

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 22 February 2021

Title: Report of the Children's Readiness for School Sub-Group

Portfolio(s): Children, Young People and Learning	Cabinet Member(s): Cllr P Earley
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Report from: Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to present the recommendations of the Children, Education and Skills Sub-Committee's study, on behalf of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee, into Children's Readiness for School in North Tyneside.

The recommendations are set out in paragraph 1.5.4 below.

In accordance with section 9F of Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000, Cabinet is required to provide a response to the recommendations of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee within two months. In providing this response Cabinet is asked to state whether or not it accepts each recommendation and the reasons for this decision. Cabinet must also indicate what action, if any, it proposes to take.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet consider and formulate a response to the recommendations presented to them as a result of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee's study into Children's Readiness for School.

1.3 Forward Plan:

The report was included in the Forward Plan published on 22 February 2021 under the heading "Matters arising from Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee and its sub-committees".

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

The report relates to the following priority in the 2020/2024 Our North Tyneside Plan:

Our People Will:

Be ready for school – giving our children and their families the best start in life

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Background

1.5.2 In September 2019, the Children, Education and Skills Sub-Committee agreed to review the early intervention support available for parents in North Tyneside to enable children to be ready for school and identify if any improvements could be made to the support available to ensure the outcomes were improved for families and children. At this meeting it was decided that a Sub-Group be established to carry out a review.

1.5.3 The Sub-Group felt that it was important to consult directly with schools and a questionnaire was circulated to all First and Primary Schools in North Tyneside. From January until March 2020, before the national lockdown, the Sub-Group met with officers in the Early Help Services Team and the Health Visiting and School Nurse Service to gather information on the role that the Council has in relation to children's readiness for school. The Sub-Group also met with staff in private Nurseries in North Tyneside.

1.5.4 The Sub-Group has made a total of 6 recommendations for Cabinet's consideration:

1. Cabinet requests that the Director of Children's and Adult Services considers improving communication between the Council, schools, and private nurseries in relation to early help and being ready for school.
2. Cabinet requests the Director of Children's and Adult Services to consider simplifying the early help assessment process, so it is less time consuming and bureaucratic for schools and private nurseries or provides adequate help to schools and private nurseries in completing the early help assessment process.
3. Cabinet requests that the Director of Children's and Adult Services provides more help to schools and private nurseries for toilet training, including for children without special needs.
4. Cabinet requests that the Director of Children's and Adult Services provides more help and encouragement for parents and carers in accessing early help information and services, including help for toilet training, language development, and accessing online educational material for children.
5. Cabinet requests that the Director of Children's and Adult Services consults with parents, schools, and private nurseries about early help and being ready for school, including a focus on the size and distribution of any problems in North Tyneside. The findings of this consultation are to be shared with Cabinet and all Elected Members.
6. Cabinet requests that the Elected Mayor writes to the Secretary of State for Education asking for more funding and resources for local government for early help to ensure all children are ready for school.

1.5.5 The full report and recommendations of the review is attached at Appendix 1

1.5.6 The Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee received the report on 2 February 2021 and approved the recommendations for submission to Cabinet.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

Cabinet may accept the recommendation set out in paragraph 1.2 above

Option 2

Cabinet may not accept the recommendation set out in paragraph 1.2 above and provides a response to the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee at the meeting.

Option 3

Cabinet may accept part of the recommendation as set out in paragraph 1.2 above

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Cabinet has a statutory duty to respond to the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee's recommendations within 2 months of receiving them. Option 1 is recommended as this option allows Cabinet to consider and formulate a response to the recommendations

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Report of the Children's Readiness for School Sub-Group.

Appendix 2 - Acknowledgements

1.9 Contact officers:

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Maria Parkinson, Democratic Services Officer Tel. (0191) 643 5030

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:

- (1) Children's Readiness for School Sub-Group Report
- (2) Minutes of Children, Education and Skills Sub-Committee meetings held on 12 September 2019 and 14 January 2021.
- (3) Minutes of Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee meeting held on 2 February 2021

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The financial implications associated with each recommendation will be included in Cabinet's response to this report.

2.2 Legal

There are no legal implications at this stage.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

The Sub-Group consulted with Primary Schools and held discussions with relevant officers.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

The Sub-Group met with representatives from private nursery providers in Tynemouth, Wallsend and North Shields.

2.4 Human rights

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

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no direct issues relating to equalities and diversity arising from this report.

2.6 Risk management

There are no direct issues relating to risk arising from this report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

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

2.8 Environment and sustainability

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

PART 3

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