

Overview, Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

Tuesday, 2 February 2021

Present: Councillor S Graham (Chair)
Councillors J Allan, A Austin, B Burdis, K Clark, M Green,
Janet Hunter, A McMullen, A Newman, P Oliver,
M Rankin, M Ord, D Cox, J Kirwin and S Fallon

In attendance: Councillors J OShea and R Glendon
S Fallon – Church Representative
M Ord – Parent Governor Representative

Apologies: Councillor W Samuel and Rev Vine – Church
Representative

OV72/21 Appointment of Substitute Members

Pursuant to the Council's constitution the appointment of the following substitute Member was reported: - Councillor J O'Shea for Councillor W Samuel.

OV73/21 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Cllr Karen Clark declared a registerable personal interest in Item 5 Children and Young Peoples Plan 2021-2025 as she holds the position of Chief Executive Officer for the Community Interest Company (CIC) Justice Prince.

Stephen Fallon – Church Representative declared a non-registerable personal interest in Item 5 Children and Young Peoples Plan 2021-2025 & Item 6 Children's Readiness for School report, he is a Head Teacher in a primary school in North Tyneside.

Stephen Fallon – Church Representative declared a non-registerable personal interest in Item 6 Children's Readiness for School report, he is a Head Teacher in a primary school in North Tyneside

Councillor Pat Oliver declared a non-registerable personal interest in Item 5 Children and Young Peoples Plan 2021-2025. She has a family member in receipt of SEND services.

Councillor Janet Hunter declared a non-registerable personal interest in Item 6 Children's readiness for school report, she is a governor for Benton Dene school.

OV74/21 Minutes of the meeting 18 January 2021

Resolved that the minute of the meeting held on 18 January 2021 be confirmed.

OV75/21 Children and Young People's Plan 2021 - 2025

In line with the Councils Policy Framework a further report in relation to the Children's and

Young Peoples Plan 2021 -2025 was received that provided additional information in relation to queries raised by the Committee that met on the 18 January 2021;

- The number and rate of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and approaches to support young people
- The proportion of children with SEND educated outside of North Tyneside
- The priorities within the developing Autism Strategy
- The priorities within the developing SEND Inclusion Strategy

The Assistant Director, SEND was in attendance and responded to members questions.

In relation to the young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), it was noted that information was expressed in percentage terms. Members requested the numeric figure in relation to the percentages be provided.

A member asked for clarification in the understanding of the percentages of NEETS, with the comparisons with both the North East region and nationally. In response it was confirmed that the majority of measures for North Tyneside were better than those nationally except in relation to 16-17year olds who are NEET.

A member raised that the impact from Covid-19 on NEET young people in the last year, would have been excessive as they would have had no contact with teachers. It was asked what strategy or plans were in place to ensure no young person would be further disadvantaged. In response, assurance was given that cross service approach in keeping in contact and supporting young people and their families throughout the Covid -19 pandemic had continued.

A further question was asked if the availability and delivery of college courses over the last year had changed and would impact young people. It was stated there was not a great difference in courses available to young people, however, they may choose to extend their learning due to the interruption to their studies and services were working on an individual basis to support young people to find the most appropriate plan for them.

A member stated that there were some great positives and there were some very noticeable good cross service/agency partnerships supporting and working together to help young people in employment, education and training programmes.

There was concern that children were losing contact or ground during covid-19 especially when there is reliance on external agencies for support and guidance and it was raised that there was inconsistency over this period. It was stated that some agencies would not engage with children and families after the schools had brokered meetings with parents for assessments to take place.

It was stated that this did not match the aspirations to meet the needs of children in the strategies and plans often put forward. There was frustration that some agencies could opt out of providing support. It was asked what joined up thinking was there between agencies?

In response it was stated that there was an aim to ensure support was joined up as much as possible, there were services working under differing remits, health, social care and education and guidance given for each had not been consistent. An offer was made that any

particular instances could be raised with service leads. It was asked if this could be pursued as the most vulnerable children would be impacted more through the current situation and that looking forward there needed to be more joined up approach as feeling was many agencies opt out.

It was stated that there was a fear that some children that had been disproportionately affected from current situations and aid was required quickly to support these young people.

Clarification was asked to the increase in, out of borough placements and in response it was explained there were two types of out of borough placements, pre and post 16. Of the 215 approximately 160 are post 16 and attend education facilities outside of North Tyneside. The remaining are pre 16, where some attended educational facilities in the locality, some attended facilities across the country which could have a residential aspect, and the remaining receiving care that was not available within North Tyneside.

A member questioned the size of the consultation group to aid the production of the All Age Autism Strategy and asked if consultation was undertaken with carers and parents in supported living. In response the officer offered to forward the information required to the member.

A member asked and was advised that the comparisons in attainment of young people in NEET who were looked after children compared to those not, would be provided to the member.

Agreed that the Children's and Young Peoples Plan 2021-2025 report be noted.

OV76/21 Children's Readiness for School

The Committee received the report of the Children's Readiness for School sub-group.

The sub-group was set up by the Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee to review the early intervention support available to parents in North Tyneside to enable children to be ready for school and to identify any improvements.

Councillor M Thirlaway, Chair of the sub-group attended the meeting to present the findings.

All North Tyneside, first, primary schools and nurseries were surveyed a number of times to elicit their views on provision available through the circulation of a questionnaire. The sub-group met representatives from Private Nurseries and officers from the Early Help Services Team, Health Visiting and School Nurse Service to aid the scrutiny.

It was stated that the engagement responses from schools had been disappointing, where only five schools responded. Gratitude was given to the Head Teachers of the schools, the officer teams and private nurseries that did engage. It was thought greater engagement would have benefited the scrutiny and would have allowed the opportunity to make more definitive recommendations.

A member proposed that a future approach could be to use Head Teacher briefings as an alternative to the approach to the individual schools.

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Members discussed the importance of ensuring the children were ready for school and suggested that the engagement with and listening to parents' concerns was paramount.

Agreed that the Children's Readiness for School sub-group report be referred to Cabinet.