

## **FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**THURSDAY, 28TH NOVEMBER, 2024**

**Present:** Councillor Jill Green in the Chair

Councillors P Burns (Vice-Chair), L Caffrey,  
B Clelland, R Mullen, K Henderson, H Kelly,  
J Mohammed, L Moir, A Ord, M Ord, I Patterson,  
D Robson and S Craig

**165 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors McCartney, McMaster and Weatherley.

**166 Minutes of last meeting**

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024, as an accurate record.

**167 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor A Ord declared interest in relation to the report of agenda item 8, due to being employed by Northumbria University.

**168 Regional Adoption Agency Annual Report**

This report was postponed due to apologies, and will be presented in the next Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**169 Performance Management & Improvement Framework 2024/25 - Six-month update**

The Committee received the report which aimed to provide an update of how the Council is delivering in terms of the Thrive agenda.

The Committee discussed the potential reasons for why children may be absent from school and requested that a deeper understanding may be sought through further interpretation of data and submitting findings in January's Committee.

The Committee expressed concern regarding permanent exclusions. Twelve directors of education have produced a statement regarding concerns as to why there have been so many exclusions. Further collective work to improve practices within local authorities is ongoing such as, for example, SEND projects that are due to be rolled out to prevent suspensions and exclusions.

The Committee discussed the need for further data on how children's needs, which are shown to be escalating, can be addressed beyond that of which is linked to economics. The Committee learned that more detailed data can be provided for a future Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. That the Committee agreed the recommendations of the report.

**170 Participation and Engagement of Children and Young People**

The Committee received the report which provided an overview of the current children and young people's participation across the Social Care teams.

The Committee discussed the endeavour of Gateshead's Health and Wellbeing Board to develop a children's plan, to focus on the voice of the children of Gateshead and what can be done to address their needs. Connected Voice have offered to produce a plan for Gateshead to highlight the gaps of need throughout the borough. The Committee agreed it to be beneficial that a report of Gateshead's Children's Plan is to be added to the Committee's Works Programme.

The Committee discussed the opportunity to delivery change and strategy, as presented within the report. The Committee asked what can be done that would be most effective in addressing need. The Committee learned of two posts of the service being dedicated to SEND and Child Participation. The service has acknowledged the needs of youth workers and the importance of communicating their experiences and needs. Work is ongoing with Public Health colleagues to obtain the information required to further address need. The service is looking at what can be done, in terms of projects, with the information obtained.

**ACTION:**

- i. To add the report of Gateshead's Children's Plan to the Work Programme.
- ii. For Officers to incorporate Councillors in the work and endeavours of the relevant services (Officers to consult with Councillors).
- iii. To Invite representative of Children in Our Care to future meetings. (Young Ambassadors will lead. Services to arrange)

**RESOLVED:**

- i. That the Committee agreed the recommendations of the report.

**171 Progress on delivering Early Help and Prevention Strategy**

The Committee received the report which provided a summary of the progress made with delivery of the Gateshead Early Help Strategy 2023-26.

The strategy continues to look to bring in more people and maintain a larger reach in relation to the profile of need. Current communications campaigns work to promote the strategy as a walk-in source of support, also.

The spending review conducted in October 2024 confirmed another year of funding for 2025-26. Further detail on this is awaited. With the current model being partnership orientated; the feeling of confidence is had that the work of the strategy will continue.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. That the Committee agreed the recommendation of the report.

**172 Progress update on delivery of youth justice services and inspection outcomes**

**Thursday, 28th November, 2024**

The Committee received the report which provided Members a summary of the progress achieved in the Youth Justice Service from April 2023 to March 2024.

The Committee learned of the service improvement objectives that have been agreed for 2024-25.

The Committee learned of the progress made in relation to the implementation of the recommendations from the 2023 HMIP Inspection of Youth Justice Services.

The Committee discussed the correlations between violence in the home and the violence of young people. The Committee learned that most of the young people involved in criminal behaviour are seen to be linked or exposed to incidents and experiences in the home. The work being conducted aims to prevent future incidents.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. That the Committee agreed the recommendations of the report.

**173 Work Programme 2024/25**

**RESOLVED:**

- i. That the Committee noted the document.

**174 Date of the next meeting**

The next Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held on Tuesday 21st January 2025, at 17:30 in the Bridges Room.

**Duration of the meeting:** Times Not Specified

Chairman at the meeting on  
Thursday, 28 November 2024