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Northumberland County Council

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Enquiries to: Lesley Little

Email: Lesley.Little@northumberland.gov.uk

Tel direct: 01670 622614

Date: Tuesday, 26 April 2022

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF ROOM

Dear Sir or Madam,

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held in **COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL** on **THURSDAY, 5 MAY 2022** at **10.00 AM**.

Yours faithfully

Daljit Lally
Chief Executive

To Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee members as follows:-

C Ball, A Dale, W Daley (Chair), R Dodd (Vice-Chair), C Dunbar, L Dunn, Fairless-Aitken, M Swinburn, T Thorne and A Watson

Co-opted Members – A Hodgson, L Houghton, D Lennox, P Rickeard and J Sanderson

Any member of the press or public may view the proceedings of this meeting live on our YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/NorthumberlandTV>. Members of the press and public may tweet, blog etc during the live broadcast as they would be able to during a regular Committee meeting.

Members are referred to the risk assessment, previously circulated, for meetings held in County Hall. Masks should be worn when moving round but can be removed when seated, social distancing should be maintained, hand sanitiser regularly used.



Daljit Lally, Chief Executive
County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF
T: 0345 600 6400
www.northumberland.gov.uk



AGENDA

PART I

It is expected that the matters included in this part of the agenda will be dealt with in public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES

(Pages 1
- 6)

The minutes of the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 7 April 2022, as circulated, to be agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

3. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Unless already entered in the Council's Register of Members' interests, members are required to disclose any personal interest (which includes any disclosable pecuniary interest) they may have in any of the items included on the agenda for the meeting in accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 4 July 2012, and are reminded that if they have any personal interests of a prejudicial nature (as defined under paragraph 17 of the Code Conduct) they must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must leave the room. NB Any member needing clarification must contact the monitoring officer by email at monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk. Please refer to the guidance on disclosures at the rear of this agenda letter.

4. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

To note the latest Forward Plan of key decisions for May to August 2022. Any further changes made to the Forward Plan will be reported to the committee.

5. INFORMAL CONSULTATION ON SCHOOL ORGANISATION FOR THE COQUET PARTNERSHIP

(Pages 7
- 20)

The Cabinet report sets out the findings of the meetings that have taken place with schools in the Coquet Partnership during the Spring Term 2022 to discuss the organisation of schools in the partnership, as requested by the first schools and in light of obtaining best value for capital funding for investment in schools in the partnership as allocated in the Council's Medium Term Plan. Cabinet is also asked to permit the initiation of informal consultation on proposals for individual schools with stakeholders in the area served by Coquet Partnership. Comments made by this Committee will be reported to Cabinet when they consider the item at the meeting on Tuesday 10 May 2022.

6. UPDATE ON FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE DELIVERY OF EARLY HELP LOCALITY SERVICES IN NORTHUMBERLAND (Pages 21 - 28)

Following on from last month's report in relation to the development of Family Hubs in Northumberland, this report advises the committee of the proposed delivery route for early help locality services 0-19 going forward and changes to the current commissioning arrangements.

7. FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND MONITORING REPORT 2022/23 (Pages 29 - 36)

Members are asked to review and note the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme and Monitoring Report.

8. URGENT BUSINESS

IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST AT THIS MEETING, PLEASE:

- Declare it and give details of its nature before the matter is discussion or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.
- Complete this sheet and pass it to the Democratic Services Officer.

Name (please print):
Meeting:
Date:
Item to which your interest relates:
Nature of Registerable Personal Interest i.e either disclosable pecuniary interest (as defined by Annex 2 to Code of Conduct or other interest (as defined by Annex 3 to Code of Conduct) (please give details):
Nature of Non-registerable Personal Interest (please give details):
Are you intending to withdraw from the meeting?

1. Registerable Personal Interests – You may have a Registerable Personal Interest if the issue being discussed in the meeting:

a) relates to any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (as defined by Annex 1 to the Code of Conduct); or

b) any other interest (as defined by Annex 2 to the Code of Conduct)

The following interests are Disclosable Pecuniary Interests if they are an interest of either you or your spouse or civil partner:

(1) Employment, Office, Companies, Profession or vocation; (2) Sponsorship; (3) Contracts with the Council; (4) Land in the County; (5) Licences in the County; (6) Corporate Tenancies with the Council; or (7) Securities - interests in Companies trading with the Council.

The following are other Registerable Personal Interests:

(1) any body of which you are a member (or in a position of general control or management) to which you are appointed or nominated by the Council; (2) any body which (i) exercises functions of a public nature or (ii) has charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purpose includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member (or in a position of general control or management); or (3) any person from whom you have received within the previous three years a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of more than £50 which is attributable to your position as an elected or co-opted member of the Council.

2. Non-registerable personal interests - You may have a non-registerable personal interest when you attend a meeting of the Council or Cabinet, or one of their committees or sub-committees, and you are, or ought reasonably to be, aware that a decision in relation to an item of business which is to be transacted might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well being or financial position, or the well being or financial position of a person described below to a greater extent than most inhabitants of the area affected by the decision.

The persons referred to above are: (a) a member of your family; (b) any person with whom you have a close association; or (c) in relation to persons described in (a) and (b), their employer, any firm in which they are a partner, or company of which they are a director or shareholder.

3. Non-participation in Council Business

When you attend a meeting of the Council or Cabinet, or one of their committees or sub-committees, and you are aware that the criteria set out below are satisfied in relation to any matter to be considered, or being considered at that meeting, you must : (a) Declare that fact to the meeting; (b) Not participate (or further participate) in any discussion of the matter at the meeting; (c) Not participate in any vote (or further vote) taken on the matter at the meeting; and (d) Leave the room whilst the matter is being discussed.

The criteria for the purposes of the above paragraph are that: (a) You have a registerable or non-registerable personal interest in the matter which is such that a member of the public knowing the relevant facts would reasonably think it so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest; **and either** (b) the matter will affect the financial position of yourself or one of the persons or bodies referred to above or in any of your register entries; **or** (c) the matter concerns a request for any permission, licence, consent or registration sought by yourself or any of the persons referred to above or in any of your register entries.

This guidance is not a complete statement of the rules on declaration of interests which are contained in the Members' Code of Conduct. If in any doubt, please consult the Monitoring Officer or relevant Democratic Services Officer before the meeting.

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NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At the meeting of the **Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held at Meeting Space - Block 1, Floor 2 - County Hall on Thursday, 7 April 2022 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

R Dodd (Vice-Chair) (in the Chair)

COUNCILLORS

L Dunn
M Swinburn

Fairless-Aitken
A Watson

CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES

A Hodgson

OFFICERS

C Angus
S Aviston
M Connor
N Dorward

S Kaur
A Kingham
L Little
J McCormick

C McEvoy-Carr

G Reiter

Scrutiny Officer
Head of School Organisation and Resources
Head of Early Help, Prevention and Support
Senior Manager - Education Development &
Collaborative Projects
Principal Social Worker
Service Director - Education and Skills
Senior Democratic Services Officer
Senior Manager - Early Intervention and
Prevention
Executive Director of Adults and Children's
Services
Service Director - Children's Social Care

81 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors C Ball, A Dale, W Daley along with L Houghton, D Lennox and J Sanderson.

82 FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

The Forward Plan of Cabinet decisions for April to July 2022 had been shared with Members for information. The Scrutiny Officer advised that there was to be an additional Cabinet on 26 April to consider the outline case for Astley High School and Whytrig Middle School, with pre-scrutiny at an additional meeting of this Committee on 21 April 2022.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

83 BERWICK PARTNERSHIP ORGANISATION

The report for Cabinet set out the findings of the meetings that had taken place with schools in the Berwick Partnership since April 2021 to discuss the organisation issues facing the partnership and to identify potential models of organisation that could address those issues. The results of an informal survey with parents and the wider community in the area served by Berwick Partnership were also included in the report.

Cabinet were also being asked to permit a first stage informal consultation with wider stakeholders in the area served by Berwick Partnership schools to establish whether any models of organisation that might be brought forward at a later date for consultation should consist of only 3 tier models of organisation or include 3 tier and 2 tier (primary/secondary) models of education. Other key areas such as Special Educational Needs, post 16 and early years provision would also be included as part of the first stage of wider phase of consultation.

C McEvoy-Carr advised that a significant investment was being made in order to provide sustainable education for the future and a significant amount of work had already been undertaken to get to this stage. This was a once in a lifetime opportunity to influence the education system in Berwick and the Council wished to understand what the community wanted and what would be in the best interests of children in the area. S Aviston provided a comprehensive introduction to the report with the aid of a power point presentation. Councillor Renner-Thompson, Cabinet Member and Councillor for Bamburgh which was within the Berwick Partnership advised that the process had first commenced in 2019 looking at Berwick High School and had now expanded to include the whole Berwick Partnership. He highlighted that 28% of pupils travelled to schools outside the Partnership and this trend needed to be reversed and encouraged everyone to take part in the consultation if Cabinet approved this report.

Officers advised that the community needed to understand the challenges that were facing the Partnership and that it was not about individual schools. The consultation would provide an opportunity to address these challenges and confirmed that face to face events would be held in Berwick and that staff, Unions and Councillors would all be part of the process. Clarity was sought on the impact of moving schools from the Berwick Partnership to Alnwick. The Committee were informed there was evidence to suggest parents were choosing to move their children to the Alnwick Partnership and this was an opportunity to establish more formally the level of parental choice being expressed.

Members welcomed the ongoing dialogue and the proposed next steps, along with the open way in which the consultation would be undertaken. The Committee understood this was a complex issue and appreciated the work that had gone in to getting to this stage. They also requested that consideration be given to the difference in career progression and retention of teaching staff in two tier and three schools as part of the discussions.

RESOLVED that Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations in the report.

84 **FAMILY HUBS IN NORTHUMBERLAND**

A comprehensive introduction to the report was provided by J McCormick and M Connor, giving an update on the work that Children's Social Care and a range of partners were currently undertaking to establish Family Hubs in Northumberland. These would provide a new "core offer" based on the Leadsom Report with emphasis on the colocation of family health services with other Early Help professionals to provide support to children and young people aged 0-19 and their families. Effective early intervention could improve children's wellbeing, educational attainment and life chances, lead to improved mental health and lead to lower crime, unemployment and other negative outcomes.

The family hubs would provide a central access point for integrated services whether it was in a building named a family hub, another building or a virtual access point. Outreach posts were also provided in more rural localities and mobile play vans would continue to operate. A multi-agency implementation plan was in place being led by group of strategic leaders from across the range of partners, with five stakeholder groups being established to drive the implementation forward.

Funding had been secured and was being utilised to provide a communications post, building adaptations, including midwifery and clinical rooms and the provision of IT equipment for digital and virtual delivery. Additional national funding would be in place for three years (although the amount is not yet known) and it was hoped that the Council would be able to "grow their own" social care staff for the future to help address shortages nationally across the sector.

Members welcomed the report and the work being undertaken to support children, young people and families in the County and thanked the Officers for their attendance.

RESOLVED that the information be noted and that the Committee supported the transition of Children's Centres to Family Hubs.

85 **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHILDREN'S PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WORKER**

A comprehensive introduction to the very detailed report was provided by S. Kaur. The report provided updates to the Committee on the input and work of the Principal Social Worker in 2021 and an overview of the quality of practice and development needs of frontline social workers.

Councillor Renner-Thompson advised of the excellent work undertaken in relation

to the Social Worker Academy which other Local Authorities were now looking to copy. He highlighted the difficulties in recruitment within Northumberland due in part to differing qualifications in Scotland which prevent cross-border recruitment.

C McEvoy-Carr advised that social work was a hidden crisis service and didn't often get the recognition it deserved but was quite often blamed if something went wrong. She highlighted the work undertaken to help make the lives of children better and thanked all staff for the work they undertook to help vulnerable residents in the County. This was echoed by Members of the Committee who highlighted that the Academy was testament to the Local Authority and had become a Centre of Excellence for the North East. The way social workers had adapted very quickly and their work through the pandemic was also highlighted. It was confirmed that all staff had been able to return to the office in order to allow support to be provided by their peer group.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted and the work completed over the year acknowledged.

86 **NCC DIGITAL WORKFORCE & DIGITAL WORK-BASED SKILLS**

An introduction to the report which advised of plans to accelerate the delivery of digital work-based skills within the Council was provided by N Dorward. The proposal had internal and external facing objectives in development digital work-based skills across Northumberland to the advantage of residents and businesses but also provided the mechanism for the Council to build and sustain its own digital workforce within the area of Information Services and other areas with growing volumes of digital functions.

The report was endorsed and welcomed by both the Committee and Councillor Renner-Thompson who advised that due to the digital roll out to rural parts of the County the ability to undertake this type of employment opportunity was no longer confined to the urban area, enabling residents to earn a decent salary whilst working from home.

RESOLVED that:

1. The proposal to appoint a specialist digital apprenticeship provider to partner with Northumberland County Council, enhancing the apprenticeship function of Northumberland Skills and delivering objectives within Northumberland Strategic Skills Plan 2021-2025 (funded by Levy and ESFA apprenticeship funding) be noted;
2. The proposal for NCC Education Directorate to appoint a Digital Development Lead (2 year FT) to accelerate digital skills and education advancements (within the existing staffing budget) be noted; and
3. The links between this proposal and the proposal of HR&OD to recruit a cohort of circa 10/12 digital apprentices to join Information Services on a pilot programme (funded by HR&OD apprenticeship wage support budget) be noted.

**FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND MONITORING REPORT 2021/22**

The work programme had been circulated for information and any issues which Members wished to bring to the Committee should be raised with the Chair or the Scrutiny Officer in the first instance.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

Councillor Dodd took the opportunity to thank very much C McEvoy-Carr for her work and its impact on the Council during her time at Northumberland and wished her well for her future.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....

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Northumberland County Council

CABINET

Date: 10 May 2022

PROPOSALS FOR THE COQUET PARTNERSHIP

Report of Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services -
Cath McEvoy-Carr

Cabinet Member for Children's Services – Councillor Guy Renner-Thompson

Purpose of report

The Council has approved the allocation of £25.5m of capital investment in schools in the Coquet Partnership. Before committing such investment to relevant school capital projects, Council officers have met with school leaders collectively and individually in the partnership to discuss what structure of organisation of schools would be, in their view, the most effective in improving outcomes for pupils in all phases and for the long-term sustainability of the partnership.

This report sets out the findings of these meetings, and as a result of feedback received by each of the Governing Bodies of the Coquet Partnership schools to the Council, Cabinet is recommended to approve a six-week consultation on proposals for a 2-tier structure in the Coquet Partnership with effect from 13 May 2022.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1) Approve the initiation of a 6-week preconsultation from 11 May to 29 June 2022 on proposals for a 2-tier model of school organisation in the Coquet Partnership.
- 2) Note that should Cabinet approve Recommendation 1, the following elements of education in the area would also be included in the consultation:
 - a. The SEND offer for pupils in the Coquet Partnership area;
 - b. The Early Years offer in the Coquet Partnership area;

- 3) Note the feedback received during the informal meetings with the schools in the Coquet Partnership at para. 14-19, setting out their request and rationale for the Council to initiate consultation on a proposal for a 2-tier, primary/secondary structure in the Coquet Partnership.
- 4) Note the draft proposed models of school organisation suggested as the basis for consultation.
- 5) Note that £25.5m has been proposed in the medium-term plan for investment in schools in the Coquet partnership, including for the replacement or refurbishment of the buildings of James Calvert Spence College (JCSC) at Acklington Road site.
- 6) Note should Cabinet approve the initiation of informal consultation, the outcomes presented to Cabinet may include a recommendation to permit the publication of statutory proposals for relevant schools in the Coquet Partnership.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report directly links to the Council's Corporate aim 'Living, Learning - We will ensure the best education standards for our children and young people.'

Key issues

1. In 2016, Cabinet approved the allocation of funding towards replacement or refurbishment of JCSC buildings, while in 2022 the capital allocation in the Medium term Plan was increased to £25.5m towards the improvement of school buildings in the Coquet partnership as a whole.
2. In the same way as for other partnerships, Cabinet will want assurance that any capital investment made in school buildings in the Coquet Partnership is spent on an organisational school structure that supports viable and sustainable schools at all phases of education, leading to the enrollment of the majority of children living in the Coquet at their local schools, in line with the Council's objectives.
3. Following on from the Council's decision to allocate capital funding to Coquet Partnership and communications initially received from all first schools and James Calvert Spence College in 2019 in relation to organisational structure, Council Officers met with the headteachers and Chairs of Governors on several occasions, both at full partnership level and as individual schools, to determine high level views in January to March this year. A summary of the outcomes of feedback on those meetings is set out in paras. 14-9. Overall, the feedback received from the majority of schools clearly pointed to the desire to carry out a consultation on proposals for schools to be organised within a 2-tier structure.
4. It is therefore, recommended that Cabinet should approve a 6-week informal consultation, taking place within term-time between 11 May and 29 June 2022. The

informal consultation would include the development of an online consultation document via the Council's Citizen Space facility, with hard copies available on request. The link to the consultation document would be sent directly to those Governors, staff and parents relevant to those schools most directly impacted; however, it would also be made available on the Council's website to enable any interested party to respond. A 'padlet' containing additional information and Frequently Asked Questions would also be set up as part of the consultation process.

5. As well as a consultation document, meetings with both the Governing Body and staff groups at each school would be held. Furthermore, at least one public event would be held within the consultation period to enable parents and members of the public to find out further information about how the proposals might impact education and the wider local community.
6. A report setting out the results of informal consultation, should it be approved, would be brought back to Cabinet at a later date. A request to publish statutory proposals on changes to schools in the Coquet Partnership may also be included in that report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

7. The Coquet Partnership includes the following schools:
 - Amble First – age 4-9
 - Amble Links First– age 2-9
 - Broomhill First – age 3-9
 - Grange View CE First – age 3-9
 - Red Row First – age 3-9
 - NCEA Warkworth Church of England Primary (academy) – age 2-11
 - James Calvert Spence College – age 9-18.
8. JCSC was originally an age 13 to 18 year high school, but in 2016 the school amalgamated with JCSC South Avenue (formerly named Amble Middle School) to become an age 9-18 school; the two schools had previously formed the James Calvert Spence Federation. Although theoretically pupils in schools in the Coquet Partnership have only one transition to the next school phase, this occurs at 2 years into KS2 at the midway point and at the end of Year 4 in the first schools, with pupils transferring into Year 5 at JCSC where they complete the remaining 2 years of the key stage. This structure is based on the 3-tier system of organisation remaining in place within 5 of the 14 school partnerships in the county (including Coquet). In a primary/secondary 2-tier structure, transition takes place at the end of Key Stage 2 at Year 6 with pupils transferring to

secondary school for the beginning of Key Stage 3; this structure is in line with the National Curriculum and is the prevalent system in the country.

9. The Governing Body of NCEA Warkworth Church of England Primary School took the decision a number of years ago to become a primary school as a result of the reorganisation of the Alwick Partnership, whose catchment it borders.
10. In early 2019, a letter signed by all headteachers and Chairs of Governors of the five first schools in the Coquet (Amble) Partnership was received by the incumbent Director of Education and Skills. The letter set out a request for informal consultation to be undertaken on a proposal to reorganise schools in the partnership to a two-tier, primary/secondary organisation, together with the rationale for their proposal.
11. Subsequently, a letter was received from the Governing Body of JCSC to the Director setting out its view that, while the need to improve outcomes at KS2 was acknowledged, a change in organisational structure was not necessarily the only solution to achieving such improvements. The letter set out the Governing Body's suggestions on what actions could be undertaken with a whole-partnership approach that could lead to better outcomes but retaining the existing transition point.
12. At this point in 2019, the Council decided that without consensus from all schools in the partnership to request consultation on an alternative structure of organisation, it could not support such a consultation at that time.
13. The impact of COVID has resulted in delays to the implementation of the schools Capital Programme and therefore a business case for the investment in the Coquet Partnership hasn't been developed along the original timescales. However, as the Major Educational Capital Programme is once again moving forward, the Councils Cabinet need assurance that the allocated funding for improvement in schools in the Coquet Partnership would be invested in a viable and sustainable school structure.

Process and feedback from work with schools in the Coquet Partnership

14. Informal discussions with the Coquet Partnership to gain their views on their preferences for school organisation took place as follows:
 - **18 January 2022**
Opening meeting with partnership presented by NCC officers and attended by Heads and Chairs of Governors and CE diocesan education representative.
 - **January – February 2022**

NCC officers meet with Heads and Chairs of Governors of individual schools for confidential discussions on views.

- **16 March 2022**

Plenary meeting of NCC officers headteachers and Chairs of Governors to share high level themes arising from individual meetings.

15. The informal discussions that took place with each headteacher and Chair of Governors centred around their views of the 3-tier and 2-tier system. They were also asked if they had any other ideas on how the challenges faced by the school in the partnership could be addressed. The headteachers and chairs were also asked their views about the possibility on joining a multi-academy trust (there is currently only one academy in the partnership at the moment - Warkworth CE Primary).
16. The key themes arising from the discussions were:
 - The topic of structural change has been discussed for a long time on Coquet – it's now time for change;
 - The need to improve KS2 outcomes;
 - The need to retain more pupils in the Coquet Partnership, particularly in the secondary years;
 - The need to improve the offer to children and young people with Special Educational Needs within the partnership;
 - The need for investment in buildings.
17. The summary of the views on the 3-tier and the 2-tier system are set out in Table 1:

Table 1

Main views on 3-tier system	Main views on 2-tier system
3-tier no longer the right fit for the partnership or educational journey	Majority of schools support consultation on 2-tier option for partnership
No accountability for key stages	One school has accountability for whole Key Stage
Transition currently splits key stages	Transition at end of KS2 in line with National Curriculum
Children not 'ready' for middle school at age 9 e.g. travelling on bus	Longer term viability under 2-tier
Schools losing children to primaries in other partnerships	Timing of any change important
Many children are happy to move into Year 5 at 'middle' phase	
Both models have their pros and cons	

18. Other themes and ideas that emerged from discussions with the schools were:

- Some schools would like to extend age range down to include 2 year olds;
- Wraparound care;
- Tie up this project with leisure centre/community facilities
- Financial concerns
- Buildings and site suitability issues

19. The prevalent views of schools on becoming part of a multi-academy trust which could be within a 3-tier or 2-tier structure are set out in Table 2:

Table 2

Pros	Cons
A MAT in the North could make sense	Staff would not be keen
Removal of school improvement funding from LAs could be ameliorated by a MAT	LA services are valued – can opt in or out already
	Can't see how a MAT would resolve issues
	Not all schools have an equal say in a MAT

The conclusion at this stage was there is no appetite from the partnership to progress further with discussions on forming a MAT at this time.

20. Feedback on key aspects of school organisation is set out in Table 3:

Table 3

How would your community/parents react to consultation on organisational change?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would support it • Equally, some parents would be apathetic • The variation in views from one village to another would need to be considered • It's time to ask their views
Staff recruitment and retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention good • Teacher recruitment good/ Teaching Assistant recruitment difficult
SEND Provision in the partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed need for specialist provision in the partnership, especially for ASD and SEMH • Children with SEND would potentially stay longer in

	mainstream if first schools were primary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in ARPs, but concerns about impact on reputation or education outcomes
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Standards and outcomes in schools in the Coquet Partnership

21. Current Ofsted outcomes

- Amble First – Good (November 2019)
- Amble Links First – Good (September 2021)
- Broomhill First – Good (March 2017)
- Red Row First – Good (December 2017)
- Grange View CE First – Good (March 2019)
- JCSC - Requires Improvement (most recent monitoring visit, January 2021 – school taking effective action)

22. Education Outcomes

Key Stage 1 (First School Phase): Key Stage 1 (KS1) assessments, which are taken by children at the end of Year 2, are not published.

Key Stage 2 (James Calvert Spence): Key Stage 2 (KS2) assessments did not take place in 2020 and 2021, therefore the last available data for the Coquet Partnership is from 2019 set out in Table 4.

Table 4

% Pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths	
James Calvert Spence College	27%
Northumberland Average	66%
England Average	65%

The KS2 results achieved by JCSC in 2019 were the lowest in Northumberland, with the next lowest score achieved by a school in the county being 53%. The best KS2 results at JCSC in recent years were in 2016 when the 40% of pupils achieved the expected standard.

Key Stage 4 (James Calvert Spence):

The last verified outcomes at GCSE (Key Stage 4) for JCSC were in summer 2019 as set out in Table 1. The DfE has stated that due to the unprecedented change in the way GCSE results (KS4) were awarded in the summer terms of 2020 and 2021 and the resulting significant changes to the distribution of the grades received (in comparison to exam results), pupil level attainment in 2020/21 and 2019/20 is not comparable to that of the previous exam years for the purposes of measuring changes in pupil performance.

Table 5 – GCSE results, JCSC

		GCSE 2019
Progress 8 (0 = Expected Progress)	JCSC	-0.02
	Northumberland average	-0.12
	England average	-0.03
%Achieving Grade 5+ inc Eng and Maths	JCSC	38%
	Northumberland average	43%
	England average	43%
Attainment 8 (higher figure is best)	JCSC	45.5
	Northumberland average	46.5
	England average	46.7

JCSC's results in 2019 at GCSE are stronger in comparison at both county and national (England) level, being positioned 11th out of 16 high/secondary schools in Northumberland at that point.

Proposal for reorganisation

23. In the light of the investment allocated to schools in the Council's medium term plan and as a result of the feedback received from the majority of headteachers and Chairs of Governors during the informal meetings in January and February this year, and the rationale set out by them in their letters to the Council, it is proposed that an informal consultation on the proposal for the Coquet Partnership to be reorganised within a 2-tier structure with staff, parents and the wider community is now appropriate and timely.
24. Two first schools in the partnership have closed in the last 7 years, reducing surplus capacity accordingly. While birth data for the Coquet Partnership is relatively steady, this masks some variation in capacity at the individual school level, e.g. in the first and primary phase, some schools are more popular and have attracted pupils from other catchments and as at January 2022 census, there are 25% surplus places across the first schools in the partnership as a whole. However, taking into account the impact that organisational change may have on parental preference for schools and the continuing housebuilding in the Coquet area, it is not proposed at this stage that any first schools would close as part of these proposals.
25. Similarly, JCSC has 18% surplus places in Years 9 to 11, therefore it would not be proposed that its current PAN of 120 would be reduced as part of reorganisation proposals; however, the capacity of the school would have to be amended as part

of its building solution should it become an 11-18 secondary school rather than a 9-18 school.

26. In any proposals for reorganisation, the current structure of schools forms part of the consultation process and therefore this would be expressed as the status quo model as follows:

Model A (status quo)

All schools remain organised as they are currently with phase change to JCSC occurring at the end of Year 4 in the first schools.

The buildings of JCSC age 9 to 18 are remodelled and extended buildings/new build, with all pupils brought together on the current high school site.

It should be noted that this model would not address the poor performance at KS2 without significant collaboration between the first schools and JCSC. The funding within the medium-term capital programme is likely to be sufficient to deliver this option, however given the current rate of inflation and supply shortages in the construction market a revised assessment of the costs will be carried out during any informal consultation period.

Model B

All first schools to extend their age ranges to become either age 2-11, 3-11 or 4-11 primary schools, retaining current Year 4 into Year 5 in the first phase of reorganisation.

Amble First School to relocate to the current Year 5 to Year 9 building of JCSC at South Avenue.

Red Row First School to increase its Planned Admission Number from 29 to 30 (this is a tidying up exercise).

JCSC to reduce its age range from 9 to 18 to 11 to 18 with effect from September 2023 at the earliest, having Years 7 to 13 sixth form.

JCSC to have new school buildings for age range 11 to 18 on current site.

As set out in para 29 of this report an estimated budget for any proposals will be developed during any informal consultation with the outcomes being reported to Cabinet at the next stage if consultation is approved.

Other considerations arising from the proposals

27. SEND provision

The Coquet Partnership currently doesn't have any specialist provision for Children and Young People with SEN, and therefore this results in a significant

number travelling outside of their community in order to have their educational needs met. It is therefore proposed that provision for pupils with SEND living in the Coquet Partnership forms part of the informal consultation process in order to take advantage of an opportunity to develop a joined-up approach for all pupils living in the Coquet area. Some initial informal work has taken place with headteachers in the partnership and these early ideas would be presented as part of the wider consultation.

28. Early Years provision

In the same way as for SEND in the partnership, current Early Years provision would form part of the informal consultation with potential recommendations brought forward for Cabinet's consideration with the other feedback.

29. Implications for staff

There would be implications for staffing structures in schools under the proposed Model B (2-tier structure). As part of the informal consultation process, meetings would be held with the staff body at each school in the Coquet Partnership, together with their Trade union staff representatives (unions) and Council HR (Human Resources) officer to allow specific discussions on this aspect of reorganisation under Model B. It is intended that should informal consultation be approved, Council officers would broker a draft Staffing Protocol agreement during the consultation period to include all schools that would ensure a fair and equitable appointment process under any new structure, should Model B or a variation of Model B be approved for implementation at a later stage.

30. Buildings and funding

As stated earlier in the report, the Council has already allocated £25.5m towards investment in school buildings in the Coquet Partnership. A budget for carrying out capital works under both Model A and Model B would be developed during the informal consultation, should it be approved. The costs of any linked proposals for provision for SEND students that may be set out as part of the recommendations arising would also be developed. These costs would then be presented to Cabinet for consideration along with the outcomes of the informal consultation in order to assist with decision making in relation to the proposed recommendations.

31. Catchment areas

There would be no proposal to change the current catchment areas of any school within the Coquet Partnership as part of the proposed Model B (2-tier structure) for informal consultation, although some proposals for catchment area changes may arise from consultees during the process that may require consideration. However, should approval for Model B be approved by Cabinet at a later date, the catchment areas of the first schools as they became primaries would include

pupils up to the age of 11, while the catchment area of JCSC would include pupils aged 11 to 18.

32. Transport

Under Model A (status quo), there would be no changes to the current arrangements for Home to School Transport. Under Model B (2-tier structure), pupils including those eligible for transport would remain in their first schools for an additional 2 years in Years 5 and 6. Therefore, there may be a small saving to the Home to School Transport policy as a result.

33. Sport and recreation

Under Model A and Model B, there would be the opportunity to enhanced sporting facilities at the JCSC site as a result of remodelling/rebuilding. Under Model B, there may also be an opportunity to improve the current sport and recreation facilities in some first schools. Overall, there will be no negative impact on current sporting facilities as a result of Model A or Model B.

Implications arising out of the report

Policy	This report directly links to the Council's Corporate aim 'Living, Learning - We will ensure the best education standards for our children and young people.'
Finance and value for money	Capital investment of £25.5m has been allocated by the Council in the Medium-Term Plan. Part of the rationale for informal consultation is to provide assurance to Cabinet that investment would be made within a sustainable and viable school structure for the medium to long-term. A detailed Business Case for investment would be brought forward to Cabinet once the structure of schools has been decided.
Legal	Consultation carried out on proposals would comply with School Organisation guidance and regulations.
Procurement	No implications
Human Resources	There may be some implications for staff in schools in the wider Coquet Partnership should Model B be approved for implementation by Cabinet at a later date. If the status quo remains in place, there may be some implications for JCSCS staff should the school move onto one site.

Property	Refer to 'Finance and value for money' above
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Should Cabinet approve informal consultation, an EIA would be carried out in parallel with consultation and presented together with consultation outcomes.
Risk Assessment	A risk assessment would be carried out should Cabinet approve informal consultation.
Crime & Disorder	This report has considered Section 17 (CDA) and the duty it imposes and there are no implications arising from it.
Customer Considerations	The proposal set out in this report is based upon a desire to improve outcomes for children and young people and their families in Northumberland.
Carbon reduction	It is not envisaged that these proposals would have a significant positive or negative impact on carbon reduction.
Consultation	This report has been considered by the Executive Director for Adults and Children's Services and the Member for Children's Services.
Wards	Amble; Druridge Bay; Amble West and Warkworth

Background Papers

None

Report Sign Off

	Full name
Service Director Finance & Deputy S151 Officer	Alison Elsdon
Interim Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Executive Director of Adult and Children's Services	Cath McEvoy-Carr
Deputy Chief Executive	Cath McEvoy-Carr
Lead member for Children Services	Guy Renner-Thompson

Report Author: Sue Aviston, Head of School Organisation and Resources
Sue.Aviston@northumberland.gov.uk
01670 622281

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Northumberland County Council

COMMITTEE: FAMILY AND CHILDRENS SCRUTINY

DATE: 5 MAY 2022

Update on Future arrangements for the delivery of Early Help Locality services in Northumberland

Report of Executive Director for Adult Social Care & Children's Services, Cath McEvoy-Carr

Cabinet Member: Guy Renner Thompson

Purpose of Report

Following on from last month's report in relation to the development of Family Hubs in Northumberland the purpose of this report is to advise the committee of the proposed delivery route for early help locality services 0-19 going forward and changes to the current commissioning arrangements.

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended:

1. To accept and agree the proposed changes to the current commissioning arrangements understanding that more flexibility to future service delivery can be provided through all Early Help Locality services being managed and delivered by NCC
2. To note that whilst there will be a temporary increase in expenditure during 22/23, 23/24 and 24/25, (equivalent to two whole financial years), this will be covered by additional grant funding to be received over the same period from the Supporting Families Programme and the Family Hub and Start for Life Programme. This additional investment will allow for structural service changes to be made, alignment of staffing terms and conditions, and further work to be undertaken with partner agencies about the delivery of services to families under the Family Hub model. The expectation is that expenditure will reduce in line with budgeted figures at the end of

this period and a further report on the financial implications will follow once they can be quantified.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the living, learning, connecting and enjoying priority included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2020-2021.

Key Issues

1. Northumberland has had a commissioning arrangement in place for the delivery of its locality based early help services since Sure Start was first introduced in the early 2000's. This was due to the requirement at the time that a VCS organisation was the lead partner in the development of the Sure Start partnerships. Northumberland partnered with Barnardos and Action for Children to develop partnerships in the early stages of the Sure Start developments.
2. Later developments across the county (then called children's centres) aimed at services for 0–5-year-olds were led by NCC and have continued to be so.
3. There have been a number of commissioning rounds completed over the last ten years resulting in the current arrangements whereby Barnardos and Action for Children are commissioned to manage and deliver early help services for 0–18-year-olds in the South East and Central localities alongside some staff from NCC but that overall management of these localities is overseen by an NCC employed early help locality manager. The current commissioning arrangement has been extended a number of times but is due to expire in September 2022.
4. The management arrangements agreed with Barnardos and Action for Children to cover this delivery model have been in place since 2017. As we move into the Family Hub model these arrangements and the commissioning model sitting beneath them does not allow for the flexibility needed to amend and change working practices as relationships with partner agencies develop.
5. As a result we are proposing to end the commissioning arrangements and to TUPE all relevant staff into the newly developed service structure in each locality based on current need and thinking about how we want to develop working arrangements in the Family Hub model.
6. This will allow ongoing flexibility across the county to align resources to need and not be tied into a specified contract amount for a number of years. It will reduce senior management and commissioning time in both procurement and monitoring of the contract.
7. All buildings within the two localities would revert to being managed and maintained by NCC allowing us to have total say over who co-locates there and how much is charged. Again this supports the developing Family Hub model. The only exception to this is Blyth West Children's Centre building which is owned by Barnardos.
8. To enable this to happen we estimate that there will be an initial additional cost as a result of the difference in staff salaries and pension costs for staff TUPE'd over to the local authority. We would envisage that over time this additional cost could be reduced as services begin to co deliver and align more but anticipate them being need across part of

the financial year 22/23, 23/24 and part of 24/25. Some of these costs will be offset with income received towards the running costs of buildings by partners agencies co-locating.

9. Funding from the Supporting Families grant has been identified to cover this additional cost as the development of Family Hubs aligns with the aims of the Supporting Families programme. In addition, Northumberland has been confirmed as one of seventy-five top tier authorities that will receive a share of £85 million over 3 years from government to support delivery of the Family Hub and Start for Life Programme. The exact funding allocation will be announced on the 26/4/22 and will be used to supplement funding available from Supporting Families.

Background

Commissioning arrangements for the delivery of Sure Start services in Northumberland first began in the early 2000's when funding was made available to local authorities and their delivery partners to develop buildings and services for children aged 0-2 and their families in the most deprived areas of the county. One of the conditions of the funding being awarded was that the lead organisation was a voluntary organisation and NCC partnered with Barnardos and Action for Children.

Over subsequent years the Sure Start model evolved into that of Children's Centres with the aim being that by 2010 every area had a centre offering services for children aged 0-5 and their families. Within South East and Central Northumberland the management and delivery arrangements continued to reflect the partnership with Barnardos and Action for Children.

Across Northumberland further buildings and services were developed but in the main these were then managed and delivered by NCC.

From 2013 commissioning arrangements were put in place which meant that Barnardos delivered children's centre services for children 0-5 and their families including groups, running of buildings and family support in the South East locality, Action for Children delivered the same services in the Central locality and NCC managed and delivered these in the North and West localities.

This model worked effectively with all partners working together in a collaborative way. In 2017, as a result of development and transformation in the early help offer in Northumberland, a wider service for 0-18 aged children and their families was commissioned in South East and Central localities. Barnardos and Action for Children were again successful in this procurement although at this point the manager for each locality was TUPE'd into NCC and a clearer service structure put in place for all localities including those being commissioned.

The commissioning arrangements have been extended a number of times as a result of the uncertainties of the pandemic and are due to expire at the end of September 2022. Over the past five years the early help offer across the localities and arrangements with partners has developed and grown. This has now been reinforced through the national policy initiative in relation to Family Hubs following the publication of the 'Best Start in Life' report in 2021. Committee members heard how this was being rolled out in Northumberland in a report last month.

As a result of this we have a position where health colleagues are now collocated into children's centre buildings from a wider range of teams and new partnership arrangements are being forged to develop joint delivery pathways for services for families going forward. To allow this development to happen we need to be able to flex and adapt our service structures, job roles and locations of the staff so that we can respond to emerging needs and trends in localities.

Re commissioning the services would not allow us this flexibility as we would be tied into a commissioned arrangement which is fit for purpose now but may not be in the near future as arrangements are changing quickly. We would also run the risk of being tied to organisations who have particular service structures which they are required to fit with. This has been shown now as both commissioned services have moved away from the original structure agreed in 2017 in part to fit with their organisational requirements. As a growing proportion of senior manager and commissioning time has been spent on servicing and supporting these commissioning arrangements this will allow for a resource saving to be dedicated to the wider partnership developments required for the Family Hubs.

As all of the current children's centre buildings bar one are owned by NCC and leased out to the relevant organisation these would just revert to being run and managed by NCC.

Blyth West children's centre building is owned by Barnardos and discussions are ongoing about the use of this building going forward.

As there would be additional costs initially related to the changes in staff terms and conditions as they TUPE into NCC then additional expenditure will be incurred in the years 2022/23 (part), 23/24 and 24/25 (part) equating to two full financial years. This will be covered by additional grant funding to be received over the same period from the Supporting Families Programme and the Family Hub and Start for Life Programme.

This temporary increase costs will be offset in part by income achieved through recouping running costs of buildings in which partner staff are based and overtime through the realigning of staff to meet demand and need.

We are proposing that the Supporting Families grant funding is utilised to cover the temporary increase in expenditure and supplemented by Family Hub and Start for Life Programme funding. The development of the family hubs aligns with the aims of both programmes and our recently allocated indicative amounts would allow this investment.

Implications

Policy	This proposal allows NCC to respond flexibly to the current and future national policy in relation to early help and prevention services
Finance and value for money	Although there are initial additional costs over time we think it will show best value for the resource available through allowing flexible use of the finance available across the county rather than being tied into contracts for a number of years. The additional costs are expected to be met by grant funding.
Legal	The current contracts and leasing arrangements would come to an end.
Procurement	There would be a saving for procurement in a reduction in commissioning and contract monitoring.
Human Resources	TUPE would apply to most of the current staff team employed by the two organisations.
Property	The children's centre buildings leased out would be managed by NCC going forward in the two localities. There would need to be discussions involving property services and Barnardos about the use of Blyth West children's centre building
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	This would not impact on children and families negatively and in fact would have a positive impact as we would have more flexibility to respond to needs across the county as they emerge.
Risk Assessment	N/A
Crime & Disorder	N/A
Customer Consideration	We would undertake a communication strategy with families living in the two localities to explain the changes and provide opportunities for them to meet with managers.
Carbon reduction	N/A
Health and Wellbeing	This is part of the ongoing development of early help and prevention services for children and families and is aligned to all public health and NHS England agendas
Wards	Wards in SE and Central Northumberland

Background Papers

Report Sign Off

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Service Director Finance & Deputy Section 151 Officer	Alison Elsdon
Relevant Executive Director	Cath McEvoy-Carr
Deputy Chief Executive	Cath McEvoy-Carr
Portfolio Holder	Guy Renner-Thompson

Author and Contact Details

Mary Connor, Head of Service Children's Social Care
mary.connor@northumberland.gov.uk

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Northumberland County Council

Family and Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Work Programme and Monitoring Report 2022 - 2023

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Chris Angus, Scrutiny Officer
01670 622604 - Chris.Angus@Northumberland.gov.uk

21 April 2022 - CA

Agenda Item 7

TERMS OF REFERENCE

(a) To monitor, review and make recommendations about:

- Early Years
- Education and Schools
- Special education needs and disability
- Adult and Community Education
- Training and Vocational Education
- Lifelong Learning
- Youth Offending
- Social Services for Children and Young People
- Children's Health
- Teenage Sexual Health
- Looked After Children
- Safeguarding – Children
- Youth Services
- Family Services
- Children's Centres

(b) To oversee and monitor school improvement, as follows:

- (i) To receive feedback on the Ofsted inspection of schools.
- (ii) To support the work of the County Council and the progress of schools on the School Intervention and Support Programme in specified categories.
- (iii) To receive an annual report about the number of schools that have been on the School Intervention and Support Programme, the reason(s) for their inclusion, the support given by the Council and the success of this support.
- (iv) To receive an annual report on the performance of schools.

ISSUES TO BE SCHEDULED/CONSIDERED

Regular updates:

Safeguarding Activity Trends Report
Finance and Performance Six Monthly Report
Children Permanently Excluded from School/Elective Home Education
Schools performance
Joint Targeted Area Inspection

Issues to be raised:

Themed Scrutiny:

Issues to be scheduled:

School Capital Investment
Children Permanently Excluded from School/Elective Home Education
Education (Guidance about the cost of School Uniforms) Act 2021

**Northumberland County Council
Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme 2022 - 2023**

5 May 2022

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Informal Consultation on School Organisation for the Coquet Partnership

Update on Future Arrangement for the Delivery of Early Help Locality Service in Northumberland.

This report sets out the findings of the meetings that have taken place with schools in the Coquet Partnership during the Spring Term 2022 to discuss the organisation of schools in the partnership, as requested by the first schools and in light of obtaining best value for capital funding for investment in schools in the partnership as allocated in the Council's Medium Term Plan. Cabinet is also asked to permit the initiation of informal consultation on proposals for individual schools with stakeholders in the area served by Coquet Partnership.

Report in relation to the development of Family Hubs in Northumberland the purpose of this report is to advise the committee of the proposed delivery route for early help locality services 0-19 going forward and changes to the current commissioning arrangements.

26 May 2022

Education Strategy Board Annual Update

Northumberland School Improvement Strategy

As requested by members, a report from the Education Strategy Board on the Boards initial priorities as agreed by FACS in 2020/21.

A report looking at school performance throughout the last academic year and areas/methods of improvement.

7 July 2022

	<p>School Transport Governance Arrangements</p> <p>Education Funding from Residential and Commercial builds (S106)</p> <p>The Northumberland Inclusion Strategy</p> <p>SEND Strategy</p> <p>Finance & Performance</p>	<p>Review of the current governance arrangements for school transport providers and staff.</p> <p>Report on funding for education allocated under S106 funding from new residential and commercial builds.</p> <p>To consider current performance and the budgetary position for services within the Committee's terms of reference.</p>
1 September 2022		
Page 33	<p>Complaints Annual Report 2021/2022 - children's social care, and continuing health care services</p> <p>Overview of developments in the CCG CYPS complex care portfolio</p> <p>SEND Place Planning and Capacity Strategy</p>	<p>Annual report on complaints and lessons learnt within Children's social care. Committee to identify any further areas for scrutiny.</p> <p>Overview of the journey travelled for Children and Young People's Emotional Mental health learning disability and Autism services since 2018 and to provide an update on the future plans for the next 12 months.</p>
6 October 2022		
	Care Proceedings and Public Law Outline: Annual Report on progress	To present Children's Services' performance within legal proceedings in 2020/21.

3 November 2022		
	Finance & Performance	To consider current performance and the budgetary position for services within the Committee's terms of reference.
1 December 2022		
	Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report	To provide an overview of the work completed by the NSSP undertaken from 2020-2021.
5 January 2023		
Page 3	National Funding Formula and School Funding 2023/24	To update Cabinet regarding the National Funding Formula (NFF) and the implications for 2023/24 School Funding in Northumberland.
2 February 2023		
	School Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for 2024/2025 Academic Year	This report informs Cabinet of the outcomes of the consultation on School Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2024/25 Academic Year as required by the School Admissions Code 2014. Approval (determination) of these admission arrangements is also sought.
	Virtual School Headteacher Annual Report 2021	To present the education outcomes of Northumberland's looked after children for the academic year 2021 – 2022.
	Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report	To provide an overview of the work completed by the NSSP undertaken from 2021-2022.

	Adult Learning Service Annual Report: Learning and Skills Service	The annual report for Learning and Skills Service is provided to report the performance against the Education Inspection Framework; present the work of the Careers Guidance Team and understand the role and impact of the Employability and Skills team within the wider service. The Learning and Skills Service leads a number of specialist areas and provides training for young people age 16-19, adults and apprentices across eight campuses in Northumberland as well as training in the workplace.
2 March 2023		
Page 35	<p>Director of Education Annual Report: Key Educational Outcomes (2021-2022 Academic Year)</p> <p>Finance & Performance</p> <p>Safeguarding Activity Trend</p>	<p>Annual report on the key educational outcomes of the previous academic year. The Committee will be asked to identify any further areas for scrutiny.</p> <p>To consider current performance and the budgetary position for services within the Committee's terms of reference</p> <p>To provide analysis of social work activity trends and case allocation as well as highlighting national developments regarding the Department for Education safeguarding indicators.</p>
6 April 2023		
	Annual Report of Principle Social Worker	To advise and update the Scrutiny Committee about the input and work of the Principal Social Worker in 2021/22 and an overview of the quality of practice and development needs of frontline social workers.

**Northumberland County Council
Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Monitoring Report 2022-2023**

Ref	Date	Report	Decision	Outcome
1				