School and published in the press on 27 February. The Statutory Notice will also be posted on the engagement section of the [North Tyneside SEND Local Offer](#) website throughout the consultation period. The Statutory Notice will explain how you can respond to the proposal. If you would like a paper copy of the Statutory Notice to be sent to you in the post, please contact the Commissioning Team on 0191 643 8698 or e-mail [Commissioning@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:Commissioning@northtyneside.gov.uk). I will write to you again to update you when the statutory consultation has ended.

In the mean time if you have individual questions or concerns about your child and their Education Health and Care Plan please contact the SEND Support Service on 0191 643 8684.

You can get impartial information and advice from the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS). This specialist service can help you with all aspects of special educational needs. Contact Details:

Amanda Durrant or Nicola Gregg tel. (0191) 643 8313 or (0191) 643 8317 or email: [SENDIASS@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:SENDIASS@northtyneside.gov.uk)

You may also want to contact the North Tyneside Parent Carer Forum – tel. (0191) 406 0018 or e-mail: [info@ntpcf.co.uk](mailto:info@ntpcf.co.uk)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D Buckle'.

**Diane Buckle**

Assistant Director for Education Learning and Skills



**North Tyneside Council**

Diane Buckle  
Assistant Director for Education Learning and Skills  
North Tyneside Council  
Langdale Centre  
Langdale Gardens  
Howdon  
Wallsend  
NE28 0HG

**Tel: (0191) 643 7100**

8 April 2020

Dear

**Statutory consultation on changes to provision at the Melrose Centre and Southlands School**

I wrote to you in February to let you know that the Council's Cabinet, the main decision-making body of the Council, had decided that there should be a period of statutory consultation about the changes to provision at the Melrose Centre and Southlands School. The statutory consultation ended on 2 April 2020 and I am writing to update you about the next steps.

My letter in February explained that the changes, if approved, mean that the Melrose Centre would be led by Southlands School. It would stay in the same location at Longbenton High School. This would provide stability for the pupils now at Melrose, who would remain there, and the existing staff team would continue to support them.

The Council's Cabinet will consider a report about the proposal for the Melrose Centre on 26 May 2020. The report will recommend that the Cabinet approves the proposal. I will write to you again in June to inform you of the Cabinet's decision.

In the meantime if you have individual questions or concerns about your child and their Education Health and Care Plan please contact the SEND Support Service on 0191 643 8684.

You can get impartial information and advice from the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS). This specialist service can help you with all aspects of special educational needs. Contact Details: Amanda Durrant or Nicola Gregg tel. (0191) 643 8313 or (0191) 643 8317 or email: [SENDIASS@northynteside.gov.uk](mailto:SENDIASS@northynteside.gov.uk)

You may also want to contact the North Tyneside Parent Carer Forum – tel. (0191) 406 0018 or e-mail: [info@ntpcf.co.uk](mailto:info@ntpcf.co.uk)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D Buckle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Diane Buckle**

Assistant Director for Education Learning and Skills

## North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet 26 May 2020

### Title: North Tyneside Trading Company – Strategic Business Plan 2020-2023

Portfolio(s): Elected Mayor		Cabinet Member(s): Mrs N Redfearn
Report from Service Area:	Law and Governance	
Responsible Officer:	Bryn Roberts, Head of Law and Governance	Tel: (0191) 643 5339
Wards affected:	All	

#### PART 1

##### 1.1 Executive Summary:

In December 2012, the Authority established North Tyneside Trading Company Limited (the 'Trading Company') to act as the Authority's vehicle for trading opportunities.

Cabinet is the shareholder's representative for the North Tyneside Trading Company. The Trading Company presents to Cabinet each year, for approval, its Strategic Business Plan.

##### 1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet approve the Trading Company's Strategic Business Plan 2020-2023.

##### 1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty-eight days' notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 24 April 2020.

##### 1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to the following priorities in the Our North Tyneside Plan:

- (1) Our Places: Our places will have more quality affordable homes.
- (2) Our Economy: Our economy will have the right conditions to support investment and create new jobs, especially apprenticeships.

## **1.5 Information:**

### **1.5.1 Background**

- 1.5.2 The Trading Company was established as a company limited by shares, in December 2012. The Trading Company is wholly owned by the Authority and the Authority is therefore the sole shareholder of the Trading Company.
- 1.5.3 The Trading Company was created to provide services to public bodies and to other customers, as considered appropriate, enabling trading in new markets and different places.
- 1.5.4 All projects undertaken by the Company will aim to return a surplus or profit to the Authority and/or seek to achieve a regeneration objective in line with the Authority's Our North Tyneside Plan and Ambition for North Tyneside. Projects delivered will be at least cost neutral to the Authority.
- 1.5.5 The Trading Company has 2 active subsidiary companies. These subsidiaries are wholly owned by the Trading Company. The Trading Company and its subsidiaries are each governed by their respective Boards of Directors and are guided by their Articles of Association which regulate the affairs of each of the Company.
- 1.5.6 The composition of the Board of Directors for the Company is four Directors: two Cabinet Members and two Heads of Service from the Authority's Senior Leadership Team. None Board members are remunerated for their duties. The Trading Company and its subsidiaries are all subject to Corporation Tax, VAT and other applicable taxes at the appropriate rate.
- 1.5.7 In accordance with best practice the Trading Company has a Strategic Business Plan, which it updates each year, to provide a sense of direction for the Company and to guide business development.
- 1.5.8 The Board of Directors of the Trading Company has reviewed and refreshed the Strategic Business Plan for 2020 – 2023. The Strategic Business Plan sets out the Trading Company's history; its governance arrangements; its mission/purpose and its approach to appraising business opportunities, assets, products and services and risks.

### **Progress of the active companies**

#### North Tyneside Trading Company (Development) Ltd (the Development Company)

- 1.5.9 Since its development of 13 new build affordable homes in Camperdown, the Development Company devised in 2017 a purchasing strategy and has since then proceeded to acquire 36 homes on the open market, therefore taking its total number of homes to 49 as at April 2020. In line with the Cabinet's priority of delivering more affordable homes the Board have reviewed and extended their purchasing strategy with the aim of purchasing a further 51 homes to take the Company's asset base up to 100 homes. Funding of these purchases is via a grant from the Council of Section 106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 commuted sums available for affordable housing.

## Aurora Properties (Sale) Limited (Aurora Sale)

- 1.5.10 Following the successful completion of its first new build development of 12 bungalows at Wallington Close in 2018, Aurora Properties (Sale) Limited has now also successfully completed its second 12 home luxury development for market sale at Empress Point, Whitley Bay in 2019.
- 1.5.11 The Company is also well underway with its third scheme of a further 28 homes for market sale at Northumberland Square in North Shields which is due to be completed in 2020. The scheme at Northumberland Square is at the heart of the North Shields Regeneration Project, kick-starting the drive to improve the appeal of the town centre for residents and visitors.
- 1.5.12 Cabinet approval has also been obtained for a development of seven further homes on the site of the former Backworth Primary School. Funding for the construction of these homes is from the Council in the form of both debt and equity funding.
- 1.5.13 Opportunities for the development of sites and other potential trading options will be considered and presented to Cabinet for consideration, in line with their priorities, at the appropriate time.
- 1.5.14 The full Strategic Business Plan is attached Appendix 1.

### **1.5 Decision options:**

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

#### Option 1

Cabinet may approve the Trading Company's Strategic Business Plan 2020-2023.

#### Option 2

Cabinet may not approve the Trading Company's Strategic Business Plan 2020-2023 and refer the Business Plan back to the Trading Company to examine further options/opportunities.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

### **1.6 Reasons for recommended option:**

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

If Cabinet approves the recommended option, the Trading Company will continue with the activities set out in the Strategic Business Plan, including continuing with the purchasing strategy of homes to be let at an affordable rent and the construction of new homes for market sale, in line with Cabinet approval.

If the preferred option is not approved, the Trading Company will be unable to undertake the proposed Strategic Business Plan activities, including the purchasing strategy of homes to be let at an affordable rent and the construction of new homes for market sale along with any other potential commercial opportunities.

## **1.7 Appendices:**

Appendix 1: North Tyneside Trading Company Limited: Strategic Business Plan 2020-2023

## **1.8 Contact officers:**

Stephen Ballantyne, Legal Manager –  
Governance and Employment /  
Trading Company's Company Secretary

Tel: (0191) 643 5329

## **1.9 Background information:**

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

Cabinet 9 March 2015 – Delivering Affordable Homes Update (exempt report)

Cabinet 14 November 2016 – North Tyneside Trading Company – Strategic Business Plan 2016-2019

[http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk/browse-display.shtml?p\\_ID=567013&p\\_subjectCategory=41](http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk/browse-display.shtml?p_ID=567013&p_subjectCategory=41)

Cabinet 14 November 2016 – Delivering Housing Growth through the North Tyneside Trading Company (exempt report)

Cabinet 13 February 2017 – Delivering Housing Growth through North Tyneside Trading Company (exempt report)

Cabinet 8 May 2017 – Delivering Housing Growth – Business Case for Wallington Court (exempt report)

[Cabinet - 8 October 2012 - Creating A Trading Company for North Tyneside Council](#)

## **PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING**

### **2.1 Finance and other resources**

There are no specific financial implications arising from this report as this is to agree the over arching business plan.

Individual projects which are brought forward for consideration by the Trading Company will have a full business case prepared which will set out the financial implications for both the Authority and the Company.

### **2.2 Legal**

Each year Cabinet as the representative of the shareholder (the Authority) are presented with and are requested to agree the Strategic Business Plan for the Trading Company.

Individual projects which are brought forward for consideration by the Trading Company will have a full business case prepared which will set out the financial implications for both the Authority and the Company.

### **2.3 Consultation/community engagement**

There are no specific public engagement implications arising from this report as this is to agree the over arching business plan. There has been internal consultation with Cabinet Members on the Trading Company proposal.

Engagement/consultation requirements will be considered for any proposal brought forward by the Trading Company.

### **2.4 Human rights**

There are no human rights implications directly arising from this report.

### **2.5 Equalities and diversity**

There are no equalities and diversity implications directly arising from this report.

### **2.6 Risk management**

The Trading Company and each active subsidiary has a risk register that the Boards of Directors regularly review and each project has its own risk register. The Trading Company and the subsidiary companies use the same risk methodology as the Authority.

### **2.7 Crime and disorder**

There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from this report.

### **2.8 Environment and sustainability**

There are no environment and sustainability implications directly arising from this report.

## **PART 3 - SIGN OFF**

- Chief Executive ☐
- Head(s) of Service ☐
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) ☐
- Chief Finance Officer ☐
- Monitoring Officer ☐
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service ☐

This page is intentionally left blank

**STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN**

**2020-23**

**NORTH TYNESIDE TRADING COMPANY LIMITED**

**QUADRANT  
COBALT BUSINESS PARK  
THE SILVERLINK NORTH  
NORTH TYNESIDE  
NE27 0BY**

**DATE OF INCORPORATION: 11 DECEMBER 2012**

**COMPANY NUMBER: 08326780**

**1 APRIL 2020 TO 31 MARCH 2023**



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

North Tyneside Trading Company Limited was established as a Private Company, limited by shares in December 2012.

The Company is wholly owned by North Tyneside Council who is the sole shareholder of the Company.

The Company was created by the Council to generate an income from the delivery of traded services to both the public and private sector.

Whilst the primary function of the Company is to deliver an income to the Council, it is fundamental that it operates with the highest levels of integrity, accountability and transparency.

The Company is an umbrella Holding Company that delivers income and social benefits e.g. regeneration for the Council through the trading activities of its subsidiaries. The Company will create a new subsidiary for each separate type of activity that is undertaken.

To date the Company has 4 subsidiaries:-

- North Tyneside Trading Company (Consulting) Limited – a Company established for the delivery of professional services. (Currently dormant).
- North Tyneside Trading Company (Development) Limited (now trading under the name of Aurora Affordable Homes) – a Company established to increase the pace and scale of delivery of affordable homes. The trading name of Aurora Affordable Homes was adopted by the Company in 2019 to provide greater clarity of its purpose particularly now that it is focusing on a purchasing strategy in order to provide more affordable homes.
- Aurora Properties (Sale) Limited – a Company established to pursue developments for commercial and regeneration purposes, primarily via the delivery of homes for sale on the open market.
- Aurora Properties (Rental) Limited – a Company established for the delivery of homes for market rental. (Currently dormant).

This is the sixth Strategic Business Plan for North Tyneside Trading Company Limited. It sets out the mission and strategic ambitions of the Company for the next three years and how these can be delivered.

Details regarding the Company's history and governance are included.

This strategic plan will provide a sense of direction for the Company and will guide its business development.

## **BUSINESS OVERVIEW**

### **Organisational Background and Context**

As a wholly owned company the Company is accountable to North Tyneside Council as the sole Shareholder. Through the Company the Council aims to:

- Create an organisation responsive to customer needs and the market;
- Generate income and wider benefits such as regeneration aims, through the delivery of quality services and products; and
- Improve and enhance the skills of the Council's workforce through delivering opportunities for staff to work across different sectors and potentially in new markets in their provision of services to the Company.

At its meeting on 16 April 2012, the Council's Cabinet asked officers to develop options for alternative business structures to generate income for the Council. The Cabinet received a further report on 11 June 2012 seeking approval to agree the next steps in developing the Council's trading opportunities. A further report was presented on 12 October 2012 to gain Cabinet's approval for appropriate purpose, structure and governance for the trading company, as well as the process for appraising trading opportunities.

North Tyneside Trading Company Limited and its original subsidiary North Tyneside Trading Company (Consulting) Limited were incorporated with Companies House on 11 December 2012 with a view to look for business opportunities across a range of services, however, none of these were deemed to be commercially viable at that time.

From May 2013, there was a change of focus for the Company. Cabinet asked the Company to establish the capability to develop sites to deliver affordable homes as part of the Our North Tyneside Council Plan to deliver 3,000 new affordable homes in North Tyneside.

At the Meeting held on 25 March 2015, the Company's Board approved the setting up of a second subsidiary to carry out this purpose, North Tyneside Trading Company (Development) Limited. This subsidiary has delivered homes for affordable rent at its new build scheme at Reed Avenue and by purchasing homes at the new build site at Wallington Close. It has also purchased homes on the open market in various locations within the borough. All homes are occupied in line with the North Tyneside Trading Company (Development) Limited's lettings policy which has an emphasis on providing homes for tenants in need of affordable housing and makes use of local lettings policies tailored to specific sites.

In March 2017, two further subsidiaries of the Company were incorporated: Aurora Properties (Sale) Limited and Aurora Properties (Rental) Limited in order to deliver the Cabinet approved strategy of identifying further sites for development for either market

sale or market rental properties and / or a mix of property – some affordable and some for market sale or rental. The purpose of Aurora Properties (Sale) Limited is to provide homes for sale on the open market while the purpose of Aurora Properties (Rental) Limited is to provide homes to be let at a market rent. Aurora Properties (Rental) Limited is currently dormant.

Since devising a purchasing strategy in 2017, North Tyneside Trading Company (Development) Limited has proceeded to acquire 36 homes on the open market, therefore taking its total number of homes to 49 as at April 2020. In line with the Cabinet's priority of delivering more affordable homes the Board of North Tyneside Trading Company (Development) Limited have reviewed and extended their purchasing strategy with the aim of purchasing a further 51 homes to take that Company's asset base up to 100 homes. Funding of these purchases is via a grant from the Council of Section 106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 commuted sums available for affordable housing.

Following the successful completion of its first new build development of 12 bungalows at Wallington Close in 2018, Aurora Properties (Sale) Limited has now also successfully completed its second 12 home luxury development for market sale at Empress Point, Whitley Bay in 2019. Aurora Properties (Sale) Limited is also well underway with its third scheme of a further 28 homes for market sale at Northumberland Square in North Shields which is due to be completed in 2020. The scheme at Northumberland Square is at the heart of the North Shields Regeneration Project, kick-starting the drive to improve the appeal of the town centre for residents and visitors. Cabinet approval has also been obtained for a development of seven further homes on the site of the former Backworth Primary School. Funding for the construction of these homes is from the Council in the form of both debt and equity funding.

The subsidiary companies continue to explore sites to be developed out for either market sale or market rental properties and / or a mix of property tenures– some affordable and some for market sale or rental. Opportunities for how the companies can be used to further the regeneration aims of the Council also continue to be explored when requested.

### **Governance**

The Company is governed by a Board of Directors and guided by Articles of Association which regulate the affairs of the Company.

The composition of the Board of Directors for the Company is four Directors, two Cabinet Members and two senior officers from the Council's Senior Leadership Team. Elected Members on the Board have a role at the heart of the Company, as the representatives of the residents of North Tyneside.

The current Directors are Cabinet Members: Councillor Bruce Pickard and Councillor Ray Glindon and Senior Leadership Team members: Phil Scott (Head of Environment,

Housing and Leisure) and John Sparkes (Head of Regeneration & Economic Development).

The Board of Directors is directly accountable to the Shareholder (the Authority). The Shareholder makes its decisions through the Cabinet. Council's Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee have an integral role in examining any Shareholder decisions.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN- Growth and Business Development**

### **Our Mission**

To maximise opportunities and outcomes for the Borough through the activities we undertake to support the Our North Tyneside Council Plan.

### **Our Objectives**

- To increase the supply of quality affordable housing in the Borough, by developing affordable homes on land owned by the Council. This will support the delivery of the policy intention set out in the 2020-2024 'Our North Tyneside' Council Plan, "to deliver more quality affordable homes."
- To develop sites for market sale, market rent and/or a mixture of tenures to support the objectives of the Council.
- To provide a vehicle for the Council to test out new thinking in service delivery and new approaches to markets.

### **Appraising business opportunities**

As defined in the Articles of Association, the object of the Company is to:

'Provide services to public bodies and other customers as appropriate'.

When trading opportunities are identified a business case will be developed outlining the potential benefits, risks and resources involved in pursuing that opportunity. Each business case must be approved by both the Council (by Cabinet or under delegated powers) and by the Board of Directors.

### **Assets**

The Company was established with no assets or staff. The Council initially provided the resources required to pursue agreed business opportunities under the European Union

Regulations on de minimis state aid. The Council is permitted to provide aid of up to €200,000 (circa £0.160m) over a rolling three-year period and it has been beneficial at this stage to utilise the Services of General Economic Interest exemption to the requirements of State Aid to provide funding to the company by the Council.

North Tyneside Trading Company (Development) Limited currently has an asset base of 49 homes, which has been achieved through the use of around £5.675m of Section 106 income. Further funding is available from the Council to allow the Company to increase its stock to 100 homes.

Funding required to cover the running costs of Aurora Properties (Sale) Limited in order to deliver its next scheme at Northumberland Square site in North Shields, has been secured by the Company through a loan from the Council on commercial terms.

Further funding will be required as additional sites are progressed by Aurora Properties (Sales) Limited for development in the future.

### **Financing of Company activities**

Funding of the purchasing strategy agreed by North Tyneside Trading Company (Development) Limited is via a grant from the Council of Section 106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 commuted sums available for affordable housing.

In line with Cabinet approval, funding required for the construction of the homes by Aurora Properties (Sale) Limited will be secured by the Company through a combination of loan from the Council on commercial terms and equity funding. The drawdown of the funding will reflect the timeline of the projects being delivered.

### **Products and Services**

The Company will explore opportunities for growth in line with company objectives and mission statement. It has been identified that there is a need to establish a strong development pipeline for the next 3 years. Opportunities for the development of further sites and other potential trading options will be considered and presented to Cabinet for consideration at the appropriate time.

- **North Tyneside Trading Company (Development) Limited:**

As part of the delivery of its Affordable Homes Programme, in March 2015, the Council's Cabinet asked the North Tyneside Trading Company (Development) Limited to provide a business plan for delivery of affordable homes. North Tyneside Trading Company (Development) Limited was therefore established to act as one of the Council's developers of sites within North Tyneside for affordable homes use. In accordance with the request from Cabinet, this company completed Reed Avenue as its initial development site and is progressing with a purchasing strategy of buying homes on the open market to be let at an affordable rent. It currently has 49 homes across the

borough, all of which are let at affordable rents, in accordance with the company's lettings policy.

The North Tyneside Trading Company (Development) Limited aims to increase this figure to 100 homes using its purchasing strategy and will specifically target geographical areas, in line with demand information, that are currently under represented within the company's asset base.

The company has a comprehensive asset management plan for its homes which is updated annually.

- Aurora Properties (Sale) Limited:

The company has successfully completed their first two schemes and have begun selling homes. The Company's first scheme is 12 bungalows at Wallington Close of which 9 homes have been sold, with the remaining three sold, subject to contract.

The Company also completed a development of 12 luxury homes at Empress Point in December 2019 which includes 10, 3-bedroom townhouses, a maisonette and an apartment. Several of these homes have now been sold or are under offer.

Aurora Properties (Sale) Limited is also on site at Northumberland Square where it is developing 28 new homes for market sale. The development includes the refurbishment of the existing Grade II listed buildings into 10 luxury apartments and 2 townhouses, as well as 3 new build apartments and 13 new build houses at the rear of the existing building.

A further development opportunity is being taken forward by Aurora Properties (Sale) Limited at the site of the former Backworth Primary School, following Cabinet approval in October 2019. The proposal is for the development of 7 executive homes following the demolition of the former school building.

Aurora Properties (Sale) Limited continues to work to identify further possible development opportunities for market sale.

- Aurora Properties (Rental) Limited:

This Company is working to identify possible opportunities for development or acquisition of homes for market rent. It is envisaged that this company could potentially act as a market leader, thereby helping to raise standards in the private rented sector.

- North Tyneside Trading Company (Consulting) Limited:

Although previously no other commercial opportunities have been identified to date, the Directors believe that there is potential to develop commercial activity within the Council, e.g. selling professional services to other organisations. The Directors will look to

establish target markets for these services and will use North Tyneside Trading Company (Consulting) Limited to deliver these services where appropriate.

### **Risks**

These ambitions are set against a continuing backdrop of tough financial times. Full risk registers are in place for North Tyneside Trading Company Limited and all active subsidiaries and each project has a project specific risk register. These are actively reviewed regularly and are discussed at Board meetings.

Monitoring and mitigation of these risks by the Directors of the Company and by the Cabinet as shareholder helps to enable the company to fulfil its strategic ambitions and to achieve its mission.

## North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 26 May 2020

### Title: The findings of the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services

Portfolio(s): Children, Young People and Learning	Cabinet Member: Councillor Peter Earley	
Report from Service Area:	Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding	
Responsible Officer:	Jacqui Old, Director of Children's Services	Tel 0191 643 7317
Wards affected:	All	

#### **PART 1**

##### **1.1 Executive Summary:**

Between 09 March 2020 and 13 March 2020 North Tyneside Council's Children's Social Care Services were inspected by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (hereafter 'Ofsted') as part of their national programme of three yearly inspection. The Inspection, following a five-day notice period, focused upon effectiveness of the Council's Children's Social Care Services in relation to three areas: the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families; the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection and; the experiences and progress of children in care and care.

Ofsted published their findings by way of a written report on 15 April 2020. Ofsted judged the overall effectiveness of Children's Social Care Services in North Tyneside to be 'Outstanding'. This overall judgment was based on the following findings:

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	<b>Outstanding</b>
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	<b>Outstanding</b>
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness	<b>Outstanding</b>

This places North Tyneside Council within the small group of top performing Children's Services within the country.

Ofsted made just two formal recommendations to the Authority about areas for development. Both areas were known to Officers prior to inspection and improvement work was on-going at the point of inspection. The Authority is required to provide an 'Action Plan' relating to the recommendations for approval by the Secretary of State and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, no later than 21 July 2020.

A copy of the proposed Post-Inspection Action Plan developed by Officers and endorsed by the Head of Service and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning is appended.

## **1.2 Recommendation(s):**

It is recommended that Cabinet note:

1. the positive findings of Ofsted, including the overall effectiveness of services being graded 'Outstanding'
2. the areas for development identified by Ofsted and the commitment by the Service Area to address these and to continue to improve and develop services for children and young people, parents and carers.

## **1.3 Forward Plan:**

Twenty-eight days notice of this report was provided. It first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 16 April 2020, immediately after publication of the Ofsted Report.

## **1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework**

The 2018-2020 Our North Tyneside Plan states that 'Our people will':

- Be listened to so that their experience helps the Council work better for residents.
- Be ready for school – giving our children and their families the best start in life.
- Be ready for work and life – with the right skills and abilities to achieve their full potential, economic independence and meet business needs.
- Be healthy and well – with the information, skills and opportunities to maintain and improve their health, well-being and independence, especially if they are carers.
- Be cared for, protected and supported if they become vulnerable including if they become homeless.
- Be encouraged and enabled to, whenever possible, be more independent, to volunteer and to do more for themselves and their local communities.

The Ofsted Inspection of the Council's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers confirms the quality and performance of Children's Services' contribution to these priorities.

## 1.5 Information:

### Background and Scope of the Inspection

In January 2018, Ofsted introduced the 'ILACS' (Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services) national inspection framework to replace the 'SIF' (Single Inspection Framework) inspection process by which North Tyneside Council's services for children in need of help and protection, children in care and care leavers were inspected in March 2017.

The published guidance for the ILACS framework notes that the framework maintains its predecessors focus on the effectiveness of local authority services and arrangements:

- to help and protect children;
- the experiences and progress of children in care wherever they live, including those children who return home;
- the arrangements for permanence for children who are looked after, including adoption;
- the experiences and progress of care leavers.

Additionally, the ILACS Framework also evaluates:

- the effectiveness of leaders and managers and the impact they have on the lives of children and young people, and the quality of professional practice.

Inspectors are noted to seek answers to three questions in relation to the progress of Children's Social Care Services since the preceding inspection:

- Has the quality and impact of practice been maintained?
- Are there any areas where the quality and impact of practice have improved?
- Are there any areas where the quality and impact of practice have deteriorated?

Relevant to North Tyneside, ILACS introduced, for the first time, different time lengths of inspection dependent upon the findings of the preceding assessment. As North Tyneside was graded 'Good' by the March 2017 Inspection, North Tyneside was subject to a 'Short' Inspection – five days fieldwork rather than ten days by Inspectors following five-days' notice.

### The Inspection

On Monday 02 March 2020, the Head of Service was notified by Mr. Nigel Parkes, her Majesty's Inspector, that Ofsted would commence their Inspection of North Tyneside Council Children's Social Care Services on 09 March 2020. This was the first full inspection of North Tyneside's services since March 2017.

The inspection took place between 09 March 2020 and 13 March 2020. The inspection team consisted of four of Her Majesty's Inspectors from Ofsted and two additional Inspectors for Fostering, Adoption and Residential Care and for the Virtual School respectively.

The inspection team were onsite for five working days and read case files, observed staff working with children and families and other professionals and discussed with staff and safeguarding partners the help and care given to children and young people. They also

talked directly to children, young people and their families, including the Children in Care Council and SEND Youth Forum, Foster Carers and Adopters. They visited a range of Council venues where services for children and young people are based and delivered, including Quadrant, the Oxford Centre, Riverside Children's Centre, Whitley Bay Customer First Centre, Balliol Wing (Adopt North East) and The Lodge (Leaving Care).

### Outcome of Inspection

Ofsted published their findings by way of Report on 15 April 2020. The Summary of findings is taken verbatim from the full Report and is as follows:

*Senior leaders share a relentless commitment to continuous improvement. Outward looking and open to challenge, they have succeeded in creating a learning environment in which social work is thriving. Strategic partnerships are mature, well developed and highly effective. The quality of performance management information is excellent. The reach of the quality assurance framework is extensive. Using a rich combination of facts, figures and findings", senior leaders are proactive in responding to shortfalls in practice and performance. They are daring and imaginative in pushing the boundaries in order to improve the experiences and progress of children in need of help and protection, children in care and care leavers.*

*Partner agencies have enthusiastically embraced early help. Further changes to the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) have significantly increased its impact and effectiveness. The interface between children's social care and early help has been strengthened. The local authority's preferred method of social work has transformed the way in which they, and their partners talk with children and families and to each other about what worries them, what is working well and about what worries them, what is working well and what they need to do about it. As a result, most children get the right level of the right level of help and protection help and protection at the right time.*

*When it is no longer possible for children to live safely at home, the local authority pulls out all the stops to try to make sure that children stay connected with their friends, families and communities. Most children in care live in good-quality placements within a 20-mile radius of their family homes. The local authority is in touch with virtually all of its care leavers, the vast majority of whom are living in safe and suitable accommodation.*

Ofsted report that it judges the overall effectiveness of Children's Social Care Services in North Tyneside to be 'Outstanding'. A comparison with the graded judgments of other local authorities that have been inspected to date by Ofsted establish that North Tyneside Council is one of only fourteen Local Authorities to be graded Outstanding in the country.

### Formal Recommendations resulting from the Inspection to North Tyneside Council

Two formal recommended areas for development were made by Ofsted and are taken verbatim from the Report as follows:

*What needs to improve:*

1. *Supervision and management oversight are not of a consistently high quality or always clearly recorded.*

2. *In the absence of good-quality life-story work, children and young people are not routinely getting the help they need to make sense of their, and their families', histories and better understand why they are in care.*

The Authority is required to submit copies of the post inspection action plan to the Secretary of State and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector no later than 21 July 2020.

#### Response by the Authority

Officers have devised and will submit a Post-Inspection Action Plan to address the two recommendations to the Secretary of State and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector within the prescribed timescale.

Additionally, other areas identified for development but not subject to formal recommendations, not least the judgment that the experience of children in care and care leavers is 'Good but not 'Outstanding', will be subject to relentless and focused improvement work by Officers in the coming twelve months.

#### Governance of Delivery of the Plan

Delivery of the Plan will be subject to regular scrutiny and review by the Senior Management Team for Children, Young People and Learning. The Plan is owned by the Jacqui Old, Director of Children's Services.

#### Monitoring of Progress under the Plan by Ofsted

It is anticipated that progress by the Authority in relation to the two recommendations will be part of future Annual Conversations, meetings between the Regional Director of Ofsted and the Head of Service, scheduled for May of each year. Additionally, it is anticipated that progress in relation to the recommendations will be part of any subsequent inspection of Children's Services by Ofsted.

### **1.6 Decision options:**

The following options are available for consideration by Cabinet

#### Option 1

Cabinet accepts the recommendations set out in paragraph 1.2 above.

#### Option 2

Cabinet does not accept the recommendation set out in paragraph 1.2 above, and provides an alternative response to the Report by Ofsted following the Inspection of Children's Services.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

### **1.7 Reasons for recommended option:**

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

The recommendation affords an acknowledgement by Cabinet of the positive findings by Ofsted and endorses the actions identified by Officers to respond to two areas of development recommended by Ofsted.

## **1.8 Appendices:**

- I. Ofsted Report on the Inspection of North Tyneside Council's Children's Social Care Services published 15 April 2020.
- II. North Tyneside Council Post-Inspection Action Plan

## **1.9 Contact officers:**

Jacqui Old, Director of Children's Services, Tel. 0191 643 7317  
Julie Firth, Assistant Director of Children's Services, CYPL Tel. 0191 643 5943  
Nik Flavell, Senior Manager for Quality Assurance, CYPL. Tel. 0191 643 7219

## **1.10 Background Information**

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author. This report is appended and is also available electronically at:

[Ofsted Report](#)

## **PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING**

### **2.1 Finance and other resources**

There are no direct financial implications as a result of implementing the proposed recommendations. It is anticipated that the Post-Inspection Action Plan will be delivered from within the existing resources allocated to Children, Young People and Learning.

### **2.2 Legal**

The inspection of North Tyneside Council by Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) was carried out under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The Authority is required to submit copies of the post inspection action plan to the Secretary of State and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector no later than 21 July 2020 (The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Inspection of Local Authorities) Regulations 2007).

### **2.3 Consultation/community engagement**

#### **2.3.1 Consultation and Community Engagement during Inspection**

The Ofsted Inspection process itself was fully participative, involving the Cabinet Member, Chief Executive, staff, children, young people, parents, carers and adopters as well as relevant partner agencies.

### 2.3.2 Consultation and Community Engagement following Publication

Ofsted published the report on their website following a factual accuracy consultation with the Council.

A detailed Communication Plan was developed (March 2020) and has been implemented by the Authority's Communications and Marketing Team from 15 April 2020, including press, partner and Member briefings and social media messaging.

## 2.4 **Human rights**

There are no direct human rights issues arising from this report.

## 2.5 **Equalities and diversity**

There are no direct issues of equality and diversity arising from this report.

## 2.6 **Risk management**

The Ofsted Inspection of North Tyneside Council's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers focused on the management of risk to children and young people. The report found services manage risk well, including responses to child abuse and neglect, child sexual exploitation, missing children, and radicalisation.

## 2.7 **Crime and disorder**

There are no crime and disorder issues arising from this report.

## 2.8 **Environment and sustainability**

There are no environment and sustainability issues arising from this report.

## **PART 3 - SIGN OFF**

- Chief Executive ☒
- Head(s) of Service ☒
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) ☒
- Chief Finance Officer ☒
- Monitoring Officer ☒
- Head of Corporate Strategy ☒

This page is intentionally left blank

# North Tyneside Council

## Inspection of children's social care services

**Inspection dates: 9 March 2020 to 13 March 2020**

**Lead inspector: Nigel Parkes**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Grade</b>
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Outstanding
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Outstanding
The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers	Good
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding

Senior leaders share a relentless commitment to continuous improvement. Outward-looking and open to challenge, they have succeeded in creating a learning environment in which social work is thriving. Strategic partnerships are mature, well developed and highly effective. The quality of performance management information is excellent. The reach of the quality assurance framework is extensive. Using a rich combination of 'facts, figures and findings', senior leaders are proactive in responding to shortfalls in practice and performance. They are daring and imaginative in pushing the boundaries in order to improve the experiences and progress of children in need of help and protection, children in care and care leavers.

Partner agencies have enthusiastically embraced early help. Further changes to the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) have significantly increased its impact and effectiveness. The interface between children's social care and early help has been strengthened. The local authority's preferred method of social work has transformed the way in which they, and their partners, talk with children and

families and to each other about what worries them, what is working well and what they need to do about it. As a result, most children get the right level of help and protection at the right time.

When it is no longer possible for children to live safely at home, the local authority pulls out all the stops to try to make sure that children stay connected with their friends, families and communities. Most children in care live in good-quality placements within a 20-mile radius of their family homes. The local authority is in touch with virtually all of its care leavers, the vast majority of whom are living in safe and suitable accommodation.

## **What needs to improve**

- Supervision and management oversight are not of a consistently high quality or always clearly recorded.
- In the absence of good-quality life-story work, children and young people are not routinely getting the help they need to make sense of their, and their families', histories and better understand why they are in care.

## **The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection: outstanding**

1. Early help is making a real difference to children's and families' lives. The sheer volume of early help assessments that partner agencies complete, and their willingness to lead teams around the family (TAFs), reflects the fact that in North Tyneside early help is everybody's business. Partner agencies have wholeheartedly embraced the approach, advocated by the local authority, of talking with families in very simple and easy-to-understand terms about what they are worried about, what is working well and what the next steps should be. This is helping to make sure that children and families get the help and support they need quickly and easily.
2. Early help coordinators, employed by the local authority, respond swiftly when TAFs get stuck or when partners need advice or guidance. This may involve the early help coordinator attending the TAF meeting in person, mobilising the support of other organisations, getting a family partner involved or suggesting that the family needs to be referred to children's social care. This is helping to build confidence and resilience in early help.
3. Children and families who need additional support are really benefiting from the services provided by the four multi-disciplinary early help locality teams. Family partners, North Tyneside's equivalent of family support workers, work extremely well with other agencies and organisations, including the voluntary sector, to deliver targeted packages of help and support. These packages of support are well thought out, well coordinated and impactful. This means that children and

families are able to get the help and support they require without the need for social workers to become involved unnecessarily.

4. The quality of contacts and referrals from partner agencies reflects an awareness of needs and vulnerabilities and a good understanding of the thresholds. This helps to avoid delay. The relatively new professional advice line is being well used.
5. Changes made to the MASH since the focused visit in 2018 have significantly enhanced its impact and effectiveness. Daily triage meetings with the police about all child concern notifications help to ensure a speedy and proportionate response. Requests for statutory advice from children's social care to inform an education, health and care needs assessment are now routinely routed through the MASH. The development of the early help hub has helped to ensure that cases are stepped up and down from early help to children's social care appropriately and easily. As a result, children and families get the right level of help and protection.
6. MASH workers demonstrate an appropriate level of professional curiosity. Their use of a common language and shared scaling system, based on the local authority's preferred social work model, helps to make sure that information is shared effectively. Children's and families' histories are carefully considered. Parental consent is only dispensed with when it is necessary to do so. Robust management oversight ensures that thresholds are applied appropriately. Processing of cases is timely. However, on occasions the rationale for the decision taken is not recorded as clearly as it might be.
7. Children who are identified as being at immediate risk of significant harm are seen immediately. Strategy meetings are held promptly. Child protection investigations are timely and thorough, leading to swift and appropriate action to safeguard and protect children.
8. Good two-way communication between the MASH and the emergency duty team helps to ensure that children and families in need of help and protection receive an appropriate response out of hours.
9. Clearly recorded and well-managed, allegations and concerns about adults in positions of trust who are working with children are dealt with very effectively. This is helping to safeguard and protect children.
10. Social work assessment teams provide a timely and proportionate response to referrals coming through from the MASH. Cases are allocated on arrival and families are contacted promptly. Assessments, which are of a good standard, provide robust analysis and a clear rationale for decisions about whether to proceed to an initial child protection conference. Management oversight is strong. Thresholds are applied appropriately.

11. Social workers use a variety of different tools, often in creative and imaginative ways, to explore children's lived experiences and help parents to understand the impact of their behaviour on their children's lives. This includes the use of words and pictures.
12. Children who are the subject of a child protection plan benefit from danger statements and safety goals that are easy to understand and make clear what needs to change and why. Interim safety plans are clear and explicit, leaving no doubt about what needs to happen to keep children safe while work is progressing. Week-by-week child in need and child protection trajectory plans completed by safe and supported team social workers specify who will do what and by when, while at the same time providing families with a clear route-map to a life free of social work involvement where appropriate.
13. Where concerns continue unabated or risks increase, cases are escalated swiftly and appropriately. Social workers and their managers are making intelligent use of the pre-proceedings stage of the Public Law Outline, not simply as a stepping stone into care, but as a vehicle for change. Letters before proceedings are clear and easy to understand. Meetings with parents focus on what needs to change, why and by when. Progress is closely monitored. Currently, there are no children's cases that have been in proceedings for more than 18 weeks. This approach has been a trigger for change that has demonstrably helped to improve the experiences and progress of a number of children.
14. Family network meetings are used to good effect to tap into the strengths of extended family members in order to help build resilience, protect children and promote sustainable change. Core groups, child in need meetings and review child protection conferences take place at regular intervals, are well attended by the relevant professionals and rigorously monitor the progress of children's plans.
15. Social workers are good at engaging statutory and voluntary sector partner agencies and coordinating their efforts to deliver effective packages of support. Time and again, this is having a very positive impact on the experiences and progress of children, including those who are living with domestic violence, parental mental ill-health and/or substance misuse.
16. Planning for the transition to adult services starts early with disabled children and their families. The quality of help and protection, care and support that the children's disability team provides is good. Part of a whole-life disability service, and co-located with whole-life disability health services, the team works hard to try to ensure a smooth transition from children's to adults' services. Transition and enablement workers, working alongside case accountable social workers, provide practical help, advice and support to enable young people to develop the confidence and life skills, including travel skills, that they need to prepare them for adulthood.

17. The local authority and its partners are actively engaged in refreshing their strategic and operational responses to children who go missing from home or care and those at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation. This is part of a shift towards a much sharper focus on extra-familial risk. Since simplifying the missing and return home interview pathway, the offer and completion of return home interviews (RHIs) has increased considerably. However, further work is required to improve the quality of RHIs in order to make better use of the information generated.
18. The local authority is highly effective in identifying and tracking children who are missing from education and those who are being home educated. Parents and professionals are challenged appropriately.
19. The local authority is extremely diligent in making sure that 16- and 17-year olds who present as homeless are offered suitable accommodation and appropriate packages of support, based on a detailed assessment of their needs and circumstances.
20. An extremely impressive level of investment in participation and engagement is empowering children and young people. Children involved in child protection processes benefit from having access to high-quality advocacy and support. The local authority is now taking participation and engagement to another level with disabled children. Although still early days, there is already clear evidence of disabled children's voices having an impact, as evidenced, for example, by the SEND (special educational needs and/or disabilities) youth forum's success in persuading the elected mayor to get the pavement outside one of their short breaks children's homes repaired.

## **The experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers: good**

21. Inspectors saw no evidence of children being in care who did not need to be. When children are the subject of care proceedings, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) and the judiciary confirm that most applications are timely and proportionate and that the quality of assessments and care plans is of a generally good standard. Emergency applications are the exception rather than the norm.
22. The local authority works extremely hard to make sure that when it is no longer possible for children to live safely at home, children stay 'connected' with their friends, their families and their communities. This is reflected in the sharp rise in recent years in the number of children who achieve permanence through living with relatives under the terms of a special guardianship order (SGO) and the proportion of foster carers who are connected persons.

23. Although still in its infancy, the local authority's Keeping Families Connected service has already achieved considerable success in helping to safely and appropriately reunite a number of children with their birth families and preventing the need for others to come into care in the first place. Those children who are reunited with their birth families do so in a planned way with input from a clinical psychologist, and only after the risks have been thoroughly assessed and effectively mitigated.
24. Most children benefit from good-quality placements that are meeting their assessed needs. Children are given plenty of opportunities and encouragement to develop their interests and hobbies or express themselves through a range of social and leisure activities. The vast majority of children in care are living within a 20-mile radius of their family homes, most of them with a foster family.
25. Most children are active participants in their reviews, either directly or with the support of an advocate. Trajectory care plans make it easier for children and others to understand what they can expect and who is likely to do what for them and by when. Most reviews are timely and include relevant others. Decisions taken and actions agreed are clearly recorded.
26. While there is increased evidence of the independent reviewing officers' (IROs') footprint on children's case records, the quality of critical challenge provided by IROs is variable. Some IROs are more proactive than others in tracking the progress of children's plans and are quick to use the escalation process when it is appropriate to do so. Others are less rigorous and this has, on occasions, contributed to drift or delay. This is being robustly addressed.
27. Every effort is made to make sure that children are able to safely enjoy family time with those people who matter most to them. By appropriately delegating authority to children's carers, the local authority is also making it possible for children to spend time with brothers, sisters or friends, without always needing their social worker's authorisation. This helps to reduce some of the stigma and sense of difference that can sometimes be associated with being a child in care.
28. The virtual school (VS), which has developed strong and effective relationships with schools, has high expectations for children in care. Although the quality of personal education plans is variable, the VS closely monitors targets and interventions to make sure that they are the right ones, that the action being taken is having a positive impact and that the pupil premium is being used effectively. The attendance and behaviour of all children, including children in care, are regularly monitored. Attendance is in line with national averages. Exclusions are few and far between. As a result, the attainment and progress of children in care at key stages 1 and 2 are in line with, or better than, national averages.
29. The multi-agency raising the health and education of looked after children (RHELAC) team, of which the virtual school is a part, provides a highly effective

one-stop-shop service for children in care, particularly those who are experiencing problems with their mental health and emotional well-being. Where necessary, RHELAC is able to fast-track children in care who need support from children and adolescent mental health services.

30. Short-term placement stability has improved considerably as a direct result of the decisive action taken by senior leaders, and is now in line with statistical neighbours. The new fostering strategy, designed to increase the range of foster placements available, is also starting to have an impact.
31. Social workers and their managers clearly understand the significance and importance of permanence for children in care. However, while the majority of children achieve permanence in a timely way, it is only recently that children living in settled and stable long-term placements who have no realistic prospect of being able to return to their birth families are starting to be formally matched long term with their foster carers.
32. Senior leaders have introduced a new missing performance scorecard and are currently testing a simplified missing and return home interview pathway. Having piloted the Philomena Protocol in their own children's homes, they are now about to roll it out to foster carers. Whereas, previously the offer and completion of RHIs was relatively low, the position has improved quite dramatically in the last quarter.
33. Senior leaders are acutely aware of the fact that more needs to be done to help children to make sense of their own, and their families', histories and develop a better understanding of why they are in care. Life-story work has been identified as a key priority area for development in 2020/21.
34. The Children in Care Council (CiCC) is exceptional. This small group of sparky, challenging, thoughtful and imaginative children and young people has had a significant impact both locally and regionally. They have, for example, been influential in changing the words that people use when talking about children in care and their experiences, improving family time venues, training foster carers and helping professionals to understand what it is like to be in care. The North Tyneside's CiCC has also played a key role in establishing the North East Regional Children in Care Council and, to date, has coordinated three regional conferences for professionals.
35. The recruitment, assessment, selection, supervision of and support for foster carers are well managed. The active involvement of the CiCC and the use of buddies both during the assessment process and after carers have been approved are invaluable in helping prospective carers to better understand their role. All foster carers and connected persons enjoy the same rights to training and support. Staff in the fostering team say that they feel well supported. They speak positively about their work and have manageable caseloads.

36. The regional adoption agency (Adopt North East), which is hosted by the local authority, is delivering positive and timely outcomes for children from North Tyneside whose plan for permanence involves adoption. Prospective adopters are carefully and properly prepared. Prospective adopter reports provide clear and concise assessments of the prospective adopters' parenting capacity and their ability to provide the love, warmth, comfort and security that children need. Adopters who had experienced a particularly distressing and wholly unexpected adoption breakdown during the introductory process could not speak highly enough about the support they received from the adoption service, which has encouraged them to give adoption another go.
37. The adoption panel provides an appropriate level of critical scrutiny and challenge. Post-adoption support is well considered. The agency decision-maker understands the critical importance of her role and what it means for children. The way in which she records her decisions is exemplary.
38. The local authority is in touch with the vast majority of its care leavers, thanks largely to the dogged determination of their personal advisers (PAs). PAs know their young people well and work hard to develop and maintain positive relationships with them. The support they provide is making a real difference to young people's lives. One young person said of her PA that she was 'the only one who gets me'.
39. Pathway plans are developed with care leavers and most are up to date. While the quality of pathway plans is variable, most make it clear who needs to do what and by when to make it possible for the young person to achieve their short-term goals and, in the longer term, to realise their ambitions.
40. The vast majority of care leavers are living in suitable accommodation that is meeting their needs. The range of housing options available to them, which includes supported accommodation as well as training flats provided by the local authority's own Starting Point service, is impressive. Increasing numbers of care leavers are taking advantage of the option to stay put with their former foster carers once they reach 18.
41. Robust and appropriate action is being taken to address the lack of suitable support for care leavers experiencing problems with their mental health and a recent rise in the number of young people who are not in education, employment and training. However, it is too soon to evaluate the impact of this activity.

## **The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families: outstanding**

42. Senior leaders, who are outward looking and open to challenge, know themselves and their services extremely well. They are under no illusion that the

local authority's improvement journey is complete. When they see that things are not working, they are quick to do something about it. Even before this inspection started, senior leaders were already working on those areas identified by inspectors as being in need of some further improvement. These include short-term placement stability, permanence for children who are settled in stable long-term foster placements, missing children and those at risk of exploitation, the mental health of care leavers and life-story work.

43. Senior leaders share a common set of values and principles. Their determination to make life healthier, happier, safer and better for children is readily apparent. They take as their starting point the experiences and progress of children and families. Having made a significant investment in participation and engagement, senior leaders get much of their inspiration from what children say and tell them. Children's voices are up front and central in the local authority's transformation programme and are increasingly influential in the design, development and delivery of services.
44. Governance arrangements are extremely robust. Reporting arrangements are clear, simple and effective. High-quality performance management information allied to a genuine commitment to openness and transparency means that elected members are well informed and able to provide an appropriate level of rigorous scrutiny and critical challenge. Totally committed to the principle of keeping children in care 'connected' with their families, their friends and their communities, they have provided additional funding for important new initiatives like the edge of care service and the provision of additional high-quality supported accommodation, including training flats for care leavers.
45. Strategic partnerships, particularly between health, education and the police, are based on open and honest relationships, mutual respect and a strong commitment to reciprocal challenge. Not afraid to have 'proper conversations', senior leaders, both within the local authority and across the partnership, hold themselves and each other to account effectively. Together, they are delivering improved outcomes for children and families.
46. Representatives of Cafcass and the judiciary talk very positively about their working relationships with the local authority and describe senior managers as being open to challenge and actively engaged with the local family justice board.
47. The local authority and its partners are acutely aware of the actual and potential risks of the criminal and sexual exploitation of children and young people. They have well-established, pan-Northumbria missing, slavery, exploitation and trafficking arrangements but are in the process of refreshing them in order to be able to combat the threat posed by county lines. A considerable amount of work is being undertaken as part of the planned move towards a much sharper focus on extra-familial abuse. The new safeguarding partnership arrangements are firmly established.

48. Senior leaders' understanding of demand, supply, capacity and sufficiency is sophisticated, well developed and used effectively to shape and inform strategic planning and commissioning. The accommodation strategy is having a positive impact on the experiences and progress of care leavers. The new fostering strategy, designed to increase the range of foster placement options available, is starting to have a positive impact. Short-term placement stability has improved considerably.
49. The way in which the local authority's preferred method of social work has been rolled out across early help and children's social care, and embraced by partners, has had a transformational impact. It provides a common language with which to talk about and explore issues and concerns, needs and risks, dangers and protective factors in a way that is easy to understand for parents, professionals and partners. Particularly impressive is the way in which the local authority's electronic case recording system has been adapted to ensure that it helps rather than hinders this approach. Equally impressive is the way in which senior leaders are leading by example, using the same simple methodology in reports and policy documents.
50. The local authority is doing what any good corporate parent would and should do to improve the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers. This is evident not only in its approach to the offer of accommodation, apprenticeships, work experience and health passports for care leavers, but also in its thoughtful approach to the language it uses based on feedback from children in care. The corporate parenting forum has been restructured and is currently going through a period of transition. The lead member is determined to increase its impact and make it more influential. However, in the here and now, the minutes of the corporate parenting panel do not do full justice to the leadership and rigorous scrutiny that the corporate parenting forum is starting to provide.
51. The quality of performance management information, and the way in which it is presented, is excellent. Monthly performance reports contain a wealth of relevant information. They provide a good range of relevant measures, with trend information, clear data analysis and easy-to-understand commentary. Their real strength is in the service-by-service area dashboards, which make it clear what is working well, what the worries are and what needs to happen next. This enables senior leaders to be proactive in responding to emerging issues and addressing actual or potential problems.
52. The local authority's quality assurance framework is clear, explicit and well developed. It starts from the premise that 'safe organisations are honest and open' and asserts that 'while we know that we will never get it right for every child all of the time... we refuse to accept that we cannot do it better next time'. Senior leaders are using a range of good-quality assurance tools, including brief case reviews, themed case reviews, early help learning reviews and peer reviews, to rigorously interrogate practice and performance. They have recently

added collaborative case reviews to their 'tool bag'. Learning from all of this audit activity, and from serious case reviews, is widely disseminated in easy-to-understand, bite-sized chunks, and is used effectively to support continuous improvement.

53. Senior leaders are always willing to explore new ideas, new ways of working and new practice models, and are eager to learn from and capitalise on the experiences of other local authorities. They innovate, but never for the sake of innovation. Their involvement in Partners in Practice and in the Learning Lab reflects their willingness to pool and share their ideas and support others' learning and development, knowing full well that this stimulates the professional development of their own managers and staff.
54. Senior leaders have succeeded in creating an environment which supports and encourages high-quality social work. After a period of relative turbulence last year, and despite fierce competition for social workers in the regional employment market, senior leaders have succeeded in achieving a stable workforce. There are very few vacancies. Staff turnover is low. Currently, the local authority does not employ a single agency social worker.
55. Social workers talk very positively about the level of access to good-quality training and the opportunities available to support their professional development. The latest staff survey shows that social workers enjoy working for North Tyneside Council. Most believe in what they are doing and feel appreciated and valued while they are doing it.
56. Most social workers receive regular good-quality, and increasingly reflective, supervision, although, on occasions, management oversight is not as clearly recorded on children's case records as it could and should be. Regular fortnightly group supervision is well recorded and provides further opportunities for reflection, shared learning and peer support. Direct observation of one such session provided a valuable insight into the dynamic nature of the process, the level of energy generated and the learning the participants gained from it.



The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2020



North Tyneside Council

## Post-Inspection Action Plan

North Tyneside Council has prepared this response in compliance with The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Inspection of Local Authorities Regulations 2007) following publication on 15 April 2020 by Ofsted of the report on their inspection into the effectiveness of North Tyneside Council's Children's Social Care Services.

	Ofsted Recommendations of What Needs to Improve	Actions that will be taken	By when	Measure of Success that will be used
1.	<b>Supervision and management oversight are not of a consistently high quality or always clearly recorded.</b>	a. Development of a Supervision Scorecard which reflects the key performance expectations detailed in the recently refreshed Supervision Policy	30/06/2020	Performance Management Information in relation to Supervision is captured and reported to Senior Managers in an accessible way so that the regularity of Case Supervision can be monitored, with any deficits in performance robustly and swiftly addressed with individual Managers as appropriate.
		b. Direct Observation of Supervision by Senior Managers extended to include a review of the clarity of recording of the Supervision by the Supervisor as part of increased quality assurance activity	31/05/2020	The quality of Case Supervision is regularly assured by Senior Managers and learning is fed directly back to Supervisors to improve their practice.

	Ofsted Recommendations of What Needs to Improve	Actions that will be taken	By when	Measure of Success that will be used
		c. Continued training of all Supervisors in evidence-informed best practice relating to reflective and directive Supervision, consistent with the Signs of Safety model of practice	31/12/2020	All those undertaking Supervision access relevant, recent training and their practice is informed by evidence of what works
		d. Brief Case Reviews to regularly focus on the frequency and quality of management oversight recorded in Case Notes	31/05/2020	The regularity of management oversight of cases is reviewed, with any deficits in performance robustly addressed
2.	<b>In the absence of good-quality life-story work, children and young people are not routinely getting the help they need to make sense of their, and their families', histories and better understand why they are in care.</b>	e. Continuation of commissioned specialist training of all relevant practitioners in effective evidence-informed best practice in relation to Life-Story Work.	30/09/2020	All staff working with children and young people understand and apply the key principles of the adopted model of Life-Story Work ensuring consistency of approach
		f. Development of a Life-Story Scorecard which reflects the key performance expectations detailed in the new Life-Story Policy	30/06/2020	Every child or young person entering care has timely commencement of high-quality Life-Story Work.  Every child or young person in care with a plan for permanence has timely completion of high-quality Life Story Work, including, where appropriate, a Later Life Letter and Book.
		g. More frequent use with children and young people of their life-stories by practitioners and carers, supported if needed by Clinical Psychological input,	30/06/2020	Increased recognition by practitioners of the therapeutic value of high-quality Life-Story work and, as a result, increased use, where appropriate, of Life-Story

	Ofsted Recommendations of What Needs to Improve	Actions that will be taken	By when	Measure of Success that will be used
		to help children and young people make sense of their, and their families', histories and better understand why they are in care.		work with children and young people in care
		h. Identification of any children and young people in care or recently left care for whom Life Story Work requires strengthening and appropriate action taken to address identified deficits within a defined timescale	30/06/2020	All children and young people have high quality Life Story Work undertaken with them. Where work undertaken is judged not to effectively support a clear understanding of the child's history, their family's history or why they are in care, prompt and effective remedial action is taken to improve the work as swiftly as possible.

#### **Endorsement of Plan**

Ms. Jacqui Old  
Director of Children and Adult's Services  
23 April 2020

Cllr. Peter Earley  
Council Member for Children, Young People and Learners  
23 April 2020

This page is intentionally left blank