

# Public Document Pack



## Northumberland County Council

**Your ref:**

**Our ref:**

**Enquiries to:** Lesley Little

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**Tel direct:** 01670 622614

**Date:** Wednesday, 23 November 2022

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, 1 DECEMBER 2022** at **10.00 AM**.

Yours faithfully

Rick O'Farrell  
Interim 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, S Fairless-Aitken, M Richardson, M Swinburn, T Thorne and A Watson**



**Rick O'Farrell, Interim Chief Executive**  
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# 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. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Unless already entered in the Council's Register of Members' interests, members are required where a matter arises at a meeting;

- a. Which **directly relates to** Disclosable Pecuniary Interest ('DPI') as set out in Appendix B, Table 1 of the Code of Conduct, to disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote and not to remain in room. Where members have a DPI or if the matter concerns an executive function and is being considered by a Cabinet Member with a DPI they must notify the Monitoring Officer and arrange for somebody else to deal with the matter.
- b. Which **directly relates to** the financial interest or well being of a Other Registrable Interest as set out in Appendix B, Table 2 of the Code of Conduct to disclose the interest and only speak on the matter if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain the room.
- c. Which **directly relates to** their financial interest or well-being (and is not DPI) or the financial well being of a relative or close associate, to declare the interest and members may only speak on the matter if members of the public are also allowed to speak. Otherwise, the member must not take part in discussion or vote on the matter and must leave the room.
- d. Which **affects** the financial well-being of the member, a relative or close associate or a body included under the Other Registrable Interests column in Table 2, to disclose the interest and apply the test set out at paragraph 9 of Appendix B before deciding whether they may remain in the meeting.
- e. Where Members have or a Cabinet Member has an Other Registerable Interest or Non Registerable Interest in a matter being considered in exercise of their executive function, they must notify the Monitoring Officer and arrange for somebody else to deal with it.

NB Any member needing clarification must contact [monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk). Members are referred to the Code of Conduct which contains the matters above in full. Please refer to the guidance on disclosures at the rear of this agenda letter.

- 3. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS** (Pages 1 - 4)
- To note the latest Forward Plan of key decisions for December 2022 to March 2023. Any further changes made to the Forward Plan will be reported to the committee.
- 4. CARE PROCEEDINGS AND PUBLIC LAW OUTLINE ANNUAL REPORT ON PROGRESSION** (Pages 5 - 12)
- The report advises of Children's Services' performance within legal proceedings in 2021/2022.
- 5. FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND MONITORING REPORT 2022/23** (Pages 13 - 24)
- Members are asked to review and note the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme and Monitoring Report.
- 6. URGENT BUSINESS**

**IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST AT THIS MEETING, PLEASE:**

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

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Date of meeting:</b>	
<b>Meeting:</b>			
<b>Item to which your interest relates:</b>			
<b>Nature of Interest i.e. either disclosable pecuniary interest (as defined by Table 1 of Appendix B to the Code of Conduct, Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest (as defined by Appendix B to Code of Conduct) (please give details):</b>			
<b>Are you intending to withdraw from the meeting?</b>		Yes - <input type="checkbox"/>	No - <input type="checkbox"/>

## Registering Interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

**"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest"** means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

**"Partner"** means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

### Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest.

Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

5. Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

### Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

### Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in **Table 1**) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –
- a. your own financial interest or well-being;
  - b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
  - c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2** you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied
9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or well- being:
- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
  - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise, you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where you have an Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

## Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

Subject	Description
<b>Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation</b>	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]
<b>Sponsorship</b>	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
<b>Contracts</b>	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
<b>Land and Property</b>	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. ‘Land’ excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
<b>Licenses</b>	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer
<b>Corporate tenancies</b>	Any tenancy where (to the councillor’s knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
<b>Securities</b>	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body

	<p>where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the councillor’s knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</li> <li>ii. if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</li> </ul>
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\* ‘director’ includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

\* ‘securities’ means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

## Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:

- a) any body of which you are in general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- b) any body
  - i. exercising functions of a public nature
  - ii. any body directed to charitable purposes or
  - iii. one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)



## Forward Plan

### FORTHCOMING CABINET DECISIONS DECEMBER 2022 TO MARCH 2023

DECISION	PROPOSED SCRUTINY DATE	CABINET DATE
<p><b>Council Tax Base 2023/24</b>                      The Council is required to set its council tax base annually. The tax base must be set between the 1st of December and 31st January. The tax base is a measure of the Council's taxable capacity which is used for the setting of its council tax. Legislation sets out the formula for calculation. Cabinet have delegated authority to approve the tax base.                      (R. Wearmouth/G. Barnes – 01670 624351)</p>	Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC 12 December 2022	13 December 2022
<p><b>Financial Performance 2022-23 - Position at the end of September 2022</b>                      The report will provide Cabinet with the revenue and capital financial performance against budget as at 30 September 2022.                      (R. Wearmouth/K. Harvey - 01670 624783)</p>	N/A	13 December 2022
<p><b>Trading Companies' Financial Performance 2022-23 - Position at the end of September 2022</b>                      The purpose of the report is to ensure that the Cabinet is informed of the current financial positions of its trading companies for 2022-23                      (R. Wearmouth/M. Calvert - 01670 620197)                      (Confidential report)</p>	Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC 12 December 2022	13 December 2022

<p><b>Budget 2023-24 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2023-27</b>  This report will provide an update on the development of the 2023-24 Budget and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) covering the period 2023 to 2027. This report will also detail the budget proposals for 2023-24 to meet the budget gap and provide an update on the Local Government Finance Settlement 2023-24 if it has been received.  (R. Wearmouth/A. Elsdon – 01670 622168)</p>	<p>CSEG OSC 16 January 2023</p>	<p>17 January 2023</p>
<p><b>30 Year Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account</b>  The report presents to Cabinet the 30 year Business plan for the Housing Revenue Account.  (R. Wearmouth/A. Elsdon – 01670 622168)</p>	<p>CSEG OSC 9 January 2023</p>	<p>17 January 2023</p>
<p><b>Notification of the Estimated Collection Fund Balances 2022-23 – Council Tax and Business Rates</b>  The report will advise members of the estimated surplus or deficit balances on the Collection Fund in relation to Council Tax and Business Rates at 31 March 2023. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) requires the Council as the Billing Authority to calculate a Council Tax Collection Fund estimate by 15th January each year. The Non-Domestic Rating (Rates Retention) Regulations 2013 require the Council as the Billing Authority to calculate a Business Rates Collection Fund estimate on or before 31<sup>st</sup> January each year.  (R. Wearmouth/A. Elsdon – 01670 622168)</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>17 January 2023</p>
<p><b>Recommissioning of an Integrated Drug and Alcohol Service for Adults in Northumberland</b>  To seek permission from Cabinet to commission an</p>	<p>H&amp;W OSC 6 December 2022</p>	<p>17 January 2023</p>

<p>Integrated Drug and Alcohol Service for Adults in Northumberland. This Service will be commissioned using the Public Health Ring-Fenced Grant. The grant conditions state that Local Authorities must improve the take up of, and outcomes from, its drug and alcohol misuse treatment services, based on an assessment of local need. The contract will be greater than £2m, therefore there is the need to ask Cabinet to delegate the expenditure to the Director of Public Health. (W. Pattison/John Liddell M: 07929 775559)</p>		
<p><b>Budget 2023-24 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-27</b> The report presents the updated Budget 2023-24 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-27 to Cabinet following the receipt of the provisional local government settlement which is due to be announced during December 2022. The report will also include an update on the deliverability of savings. (R. Wearmouth/A. Elsdon 01670 622168)</p>	<p>Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC 13 February 2022</p>	<p>14 February 2022 Council 22 February 2022</p>
<p><b>Produced in Northumberland Scheme</b> An update on the status of the Produced in Northumberland Scheme. A review of the scheme in 22-23 together with the intended further promotion and development of the scheme in 2023/24 (C. Horncastle/P. Simpson – 07920806260).</p>		<p>14 February 2023</p>
<p><b>Revenues and Benefits Policies for 2023/24</b> The report sets out the policies that the Revenues and Benefits services operate for the administration of council tax, business rates, housing benefit and council tax support.</p>	<p>Corporate Services and Economic Growth OSC 13 February 2022</p>	<p>14 February 2022 Council 22 February 2022</p>

<p>The report is for information and approval of any updates or legislation changes that need to be made. The policies need County Council approval on 22 February 2023. (R. Wearmouth/G. Barnes 01670 624351)</p>		
<p><b>Financial Performance 2022-23 - Position at the end of December 2022</b> The report will provide Cabinet with the revenue and capital financial performance against budget as at 31 December 2022. (R. Wearmouth/K. Harvey - 01670 624783)</p>	N/A	14 March 2023
<p><b>Service Charges in Sheltered Accommodation</b> The report requests permission to introduce Service Charges to all tenants in 8 Sheltered Housing Schemes in line with those currently charged at Arnison Close in Allendale. The HRA is currently subsidising these tenants at a cost of approx. £200k per year (C. Horncastle/ S. Ogle – 07976851270)</p>	Health and Wellbeing OSC 8 March 2023	14 March 2023
<p><b>Financial Performance 2022-23 – Position at the end of March 2023 (Provisional Outturn)</b> The report will provide Cabinet with the revenue and capital financial performance against budget as at 31 March 2023 (provisional outturn) (R. Wearmouth/K. Harvey - 01670 624783)</p>	N/A	9 May 2023



## Northumberland County Council

### **FAMILY & CHILDREN'S OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**1<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2022**

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#### **Care Proceedings and Public Law Outline Annual Report on Progression**

Report of the Joint Interim Director of Children's Services, Graham Reiter

Cabinet Member for Children's Services: Guy Renner-Thompson

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#### **Purpose of Report**

To present Children's Services' performance within legal proceedings in 2021/2022.

#### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that:

1. The Committee notes the content of the report.
2. Identifies any areas for further scrutiny.

#### **Link to Corporate Plan**

This report is relevant to the Living and learning priority included in the Council's Corporate Plan 2021 - 24.

#### **Key Issues**

1. Covid restrictions have, over the last few years, impacted on the public law system which considers care planning and makes decisions for children. The court have moved to a hybrid model of hearings however this took time to evolve.

2. Analysis of the Northumberland picture illustrates that we are in a very similar position to neighbouring Local Authorities, unsurprisingly, as 7 of the Local Authorities feed into the same Combined Court.
3. A regional steering group was established to lead on the recovery and reform of the Family Justice system, Northumberland actively participated in this group.
4. The activity in care proceedings turnover continues to be high and the 26 week target for completion of cases in court is not yet being achieved. The average time for a case in care proceedings to reach conclusion in 2022 is 39.7 weeks which is an increase of 0.7 weeks average reported to the committee in September 2021. Performance is closely monitored, and work continues to ensure any contribution that the Local Authority makes to delay is minimised. The timescales are similar for each of the local authorities using the combined court and indeed the national average in 2021 was 43 weeks.
5. Training has been provided to all staff by the legal team as an integral part of the induction plan for new staff. This provides the foundations for further in depth training in all aspects of assessment, care planning and use of the legal framework to secure permanence for children. Specialist training is offered as new case law is published.
6. Communication between the Local Authority and the court has continued to be strengthened with quarterly meetings between the Head of Service, Principal Solicitor and the lead Family Court Judge. Despite changes in staffing over the past 6 months these meetings continue and are meaningful in addressing key issues, improving practice, receiving and giving feedback and tracking cases. Measures are also in place to ensure direct contact between legal services and the court on individual cases and this is being positively reflected in the comments of the Lead Family Court Judge.

## BACKGROUND

1. Progress in respect of public care proceedings has been reported to the Family and Children Overview and Scrutiny Committee over the last 5 years highlighting the national and local trends in the family justice system and some of the challenges experienced by Northumberland County Council.
2. Care proceedings are the vehicle via which the Local Authority secure permanent plans and placements for children. The Local Authority issues care proceedings when the threshold criteria of significant harm are met, to ensure Court oversight and scrutiny of the planning for the child. The threshold for issuing care proceedings is a legal test but usually follows intervention that has been offered on a Child in Need or Child Protection basis and where this has not led to the necessary improvements for the children or following a serious and significant incident that causes harm to the child.
3. There has been regional training and workshops provided by the LFJB (Local Family Justice Board) The LFJB has offered a number of accessible workshops over the last year to consider how we can improve and learn from other's practice. These have been varied and interactive, they have included guest speakers and small breakout groups to consider the recent reports from the government and how this may impact on practice and the views of stakeholders. These were really informative sessions which aimed to broaden the understanding of key issues and themes within legal frameworks and implications for practice due to new reports and case laws. The sessions provided a collaborative approach from Local Authority legal parties, Judges, Barristers, Cafcass, Social Care and experts as well as some care experienced young people. There were ample opportunities for learning from one another and then being able to take this back to respective workforces to share learning further and have open discussions and reflections on the key issues.
4. Children's Services received an Ofsted Focused Inspection at the end of July 2022 which looked at the Authority's arrangements for Planning and Achieving Permanence. The Letter was published on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 in which it highlighted that Social Workers identified permanence plans for children at the earliest opportunity, they know their children well and use personalised and sensitive tools to communicate effectively with children and prepare them for permanence. There is an established quality assurance framework to assist senior leaders, managers and Independent Reviewing Officers in monitoring progress of plans and quality of practice. The 2 areas for improvement related to quality recordings of supervision and impact of IRO challenge and escalation.
5. Children's Services continue to operate a Legal Gateway Panel process for approval of all cases escalating to Letter Before Proceedings, issuing Care Proceedings or approving children becoming Cared For. This panel is held weekly and have on average 5 cases per week with 264 cases being heard in the last 12 months. Northumberland's Legal Gateway Panel process was identified by Ofsted in their most recent visit citing how senior leadership team provides strong and effectively oversight of when children need to achieve permanence,

how timely legal advice ensures public law proceedings are initiated swiftly when children need legal permanence. Ofsted also met with the Designated Family Judge as part of this inspection and they reported an improvement in the quality of work, including how the child's voice is evidenced, also reporting effective communication between senior leaders to resolve any issues.

6. Children's Services have set up a social work Pre-Birth Team. The foundations of the pre-birth intervention team came following the "Born into Care" review which nationally looked at the number of newborns subject to proceedings, which prompted considerations and questions about, among other things, practice in relation to pre-birth assessments and removal at birth and the legal framework and court decision making in such cases. All neighbouring authorities have also commenced the set up or established their own pre-birth teams. The team went live on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022 is based in Ashington Family Hub and will work with families across Northumberland. The team consists of 1 Team Manager, 4 Social Workers and 2 Social Work Support Assistants. The team will be reviewed and evaluated at the 9 month juncture.
7. Our current performance data reflects that currently we have 108 Northumberland children subject to public law proceedings. The vast majority of these children originate from the South East and Central areas of the county. During the first 6 months of 2021 the figures were higher (around 170-180) and increasing. Towards the end of the year, they began to decrease to around 150 and have reduced further since. Comparing the period 2020/21 and 2021/22 the data reflects that more cases have been issued in 2022 (155 in 2021 and 165 in 2022). The fact that we have seen such a reduction in cases could potentially be down to a lag in recording. Internal systems in recording all legal episodes could have impacted the data in 2021/2022, this is being addressed presently to put in place more robust systems, future data therefore would be more accurate. In 2020/2021 there was 196 proceedings ended with only 99 closed in the 2021/22. In relation to the duration of care proceedings the current average time for a case to conclude is 39.7 weeks (an increase compared to last year's figure of 37.8). This is significantly higher than the Public Law Outline target of 26 weeks. Covid has had some impact on these extended timescales but other issues that predate the coronavirus restrictions also underlie this performance. Analysis of national CAFCASS published information for April to September does not give any clear reason as to why this is and local analysis would say it is a variety of reasons. Regular legal tracking meetings chaired by the Head of Service provide senior management oversight of any delays in proceedings.

## **CONCLUSION**

8. Ofsted outcomes from July 2022's focused inspection positively reflected that Northumberland's social workers identified permanence for children at the earliest opportunity and the management oversight and processes in place for tracking are effective.



9. Some children have experienced delay with proceeding taking on average 39.7 weeks. The impact on Northumberland children is very similar to that experienced regionally and nationally.
10. Northumberland have set up a Pre-Birth team which aims to secure permanency for babies as quickly as possible following birth. Evaluation and review of the effectiveness of this team will be completed in the summer 2023.
11. Northumberland will continue to work closely with the court, Cafcass and neighbouring Local Authorities.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE REPORT

<b>Policy</b>	The PLO and other legislation governing legal proceedings in relation to children are translated into NCC policy and procedures.
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	Care proceedings place a financial burden on the Authority in terms of application fees and staff resources.
<b>Legal</b>	The Children Act 1989 contains the applicable statutory basis for issuing care proceedings and pre proceedings under the PLO.
<b>Procurement</b>	Directions of the Court within care proceedings can require the local authority to procure external services with which we have to comply.
<b>Human Resources</b>	Staff need to have the capacity, knowledge and skills to manage cases effectively and efficiently to achieve the very best outcomes for each child.
<b>Property</b>	None
<b>Equalities</b>	Each child must be recognised as an individual and provided with a service that meets their specific and different needs.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Ofsted and reputational risk if performance around timescales and working practice is not improved.
<b>Carbon Reduction</b>	None.
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	Criminal proceedings will often run alongside care cases and inform the outcome.
<b>Customer Considerations</b>	The child is the customer and the timescales imposed are intended to improve outcomes and allow the child to have a finalised secure plan at the earliest opportunity.
<b>Consultation</b>	Regular feedback is sought and provided by the courts. Children's voices are key to all reports and evidence for court.

<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	Ensuring children have safe permanent living arrangements as soon as possible supports their health and wellbeing.
<b>Wards</b>	Applies to all wards

## REPORT SIGN OFF

Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Legal Clearance	Lynsey Wafer
Service Director Finance & Deputy S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	Graham Reiter
Chief Executive	Rick O'Farrell
Portfolio Holder(s)	Guy Renner-Thompson

**Report Author:** Katie Scovell – Senior Manager  
[Katie.Scovell@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Katie.Scovell@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**

Page 13

Chris Angus, Scrutiny Officer  
01670 622604 - [Chris.Angus@Northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Chris.Angus@Northumberland.gov.uk)

23 November 2022 - CA

Agenda Item 5

## 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**

1 December 2022

Care proceedings and Public Law Outline:  
Annual Report on progress

To present Children's Services' performance within legal proceedings in 2020/21

5 January 2023

Page 16

**Pre-Scrutiny:- National Funding Formula and School Funding 2023/24**

Children who are Electively Home Educated  
(Summary and Guidance)

Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding  
Partnership Annual Report

**To update Cabinet regarding the National Funding Formula (NFF) and the implications for 2023/24 School Funding in Northumberland.**

The report provides information about the increase in the number of children who are electively home educated, and the multi-agency support that is in place for families.

To provide an overview of the work completed by the NSSP undertaken from 2021-2022.

2 February 2023

**Pre-Scrutiny:- 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**



	<p>Virtual School Headteacher Annual Report 2021-2022</p> <p>Adult Learning Service Annual Report: Learning and Skills Service</p>	<p><b>2014. Approval (determination) of these admission arrangements is also sought.</b></p> <p>To present the education outcomes of Northumberland's looked after children for the academic year 2021 – 2022.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Page 17</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	
	<p>Director of Education Annual Report: Key Educational Outcomes (2021-2022 Academic Year)</p> <p>Finance &amp; 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>
<p>6 April 2023</p>		
	<p>Annual Report of Principle Social Worker</p>	<p>To advise and update the Scrutiny Committee about the input and work of the Principal Social Worker in 2021/22 and an overview of</p>

		the quality of practice and development needs of frontline social workers.
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**Northumberland County Council  
Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Monitoring Report 2022-2023**

Ref	Date	Report	Decision	Outcome
Page 18	5 May 2022	<b>Informal Consultation on School Organisation for The Coquet Partnership</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations outlined in the report.	At its meeting on 10 May, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments.
2	5 May 2022	<b>Update On Future Arrangements for The Delivery of Early Help Locality Services in Northumberland</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The proposed changes to the current commissioning arrangements be agreed; and</li> <li>2. The temporary increase in expenditure during 2022/23, 2223/24 and 2024/25, which would be covered by the additional grant funding to be received over the same period from the Supporting Families</li> </ol>	No further action

			programme and the Family Hub and Start for life Programmes be noted.	
3	26 May 2022	<b>Education Strategy Board Annual Update</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that it be noted that the Committee had reviewed the performance of the Board in its first year and its ability to review, develop and drive the Education and Skills key priorities	To continue to receive annual updates
4	26 May 2022	<b>The Impact of the School Improvement Team</b>	It was unanimously <b>RESOLVED</b> that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The performance of the team and their ability to develop the quality of education in Northumberland be noted;</li> <li>2. The changes to funding imposed by the DfE and the possible impact of service be noted;</li> <li>3. A further report be received once it was known how the reduced funding would be accounted for; and</li> <li>4. A recommendation be made to Cabinet for funding of the School Improvement Team to continue until the end of this Administration so that the team could continue to develop and offer support to schools both inside and outside of Northumberland</li> </ol>	A further report to be received at a later date
5	7 July 2022	<b>Send Strategy Progress Report</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the contents of the report be noted and the Committee supported the next steps to be taken.	To receive future updates

6	7 July 2022	<b>The Annual Report of Northumberland County Council Fostering Service 2021/22</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the contents of the report be noted and the performance information for the period April 2021 – March 2022 be acknowledged.	No further action
7	7 July 2022	<b>Briefing Note - Potential Multi Academy Trust Opportunity</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the contents of the briefing note be noted	No further action
8	8 September 2022	<b>Finance and Performance</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the current performance and how it compared to benchmarks was noted.	No further action
9	8 September 2022	<b>Outcomes of Consultation on Proposals for the Coquet Partnership</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations as outlined in the report.	At its meeting on 21 September, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments.
10	8 September 2022	<b>Children's Services Annual Representations 2021- 2022</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the contents of the report be noted.	No further action
11	8 September 2022	<b>Children's Social Care – Annual Self Assessment</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the contents of the report be noted	No further action
12	8 September 2022	<b>OFSTED Focused Visit to Northumberland Children's Services</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the information be noted	No further action

13	8 September 2022	<b>Proposal In Relation to Future Arrangements For The Youth Service</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that :-  1. The activity undertaken during the review be noted; and  2. Option 1, as outlined in the report, be agreed as the way forward.	No further action at this time
14	8 September 2022	<b>Family Hub Development</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the Committee:-  1. Agree to proceed with the funding for the Family Hub offer; and  2. Support the development of the governance and wider processes to underpin this as outlined in the report.	No further action at this time
Page 21	8 September 2022	<b>Support for Children and Young people with mental health needs in Northumberland</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the contents of the report and the future plans be noted and the support now on offer for children and young people in Northumberland be recognised.	No further action
16	6 October 2022	Regional Schools Director's Overview		No further action
17	6 October 2022	<b>Outcomes of Consultation on Berwick Consultation</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations as outlined in the report.	At its meeting on 11 October, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments.

18	6 October 2022	<b>Supported Accommodation Tender</b>	<b>RESOLVED</b> that Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations outlined in the report and asked that a report be brought back to the Committee at a future date outlining the available services and anticipated placement numbers.	At its meeting on 11 October, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments.  A report outlining the available services and anticipated placement numbers to be brought back in 2023
29	6 October 2022	The Northumberland Inclusion Strategy	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the Committee welcomed the report and noted the content and detailed strategy along with the impact that the work undertaken within Children's Services and Schools has had on the lives of Northumberland children	More detail of figures in appendix 2 to be provided
20	6 October 2022	Pegasus Centre Update	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the information in the report be noted.	No further action
Page 22	3 November 2022	Proposals for Coquet Partnership: Outcomes of statutory consultation and final decision	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the Cabinet be advised that this Committee supported the recommendations as outlined in the report.	At its meeting on 17 November, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments.
22	3 November 2022	SEND Place Planning and Capacity Strategy	<b>RESOLVED</b> that  1. Cabinet be advised that this Committee unanimously supported the recommendations as outlined in the report; and  2. A Task and Finish Working Group be established as outlined above.	At its meeting on 17 November, Cabinet considered the Committee's comments.

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