

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING

Monday, 17 September 2018

- PRESENT:** Councillor N Weatherley (Chair)
- Councillor(s): D Burnett, B Clelland, S Dickie, K Dodds, F Geddes, M Graham, H Haran, S Hawkins, M Hood, H Kelly, J McClurey, J Turnbull and A Wheeler
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor(s): A Geddes
- APOLOGIES:** Councillor(s): T Graham, K McClurey and J Simpson

CPL9 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18 June 2018 be agreed as a correct record.

CPL10 REVIEW TO ADDRESS SKILLS SHORTAGES & INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES - FIRST EVIDENCE GATHERING SESSION

Following the agreement of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the focus of the review for 2018/19 would be work to address skills shortages and increase employment opportunities.

The review will look to help the Committee to have a holistic view of the current skills and employment position and the challenges we face both now and in the future. The Committee will also consider how the Council and/or its partners currently work, highlight gaps in provision and identify more effective partnership working opportunities for the benefit of Gateshead residents.

The scoping report for the review was agreed on 18 June and today's session will include presentations from Jan Batchelor, Childcare Support Lead Officer and Ryan Gibson, National Facilitator, Careers Education, North East Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Committee first received a presentation from Jan Batchelor. Jan advised the Committee that a Government Report – Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential: a plan for improving social mobility through education in December 2017 advised that in our country today, where you start still all too often determines where you finish. And whilst talent is spread evenly across the country, opportunity is not. The plan set an overarching ambition: no community left behind.

It was also noted in the report that across the country, less-advantaged children fall behind their more affluent peer in the early years and the gaps widen throughout school and beyond. Opportunity breeds opportunity and while advantage accumulates, so too does early disadvantage.

The Government has 4 stated ambitions

1. Close the 'word gap' in the early years
2. Close the attainment gap in school while continuing to raise standards for all
3. High quality post-16 education choices for all young people
4. Everyone achieving their full potential in rewarding careers

The Effective pre-school, primary and secondary education project (June 2015) was instrumental in the development of the government's social mobility and education plan: Its key findings were:

- Pre-school has a positive and long term impact on children's attainment, progress and social-behavioural development
- At school entry (age 5), attending pre-school improved children's academic and social outcomes with an early start (before 3 years of age) and attending a high quality setting being particularly beneficial.
- At age 11, high quality pre-school was especially important for boys, pupils with SEND and those from disadvantaged backgrounds through enhanced maths outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and for those of low qualified parents.

At age 14, (Key Stage 3), those who attended high quality pre-school had higher attainment and better social-behavioural development. By age 16 (Key stage 4) attending a high quality pre-school predicted better GCSE results.

In terms of Early Education and Childcare in Gateshead, research has shown the importance of high quality provision in improving outcomes for children.

Within Gateshead 96% of childminders and 100% of private, voluntary and independent nurseries, pre-schools and out of school clubs have been graded by Ofsted as either "good" or "outstanding".

The Childcare Act 2006 and 2016 (CAO6/16) places a duty on Local Authorities to "secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-15 (or up to 18 for disabled children)" This duty requires Local Authorities to shape and support the development of childcare in their area to make it flexible, sustainable and responsive to the needs of the local community.

Within Gateshead, there have been no reports of unmet childcare demand. The Early Years and Childcare Service (EYCS) successfully bid for £615,850 in 2017 to create additional places in Crawcrook, Whickham South and Ryton.

The percentage of children in Gateshead achieving at least expected levels across the Early Learning Goals covering the three prime areas of learning in 2017/18 is

84.60%. This figure compares with the North East average of 79.20% and the national average of 79%.

There are some challenges which have been identified as follows:

- The early years entitlements are funded from the Early Years Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. The amount Local Authorities receive from government has been challenged nationally. There is no commitment from Government to review funding allocations before 2020 and this may lead to some providers becoming unsustainable.
- Children's two-year integrated assessment provides an opportunity for health visitors and early years practitioners to identify children who would benefit from additional support at an early stage.
- This assessment requires review in order that it remains fit for purpose and informs effective allocation of resources.
- Childminder recruitment and retention is an issue
- Since 2012 there has been a national decrease in the number of childminders of 27%
- In Gateshead this figure stands at 31%
- Childminders generally provide the most flexible provision
- There is a recruitment campaign underway to increase the profile of childminding and to encourage and support to registration

There is an opportunity for non-working parents whose two year old is entitled to a 15 hour a week funded place, could be engaged and supported into training and/or employment. Originally, the two year old offer included this support to parents but this requirement was later dropped. It could be beneficial to create the capacity to be able to make contact with approximately 120 families per term, using the 30-hour entitlement as an incentive, once the child turns three.

The Committee also heard from Ryan Gibson, from the North East Local Enterprise Partnership. The North East LEP is a public, private and education partnership working together to improve the North East economy. The LEP has a North East Strategic Economic Plan for economic growth in the North East for the period 2014 – 2024. It sets out what we are good at, our targets to create more and better jobs and details how we are going to deliver them. The LEP's role in delivering the SEP is to provide Strategic Leadership, secure maximum investment and resources, raise the national profile of the region and work with partners on initiatives that will have the greatest economic impact.

It is important to have a SEP as it is recognised by government as the North East's principal economic policy document, it helps to identify interventions and investments to support growth and create more and better jobs and it is shared and owned by the region.

The SEP has six programmes of delivery one of which being skills. The Skills Challenges have been identified as follows:

- Ensuring workforce has the skills required
 - NE has a lower qualifications profile than England and forecasts indicate increasing demand particularly in technical skills levels
 - There is a gap in performance and outcomes between the best and lowest performing schools.
 - Employers report skills shortage vacancies and skills gaps within the existing workforce (increasing deficit in broad digital skills)
- Attracting and retaining workforce within the region
 - Relatively low levels of in-migration, we do have graduate gain but it could be higher
 - Aging population means we need to consider how best to retain (regain) older workers in the workforce.
- Supporting young people to understand the labour market to make informed choices
 - And providing them with the opportunity to have meaningful experiences of the world of work

Within the SEP the five areas of focus which have been identified are

- Excelling in technical and professional education
- Higher education
- Fuller working lives
- North East Ambition
- Education Challenge

The North East Ambition is that “Every young person in the North East should be able to identify routes to a successful working life.” In order to achieve this there will be a programme of activity centred around the Good Career Guidance Benchmarks currently being piloted, will ensure that all schools in the region are achieving the Benchmarks by 2024 and making use of the full range of information, advice and guidance (IAG) services and activities available.

By 2018 North East LEP will:

- Support every secondary school in their area that wishes to adopt the benchmarks
- Ensure that every secondary school in the area has at least one strategic Enterprise Adviser and is accessing the wider pool of Advisers for sector-specific or focussed activities
- Mentoring programmes – to ensure that ‘all and every’ student has access to the right type of guidance and support
- Develop and roll out a pilot Benchmark programme for primary schools in the North East LEP area

The North East LEP has gained learning from the pilot it has undertaken with the Gatsby Foundation, the Career Benchmarks are meant to achieve meaningful encounters with each and every student, the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks are to have:

- A stable careers programme

- Learning from Career and Labour Market Information
- Addressing the needs of each pupil
- Linking curriculum learning to careers
- Encounters with employers and employees
- Experiences of workplaces
- Encounters with further and higher education
- Personal guidance

There has been some significant progress made after the two years. It has been identified that a Careers Leader is crucial. Schools and Colleges are making rapid progress towards fully achieving the high standards of benchmarks. The rate of progress in year 1 is accelerated in year 2. Progress is more rapid when the careers leader is a member of the senior leadership team or reports to an active senior leadership team link who has responsibility for the strategic quality of careers education. The results have also demonstrated that it is possible to make significant and rapid progress – using the benchmarks as a framework – to carefully target improvements in schools/colleges of every type, size location and structure if this leadership is in place.

Ryan also pointed out a quote from the ‘State of the Nation’ Report 2017 which advised that The North East Local Enterprise Partnership has transformed careers support at local schools/colleges from the worst provision in the country to some of the best. Today it is leading the way on good-quality careers advice – a consequence of collaborative efforts to improve performance.

Other Local Enterprise Partnerships are being encouraged to follow the approach of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership, which works to improve carers support for young people by facilitating collaboration between employers, schools and colleges via joint groups and websites.

Concerted local efforts, of which careers support is one element, have also led to major successes in terms of youth unemployment in the North East. Local youth unemployment has almost halved since 2015 – falling from 23.4% to 13.5%.

Ryan advised the Committee how it is proposed to move forward in the North East and in Gateshead. A New National Careers Strategy has been launched. The New National Careers Strategy and updated Statutory Guidance is supported by a national implementation plan, lead by DfE with delegated delivery to the Careers and Enterprise Company who work through the LEPs.

In July 2018 the North East LEP were successful in securing a careers hub for the region – one of only 20 nationally. The career hubs will be established in October 2018 and will run for 2 years.

There are three aspects to the North East Ambition: Careers Hub,. We will create:

- A hub of 40 secondary schools (covering the entire North East LEP region).
- A hub of 10 colleges (including all of the regions 9 general FE Colleges and 1 Sixth Form College)

- A 'cornerstone hub' (supporting the other hubs and hub leads across the country)

The Committee were advised that initially no Gateshead schools were involved, however, through working in partnership with the Council, the LEP managed very quickly to engage the vast majority of Gateshead schools. A number of which have now been matched with enterprise leaders.

RESOLVED - That the presentations and the comments of the Committee be noted.

CPL11 OSC REVIEW - ROADS AND HIGHWAYS - PROGRESS UPDATE

The Committee received an update report on progress made since the final report was submitted to the Committee on 18 June 2018. The final report was taken to Cabinet in July.

Highway Maintenance

A specific members seminar has been arranged on this issue for 10 October. A progress report will be prepared for the OSC for the meeting in March 2019.

Short term funding measures in relation to closing the funding gap include:

- Achieving the top level in the Department for Transport's performance assessment approach which meant the risk of a cut of £138,000 has been averted.
- A review of practice in relation to road repairs to examine if there is further scope for streamlining and efficiencies

Options are under consideration for keeping members informed better in terms of highway defects and repairs and other transport ward issues.

Enforcement of Traffic Restrictions/Benefits of Joint Working with the Police.

At the conclusion of the review the Chair of the OSC wrote to the Police and Crime Commissioner on these matters. The Crime Commissioner forwarded the issue to the Chief Constable and the Service Director is undertaking correspondence with Sgt Sykes.

A members seminar took place on Speed Awareness on 5 September.

The issue of pavement parking is still undergoing discussions, currently this is something which can only be enforced by the Police. Officers are looking at whether new Anti Social Behaviour Legislation can be used. Councillors were also invited to identify hot spots within their ward and the police could perhaps park a car to assist in acting as a deterrent.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the progress made be noted.
- (ii) That further progress reports be provided in due course.

CPL12 ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme report was presented to Committee. Changes to the work programme are highlighted in italics and a subject to agreement with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

Chair.....