

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

AGENDA

**Meeting to be held in the City Hall (Committee Room No. 1) on
Thursday 31 March 2022 at 5.30 p.m.**

Membership

Cllrs Crosby, Dodds, Dunn, P.W.L. Gibson, S. Johnston, Mason-Gage, McKeith (Vice-Chairman), Noble, Samuels, Scanlan, P. Smith (Chairman) and Tye

Co-opted Member – Mrs. A. Blakey

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E. WAUGH,
Assistant Director of Law and Governance,
City Hall,
SUNDERLAND.

23 March 2022

Item 2

At a meeting of the CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL on THURSDAY 3 MARCH 2022 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor P. Smith in the Chair

Councillors Crosby, Dodds, P.W.L. Gibson, S. Johnston, Mason-Gauge, McKeith and Tye together with Ms A. Blakey.

Also in attendance:-

Ms Jill Colbert, Chief Executive, Together for Children

Mr Jim Diamond, Scrutiny Officer, Law and Governance, Corporate Services Directorate

Ms Stacy Hodgkinson, Service Manager - CIRT, Performance, Customer Feedback & Planning, Together for Children

Ms Linda Mason, Service Manager, Targeted Youth Services, Together for Children

Mr David Noon, Principal Governance Services Officer, Law and Governance, Corporate Services Directorate

Ms Emma Owens, Substance Misuse Worker, YOS, Together for Children

Ms Gillian Robinson, Scrutiny and Members Support Coordinator, Law and Governance, Corporate Services Directorate

Ms Jane Wheeler, Service Manager Early Help – Prevention and Innovation, Together for Children

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Dunn and Noble.

Minutes of the last Ordinary meeting of the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee held on 3 February 2022 and of the Extraordinary meeting held on 9 February 2022

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last Ordinary meeting of the Children, Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee held on 3 February 2022 and of the Extraordinary meeting held on 9 February 2022 be confirmed as correct records.

Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)

There were no declarations of interest made.

Youth Offending Service - Update

The Service Manager Targeted Youth Service submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members with an update on the action being taken to prevent offending and reoffending by children and young people.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Linda Mason (Service Manager) presented the report advising Members of the complexity of the young people known to the Youth Offending Service and the work undertaken by Together for Children in working with and supporting young people at risk. Members were informed that the Sunderland Youth Offending Service (YOS) was a multi-agency service comprising the four statutory agencies of police, probation, health and the Council. The service worked in partnership with other key agencies such as the area courts and specialist service providers, including child mental health. The Targeted Youth Services included several more specialised services which comprise Youth Offending Service (YOS), Return Home Interviews with young people reported missing, the Youth Drug and Alcohol Project (YDAP) and Wear Kids which engaged young people identified as at risk of entering the Criminal Justice System.

In response to an enquiry from the Chair, Ms Mason advised that she felt the Service's biggest achievement over the last year was to massively reduce the rate of first-time entrants into the Youth Justice System. From January to December 2021 the figure for Sunderland was 122. This compared with an average figure of 162 among Sunderland's family group of local authorities and the National average of 170.

Councillor Crosby referred to paragraph 3.2 of the report and asked if the reason for the lack of richness in data for YDAP was because of the low number of referrals? Ms Mason replied that it was because the case management system was still relatively new. Previously YDAP relied on an entirely paper-based system. The new system allowed the Team to drill down and get better data across cohorts rather than just individuals.

Councillor Paul Gibson welcomed the report and referred to paragraph 2.6 regarding the Missing, Slavery Exploited and Trafficked (MSET). He congratulated the Team on the partnership working that was being undertaken to help mitigate the risks of exploitation. He believed parents needed to show greater awareness of their children's on-line presence and suggested that training was made available for parents to educate them on the responsible use of the inter-net. In addition, Councillor Gibson referred to the impressive set of statistics detailed in the report and asked if they could be broken down to the ward level. Ms Mason replied that because of the nature of the Service it would be very difficult to do so without skewing the data as the young persons' residences may well be in a different ward to where they carried out their offences.

There being no further questions on that section of the report, Ms Mason introduced Ms Emma Owens, who provided the Committee with a comprehensive verbal report which fleshed out the history of the support provided by YDAP in respect of 'Young Person A' highlighted in Appendix 1 of the report.

The Chairman then invited further questions from the Committee.

Councillor Mason-Gauge congratulated Ms Owens and the work of her team at YDAP. She asked how much of the work was focused on the family in addition to the young person concerned. Ms Owen replied that this would vary from case to case. In some instances, it could be the parents who were also using drugs which negatively impacted on the young person's efforts to stop using. In other cases, parents could be a valuable source of support for the young person.

The Chairman stated that Ms Mason was an experienced Officer who had worked for the Council for a number of years. She asked her with regards to the issue of drug use, was it presently worse than it had been in past? She stated that her reason for asking was that it appeared to have moved from a situation where it was not acceptable and not noticeable to one where people were happy to openly use drugs in public. Ms Colbert replied that it was probably a question for the Council's wider partners as the YOS saw only a tiny fraction of the problem.

Councillor McKeith referred to the steep reduction in the rate of first-time entrants into the Youth Justice System and asked if it was down to the work of the service or a side-effect of the pandemic. Ms Mason replied that it was the former. The groundwork had been put in place well before the pandemic via an initiative undertaken with Northumbria Police. She advised that it was still too early to accurately assess the impact Covid had played on the service.

Mr Diamond advised that Councillor Noble was unable to attend the meeting but had submitted a question via email. Ms Colbert asked Mr Diamond to forward the email to her and she would ensure Councillor Noble received a reply.

There being no further questions or comments the Chairman thanked Ms Mason, Ms Owens and Ms Colbert for their report and it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted;

Wear Here 4 You – Prevention Bus

The Director of Children Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which briefed members on the Mobile Prevention Bus known as 'Wear Here 4 YOU', which offered a recognisable point of information, support and contact for the city's children and young people.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Jane Wheeler, Service Manager Early Help – Prevention and Innovation, presented the report informing Members that the Wear Here 4 You bus was a pilot project launched on 16th October 2021, which would deliver across the city for a 12 month period.

The Bus was a partnership enterprise offering support to children and young people in Sunderland. It was staffed by representatives from Together for Children, Growing Healthy, Northumbria Police, Youth Consortium and other partners who engage with children and young people on issues that matter to them, offer light refreshments

and give advice, support and signposting to other agencies. Its aim was to support the Sunderland Healthy City Plan vision to enable children and young people in Sunderland to have healthy, happy lives, with no one left behind. The bus would be visible in schools and community settings and would also support children and young people to recover from the impact of Covid 19 which had widened health inequalities in the city and had impacted on the access to services to support children and young people.

To complement the report, Ms Wheeler provided the Committee with a comprehensive presentation detailing the impact of the project to date.

Councillor Tye stated that a wider discussion was required around the whole Youth Strategy to assess where everything fitted in. He believed that in the long term something like the bus should probably sit with the VCS.

Councillor Gibson commended the excellent results achieved by the bus to date but expressed fears about the future availability of funding. The Chair added that the former Excel Villages had performed a similar service and had had a proven track record in being able to engage with hard to reach young people however they had fallen victim to the need to find savings.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Mason-Gauge, Ms Wheeler confirmed that all the material distributed from the bus was age appropriate. The service had a strategic partnership group which undertook a mapping exercise which used area profiling data to plot services.

Councillor McKeith asked if it was possible that the presentation could be provided to the Area Committees. Ms Wheeler replied that the service was already scheduled in to attend all the Local Area Boards in April.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Dodds, Ms Wheeler advised that the location of the bus and the dates and times were publicised via TfC's social media platforms and in the regular Head Teachers Briefings.

There being no further questions or comments, the Chairman thanked Ms Wheeler for her report and presentation, and it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted

Together for Children Performance Update

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with an overview of performance against TfC's contractual indicators with Sunderland City Council based on performance data as at January 2022 and which set out the:-

- TfC Contractual Key performance indicators (KPI) reported to the Council;
- TfC Supporting measures (SM) reported to the Council, and
- TfC Measures included within Sunderland Council's City Plan.

and provided a high-level summary of performance for each measure together with a service commentary for any rated amber or red.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms Stacy Hodgkinson, Service Manager presented the report and together with Ms Colbert, addressed questions and comments from Members thereon.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor McKeith, regarding how many Education Health Care Plans were over the 20 week limit, and by how many weeks, Ms Hodgkinson advised that she did not have that information to hand but would reply to Councillor McKeith via email following the meeting. Ms Colbert advised that it averaged around 45 – 60% with delays being caused by the delays in medical assessments.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor S. Johnston regarding the circulation of the 4 to 9 Maths and English results, Ms Colbert advised that this was publicly available data and would be published as a matter of course.

Councillor Tye commended TfC on the excellent performance report. He added that the Committee and others were quick to criticise when things weren't going well so it was only right that they were also quick to praise and offer congratulations when it was due.

There being no further questions or comments, the Chairman thanked Ms Hodgkinson for her report and it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the performance report be received and noted.

Annual Work Programme 2021/22

The Scrutiny and Members' Support Co-ordinator submitted a report (copy circulated) which briefed members on the developed of the Committee's work programme for the municipal year 2021/22 and appended a copy of the programme for Members' consideration.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr Diamond presented the report and advised the Committee that its next meeting would feature items in respect Elective Home Education and an update on Apprenticeships.

There being no questions or comments, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Notice of Key Decisions

The Scrutiny and Members' Support Co-ordinator submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with an opportunity to consider those items on

the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions for the 28 day period from the 21 February, 2022.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

The Committee was advised that if Members had any issues to raise or required further detail on any of the items included in the notice that were within the purview of the Committee, they should contact Mr Diamond, Scrutiny Officer for initial assistance.

Members having requested further information in respect of the following items:-

- i) 220210/696 – Pupil Referral Unit (Cllrs S. Johnston and P. Smith)
- ii) 220210/697 – Maintained school admission arrangements for the academic year September 2023-2024 (Cllr P. Smith)

it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the Notice of Key Decisions be received and noted.

There being no further items of business, the Chair closed the meeting having thanked members and officers for their attendance and contributions

Signed) P. SMITH,
Chairman.

CHILDREN EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 31 March 2022

APPRENTICESHIPS UPDATE – SUNDERLAND COLLEGE

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY AND MEMBERS' SUPPORT COORDINATOR

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To meet with representatives from Sunderland College in order to discuss the operation of apprenticeships in the city.

2. Background

- 2.1 In setting its work programme for the year, the Committee agreed to include an update on the operation of apprenticeships in the city, including concerns on the effect of the Covid pandemic on apprenticeships and employment opportunities for young people particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- 2.2 To this end a meeting has been arranged with Ellen Thinnesen (Principal and Chief Executive Officer) and Iain Nixon (Vice Principal Partnerships and Commercial) from Sunderland College.
- 2.3 Sunderland College is the largest provider of apprenticeships in the city and one of the largest in the region, offering around 40 apprenticeship programmes.

3 Current Position

- 3.1 Apprenticeships have a long history in the UK. In the past they were associated with so called “traditional” trades such construction, engineering and shipbuilding – industries central to the local and regional economy. Ever evolving, today apprenticeships now reflect both traditional and newer emerging sectors in the economy including:-

- mechanical and engineering
- construction
- creative and cultural
- education
- health and care
- businesses services and digital
- tourism and retail
- transport and logistics

- 3.2 An apprenticeship can be defined as a real job with training. As employees, apprentices earn a wage and work alongside experienced staff to gain job-specific skills. Most of the training is ‘on the job’ within the workplace. Off the job, usually on a day-release basis, apprentices receive training to work towards a nationally recognised qualification, provided by a local college or by a specialist learning provider.

- 3.3 Apprenticeships can take between one and four years to complete depending on the level of Apprenticeship, the apprentices' ability and the industry sector and are available in 1,500 occupations across more than 170 industries.
- 3.4 The organisation and delivery of apprenticeships has changed considerably over recent years with a greater emphasis placed on the role employers in shaping courses and improving the quality of courses on offer.
- 3.5 The apprenticeship programme is delivered by National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), part of the Education and Skills Funding Agency. The NAS is responsible for increasing the number of apprenticeship opportunities and providing a dedicated, responsive service for both employers and learners. This includes simplifying the process of recruiting an apprentice through apprenticeship vacancies, an online system where employers can advertise their apprenticeship job vacancies and potential apprentices can apply.
- 3.6 In 2016 the Institute for Apprenticeships was established with the aim of ensuring high-quality apprenticeship standards and to advise the government on funding for each standard.
- 3.7 In April 2017 the apprenticeship levy came into effect with all UK employers with a pay bill of over £3 million per year paying the levy. Since the introduction of the funding changes in 2017 there has been a fall in the number of apprenticeship starts, leading to criticism of the operation of the levy. There has also been concern at the pace at which the apprenticeship standards have been developed.
- 3.8 For many, apprenticeships are considered the optimal way of training, developing and skilling people for the future, helping businesses to secure a supply of people with the skills and qualities they need and which are often not available on the external job market.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 The Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the information provided.

Contact Officer: Jim Diamond
Scrutiny Officer
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31 MARCH 2022

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

UPDATE ON THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY - ADOPT COAST TO COAST – APRIL 2021 TO FEBRUARY 2022

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1 Marketing Activity

1.1 The marketing activity for 2021-2022 for Adopt Coast to Coast was all about brand recognition and getting the name out as far and wide as possible. Whilst events and some more traditional tools couldn't be employed due to the pandemic activity focused on the following actions:

- Public relations – stories about our launch, appeals, events, campaigns and more
- Internal communications – amongst three partners
- Radio campaign – activity during the launch and another campaign in October
- TV advert – to celebrate the launch of Adopt Coast to Coast
- Google advertising – making sure Adopt Coast to Coast appears highly when searched for
- Facebook and Instagram advertising – to raise awareness and promote events
- Display advertising on key websites to raise awareness of Adopt Coast to Coast
- Third party campaigns – joining in with activity such as for National Adoption Week or New Family Social's

1.2 LGBT+ Adoption and Fostering Week

- Organic social media activity
- Newsletters to adopters and those interested in adoption
- Spoke support from three partner local authorities including emails, internal publications, external publications, intranet
- Regular website updates

2 Together for Children's Adoption Performance

2.1 It is very positive to note that the transition to Adopt Coast to Coast has not had a detrimental impact on the children who have moved to adoptive families or recruitment of Adopt Coast to Coast prospective adopters assessed by Together for Children's adoption team.

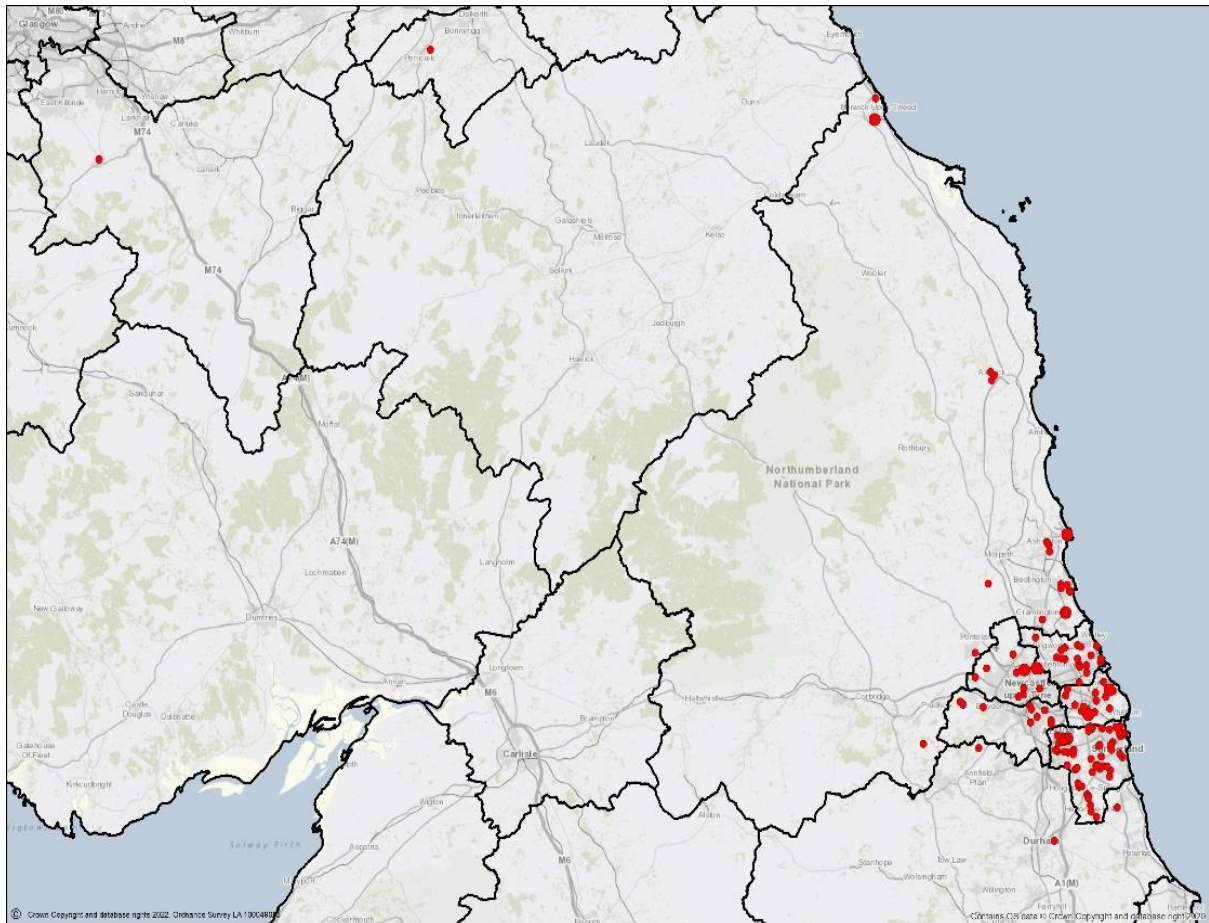
2.2 Children's Journey

	2020/21 @31 st March 2021	2021/22 @ 28 th February 2022	Analysis
Waiting with PO	14	13	<p>The slight upward trend of children waiting more than 6 months for a match with their adoptive family reflects the national position. Children with additional needs and groups of brothers and sisters are waiting longer. The national campaigns continue to seek to address these challenges.</p> <p>In respect of interagency usage, the 2021/22 number includes 5 children who were matched the previous year though the ADM was not completed until after the 1st of April.</p> <p>The reduction of 50% in interagency placements is a significant reduction in costs for TfC.</p>
Waited over 6 months	5	8	
Matched	39	27	
Interagency use	28	14	

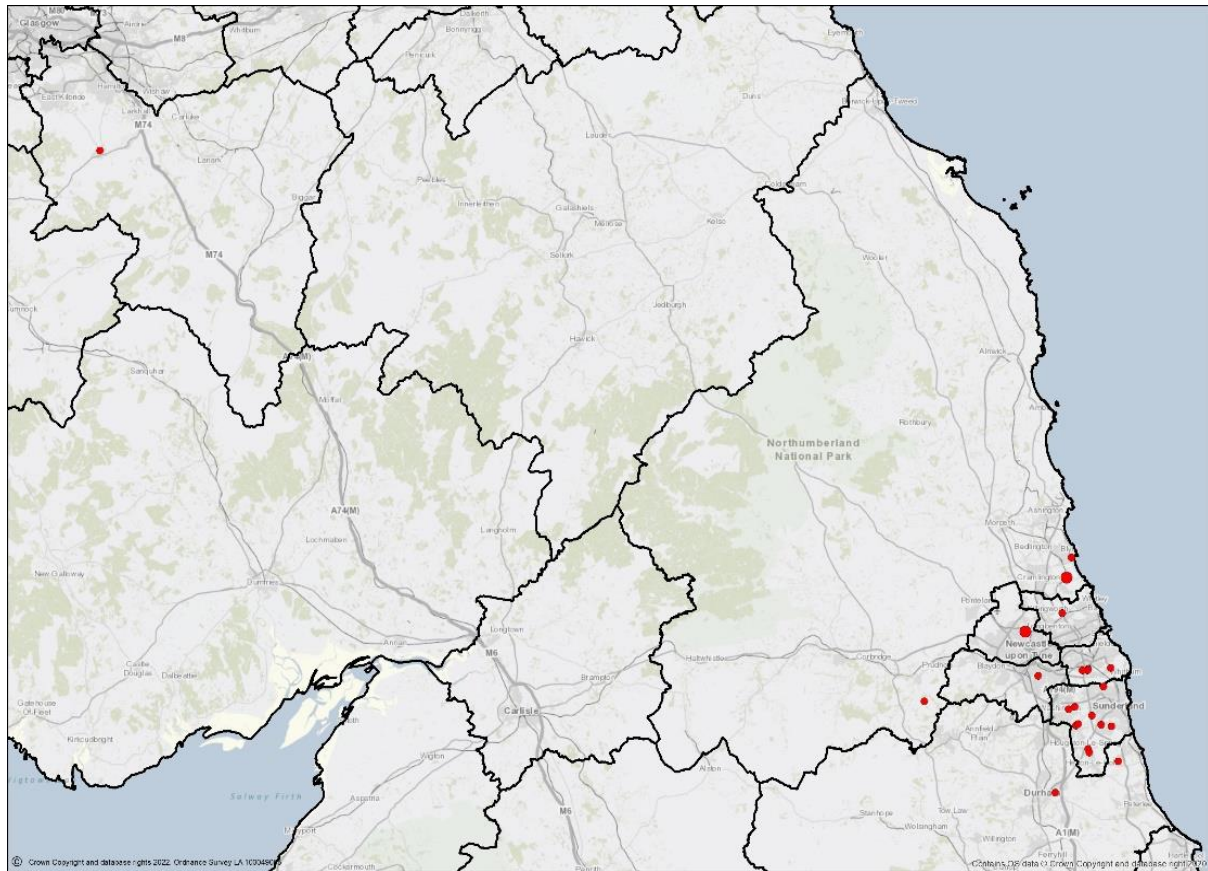
2.3 Prospective Adopter's Journey

Together for Children's adoption team are responding to enquiries promptly and as the map shows below covering a large geographical area. It is noteworthy that the adoption team are receiving as many enquiries from outside the council's border as they are from within.

Enquiries received



Commenced Stage 1



	2020/21	2021/22*	Analysis
Enquiries	34	145	<p>The increased number of enquiries being converted to applications (stage 1) and approvals has enabled TfC to match more children to the Adopt Coast to Coast prospective adopters they approved.</p> <p>There are already 19 prospective adoptive families in stage 1 and 2 with TfC who we would expect to be approved in 2021/22. We therefore anticipate the 2nd year of Adopt Coast to Coast will build on the excellent performance the TfC</p>
Stage 1	39	45	
Approvals	19	26	
Number of matches for TfC approved adopters	11	19	

			adoption team have achieved in 2021/22.
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*data up to 28th February 2022

2.4 Prospective adopter journey

Alex and Sophie originally contacted Adopt Coast to Coast in April 2021 after seeing a press release about the launch of the then new Regional Adoption Agency.

The couple are based in Scotland, falling under South Lanarkshire Council. Although the couple had made enquiries with both their local authority and Scottish Adoption (VAA), both were experiencing long delays due to the pandemic, so having read about Adopt Coast to Coast they were eager to explore their options.

Sophie said: *"We made our enquiry in Scotland around February 2021 and at the time the agency was only planning on hosting one preparation group over Zoom for 6 households later in the year, in September. That was it for the year, so it didn't fill us with hope. We weren't sure about the timescales, and we weren't sure about the way they operated as we wanted things to happen quickly. We'd already waited four years since we started trying for a family, so another year seemed a lot."*

Although the applicants would have come under Cumbria County Council's remit due to their geographical location (and automated settings in the system) the team at Cumbria felt it was too far to travel and so the other spokes were asked if they would pick it up. Together for Children (TFC) were the first to volunteer.

The couple were delighted at the speed of the response from TFC and the very next day attended an information event to find out more.

Sophie added: *"We send an email one day and we suddenly found ourselves sitting in a Teams meeting the next. It was exactly what we wanted to do as we just couldn't get to that point with anyone else. The following Monday a social worker was sitting in our house! We were so, so impressed. It was so quick and were pleased to find people who actually wanted us to come and be adopters."*

Alex added: *"The language they used and the way they explained things was very clear and really honest. We really appreciated that as we didn't want people to talk around the topics."*

The couple were advised to wait three months following completion of IVF treatment, and they were so set on the decision to progress with Adopt Coast to Coast that they had their calendar set for when they could get back in touch to officially start the application!

September 2021 – commenced stage 1 and completed 3-day preparation sessions

November 2021 – moved into stage 2

January 2022 – approved as suitable to adopt

March 2022 – matched with a 9 month old baby girl

“For us TFC have got it perfectly – they have completely nailed it. They do all of the processes, make sure all of the checks and balances are done which is completely right and proper, but they don’t waste time with bureaucracy either.”

3 Marketing activity priorities for 2022/23

- Marketing activity will include a focus on potential enquirers for groups of brothers and sisters, children with additional health needs and/or developmental uncertainty.
- Alongside the Adopt Coast to Coast activity, there is a pan regional initiative to increase opportunities for children to be adopted by families living in the North East and Cumbria through strategic partnership working across the 3 RAAs and 4 VAAs in our region.
- Continue to review and develop marketing activity and the recruitment practice across the spokes being cognizant of the lived experience of children and their adoptive families and the findings from the national mystery shopper activity.

4 Recommendation

- 4.1 The Committee are asked to consider the report.

Paula Gibbons, Head of Service, Adopt Coast to Coast

REPORT OF SCRUTINY AND MEMBERS' SUPPORT COORDINATOR

CONSULTATION WITH THE YOUTH COUNCIL

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To consider feedback from a meeting with representatives from the Youth Council.

2. Background

- 2.1 At its meeting in October 2021, the Committee heard from young people from range of participation and engagement groups on the key issues facing young people in the city.
- 2.2 At that meeting, it was agreed that a working group be established in order to meet with and discuss issues with young people in a more informal setting.

3. Current Position

- 3.1 On 9 March 2022, a meeting was held with young people belonging to the Sunderland Youth Council (SYC). The Youth Council is a group of young people that aim to represent the voices of young people in Sunderland, working to make change on specific issues voted for by young people. The SYC is responsible for hosting the Young People's State of the City debate that takes place in November each year.
- 3.2 Members in attendance included Councillors Pat Smith, Josh McKeith, Margaret Crosby and Katherine Mason-Gage.
- 3.3 The meeting involved an open discussion between members and the Youth Council representatives. Members will feedback on the issues raised at the session. These included:-
- Transport system needs to be sustainable and future proofed in terms of cost of travel for both education and leisure. In terms of 16 to 18 year olds a 'middle' type of group ticket or pop card for single journey's would help;
 - General feeling that metro stations are unsafe / inhospitable (particularly Stadium of Light). This could be an issue as to location of any city centre hub i.e. its dark early and how long can people stay. Park Lane is unwelcoming at night and don't feel safe waiting for buses;
 - A multifunctional hub in city centre would be welcome to create an energy in the city centre for young people e.g. the ping pong room was very popular;
 - Communications could be better in helping to inform when/where activities are being held – text alerts or apps;

- Interest in politics and democracy is crucial and should be encouraged by schools;
- Jobs were seen as a high priority arising out of the Make Your Mark ballot;
- Schools should look at ways to increase the promotion and take up of the Make Your Mark ballot. Can Cllrs have a role as governors to encourage schools to increase engagement?
- Mental health and waiting lists and the quality of service to minimise trauma;
- Assistance for young carers while waiting for MH treatment is important.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the feedback from young people belonging to the Youth Council.

Item 7

CHILDREN EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

31 MARCH 2021

ANNUAL REPORT

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY AND MEMBERS' SUPPORT COORDINATOR

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To approve the Children Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee report as part of the overall scrutiny annual report 2021/22 that is to be presented to Council.

2. Background

- 2.1 As previous municipal year's the annual report will be a single combined report of all four scrutiny committees. The annual report will outline the development in the scrutiny function and provide a snapshot of its work during the last 12 months.

3. Current position

- 3.1 The draft Children Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee report is attached at appendix 1 for member's consideration. The report provides a summary of some of the main work undertaken by the Committee during 2021/22. It should be noted that the report is written from the perspective of the Chair of the Committee reflecting over the year.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The Committee has delivered another ambitious work programme in 2021/22, which is reflected in the annual report. The Committee has worked with Council Directorates, stakeholders and partner organisations to deliver the work programme and has tackled a number of key issues throughout the year.

5 Recommendation

- 5.1 That Members approve the Children Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee report for inclusion in the Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22.

Contact Officer: Jim Diamond, Scrutiny Officer
(tel 07485275256)

Children, Education & Skills Scrutiny Committee

Chair: Cllr Pat Smith

Vice Chair: Cllr Joshua McKeith

Committee Members: Councillors Margaret Crosby, Tracey Dodds, Richard Dunn, Paul Gibson, Sam Johnston, Katherine Mason-Gage, Karen Noble, Alex Samuels, Lynda Scanlan, Philip Tye.

Co-opted Members: Ann Blakey (Roman Catholic Diocese) and Jackie Graham (Church of England Diocese)

Once again, the year has been dominated by the Covid pandemic and a good deal of our work has been directed at the long-term implications for the children and young people of the city.

In order to monitor the effect of the pandemic, the Committee has received regular reports across a broad spectrum of children's services. Of particular concern has been the consequences on child mental health. We heard from Sunderland CCG that children and young people's mental health providers have continued to deliver services through a mix of online and face to face interventions. Additional funding has been secured for extra staff resources and a service redesign project is underway to develop an improved service delivery model. However, there remains uncertainty over the potential long term impact of the pandemic on child mental health and the future demand for services. This is clearly an issue that will need to be closely monitored in the years ahead.

A further concern has been the effect of the pandemic on our schools and the use being made of Government funding to help children and young people catch up on missed learning. We heard from a local head teacher about the support being provided, including that made available through the National Tutoring Programme. We also heard about the measures being taken to improve primary and secondary school transitions, particularly for children with SEND. This has included the establishment of a transition working party of headteachers to help facilitate discussions and share best practice. While the impact of the pandemic will be with us for many years, it is felt that one of the positives has been to encourage a greater level of joint working between schools and it is hoped that this can be built upon in the years ahead.

The Committee paid tribute to the hard work of teachers and the school's sector generally for keeping schools open and continuing to provide an education for our children and young people during the intense challenges of the Covid pandemic.

Of continuing concern for the Committee has been the increase in elective home education. While parents have the right to home educate, we are concerned at the potentially detrimental effect on some children. At present, local authorities have only limited powers in this area and we feel that more powers should be made available. We also feel that more detailed, up to date information needs to be kept on elective home education and children missing from education.

The Committee places great importance of listening to the views of young people. At the start of the year, the Committee heard from a range of young people's representative bodies to discuss their priorities for the future. As a result of this session, a Members Working Group was established to allow for continued but more informal discussions. These meetings should play an important part in helping to shape the Committees work programme in the future and addressing any issues raised.

The Committee also received a report on the outcome of a survey into the health related behaviour of young people which contained a particular focus on the effect of the Covid pandemic on their lives. The survey sought the views of young people on a wide range of topics and highlighted their main concerns, including having enough money in the family, having enough food to eat, being lonely and struggling with schoolwork. The Committee was pleased to hear that the information derived from this survey will be shared with key stakeholders and will help inform the planning and delivery of future services. The information will also be useful to the Committee in planning its work programme for the years ahead.

The Committee heard more about two new engagement programmes that took place during the year. During the summer holidays, the Holiday Activity and Food Programme offered the opportunity for children from disadvantaged families to access nutritious food and a range of organised out of school activities. The Wear Here 4 You Mobile Prevention Bus project brought together staff from Together for Children and other partners to give advice and support to young people and their families. Feedback from both programmes has been very positive and the Committee thanked all involved for their efforts. It was felt that such activities are a highly effective way engaging with young people and their families across the city.

In setting its work programme for the year, the Committee was keen to consider the effect of Covid pandemic on incidences of anti-social behaviour. To this end, the Committee received an update report on the work of the Youth Offending Service. We heard that during the pandemic the YOS has continued to deliver services and remained in contact with all young people. This has often been through face-to-face visits, though a range of virtual methods of working directly with young people have been developed.

In response to concerns over the impact of Covid on levels of domestic violence, the Committee received a report on the delivery of domestic abuse service, together with planned improvements for the service. The Committee was provided with several individual case studies which graphically demonstrated the effect of domestic violence on children and families. The report highlighted the importance of this service for the city and again it was felt important that the long term effect of the pandemic is closely monitored.

Last year, the Council established a Regional Adoption Agency with Durham County Council and Cumbria County Council based on a host authority model comprising the areas of Sunderland, County Durham and Cumbria and working in partnership with five Voluntary Adoption Agencies. The Committee received a report on the progress made to date.

A further area of concern arising out of the Covid pandemic has been its long-term effect on apprenticeships and employment opportunities for young people. To discuss these issues, the Committee met with Principal of Sunderland College, the main provider of apprenticeships in the city.

However, it would be wrong not to recognise some of the positives we have seen during the year. We have heard repeatedly of how the Covid pandemic has helped to forge greater joint working between partner organisations in the city. We have also heard numerous examples of the hard work and commitment shown by staff across all sectors. But perhaps most importantly we should also recognise the achievements of our young people who have lived through a year of considerable challenge and adversity.

At the start of the year, the Committee received the feedback on the Ofsted Inspection of Children Services. We were delighted to hear that the service had received an outstanding rating; made all the more remarkable by being achieved during the Covid pandemic. The Committee would like to place on record its thanks and appreciation to all the staff involved. We look forward to the level of improvement being maintained and will continue to monitor the progress through our overview of performance monitoring information.

During the year, the Committee also received the findings of the Joint Ofsted report into SEND services in the city. Several areas for improvement were highlighted in the report. The Committee heard that an Action Plan for improvement had been developed and it was agreed that we should receive regular updates. The initial reports show good progress being made and we look forward to this continuing in the year ahead.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all the members of the Committee for their contributions and to thank all the officers and witnesses who gave up their time to attend and provide insights into the services they provide and the challenges they face.

Councillor Pat Smith
Chair of the Children Education and Skills Scrutiny Committee

Item 8

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 31 MARCH 2022

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2021-2022

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY AND MEMBERS' SUPPORT COORDINATOR

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report sets out for members' consideration the work programme of the Committee for the 2021/22 municipal year.

2. Background

- 2.1 The work programme is designed to set out the key issues to be addressed by the Committee during the year and provide it with a timetable of work. The Committee itself is responsible for setting its own work programme, subject to the coordinating role of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee.
- 2.2 The work programme is intended to be a working document which Committee can develop throughout the year, allowing it to maintain an overview of work planned and undertaken during the Council year.
- 2.3 In order to ensure that the Committee is able to undertake all of its business and respond to emerging issues, there will be scope for additional meetings or visits not detailed in the work programme.
- 2.4 In delivering its work programme the Committee will support the Council in achieving its corporate outcomes.

3. Current position

- 3.1 The current work programme is attached as an appendix to this report.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The work programme is intended to be a flexible mechanism for managing the work of the Committee in 2021-22.

5 Recommendation

- 5.1 That Members note the information contained in the work programme.

Contact: Gillian Robinson, Scrutiny and Members' Support Co-ordinator

REASON FOR INCLUSION	JUNE 21	JULY 21 (CANCELLED)	9 TH SEPT 21	7 TH OCT 21	4 TH NOV 21	2 ND DEC 21	3 RD FEB 22	9 TH FEB 22	3 RD MARCH 22	31 ST MARCH 22
Policy Framework/ Cabinet Referrals and Responses										Scrutiny Annual Report – 21/22
Scrutiny Business	Corporate Parenting Review		Elective Home Education (Elaine Matterson)	Engagement and Participation with Young People (Jane Wheeler)	Domestic Violence Update (Karen Davison) Draft Safe Accommodation Strategy (Gerry Taylor)	Child Health Update (Lorraine Hughes) Holiday Fund – Operation (Jane Wheeler)	Schools Update (incl support for lost education catch up and transition from primary to secondary (Simon Marshall) Change Council – Consultation (JD)	Impact of Covid 19 on Child Mental (CCG) SEND Monitoring Report (Jill Colbert/Dave Chandler)	Children At Risk:(incl Youth Offending, Drug Use and Child Exploitation/ Missing Children (Karen Davison) Wear Here 4 You – Update (Jane Wheeler)	Apprenticeships and Employment Opportunities (Sunderland College) Regional Adoption Agency (Paula Gibbons) Youth Council – Consultation
Performance / Service Improvement	Ofsted Focused visit to Children's Services - Feedback		Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services – Feedback (Jill Colbert)	Inspection of SEND - Feedback (Jill Colbert)	Together for Children – Performance Monitoring Report (Jill Colbert) Children Services Customer Feedback (Jill Colbert)				Together for Children – Performance Monitoring Report (Jill Colbert)	
Consultation / Awareness Raising	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 21-22	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 21-22	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 21-22	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 21-22	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 21-22	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 21-22	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 21-22	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 21-22	Notice of Key Decisions Work Programme 21-22	

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

NOTICE OF KEY DECISIONS

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY AND MEMBERS' SUPPORT CO-ORDINATOR

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with an opportunity to consider the items on the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Holding the Executive to account is one of the main functions of Scrutiny. One of the ways that this can be achieved is by considering the forthcoming decisions of the Executive (as outlined in the Notice of Key Decisions) and deciding whether Scrutiny can add value in advance of the decision being made. This does not negate Non-Executive Members ability to call-in a decision after it has been made.
- 2.2 To this end, the most recent version of the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions is included on the agenda of this Committee. The Notice of Key Decisions is attached marked **Appendix 1**.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 In considering the Notice of Key Decisions, Members are asked to consider only those issues where the Scrutiny Committee or relevant Scrutiny Panel could make a contribution which would add value prior to the decision being taken.
- 3.2 In the event of Members having any queries that cannot be dealt with directly in the meeting, a response will be sought from the relevant Directorate.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 To consider the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions at the Scrutiny Committee meeting.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Cabinet Agenda

The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Notice is given of the following proposed Key Decisions (whether proposed to be taken in public or in private) and of Executive Decisions including key decisions) intended to be considered in a private meeting:-

Item no.	Matter in respect of which a decision is to be made	Decision-maker (if individual, name and title, if body, its name and see below for list of members)	Key Decision Y/N	Anticipated date of decision/ period in which the decision is to be taken	Private meeting Y/N	Reasons for the meeting to be held in private	Documents submitted to the decision-maker in relation to the matter*	Address to obtain further information
210510/588	To approve the receipt of external funding for the public sector decarbonisation scheme and green homes grant local programme and the procurement of the necessary contractors to deliver the schemes.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
211005/641	To agree the proposed development strategy for Northern Spire Park and the recommended next steps	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	Y	This report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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210709/612	To authorise the Executive Director of City Development to deliver the Washington F-Pit Museum Heritage Visitor Centre and Albany Park Improvement project, including the procurement of consultants and contractors.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
210728/613	To seek approval for strategic land acquisitions in Sunnyside, Sunderland.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	Y	This report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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210920/640	To approve land and property acquisitions within the Riverside Sunderland area.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	Y	This report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
211105/656	Subject to the outcome of the Warm Homes Fund application, to authorise the Council to enter into Funding and Partnership Agreements for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and to authorise entering into associated funding and delivery arrangements in relation to the proposed decarbonisation programme.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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211110/657	To seek approval to the lettings of the ground floor commercial units at Keel Square.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	Y	This report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
211215/670	To agree to the terms of lettings at Hillthorn Farm.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	Y	This report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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211215/671	Following the report taken to September 2021 Cabinet, to authorise the making of a Compulsory Purchase Order over land at Washington Road, Sunderland, and to authorise the necessary land acquisitions by private treaty.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
211215/672	To seek approval for the sale of Penshaw House, Penshaw.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
220106/681	To approve a proposed variation to the Vaux Housing Development Funding Agreement with Siglion Developments.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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170927/212	To approve in principle the establishment of a new police led Road Safety Partnership (Northumbria Road Safety Partnership) embracing the Northumbria Force Area.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022.	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
211203/668	Subject to the outcome of the Link Together Heritage Fund application, to authorise entering into associated funding and partnership agreements in relation to the proposed green infrastructure improvements within the Coalfield area.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022.	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
211217/673	To seek approval to widen the scope of the Housing Delivery and Investment Plan to enable Private Property acquisitions	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
220111/683	To seek approval for the development of the Waste Management arrangements and associated Policies as they are developed and including the Bin Replacement Policy.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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220126/684	To grant an Option Agreement over land at Newcastle Road, Sunderland.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
220127/685	To seek Cabinet approval for the Letting of Unit 6, International Drive, IAMP, Washington, SR5 3HX.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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220127/686	To consider the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) Holmeside Bus Rationalisation (Highway Improvement Scheme).	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
220128/689	To authorise the Executive Director of City Development to deliver the Levelling Up Fund Project for 177 High Street West, 1-2 Villiers Street and 15-16 Nile Street and enter into a funding agreements with third parties for the delivery of the relevant works.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
220207/690	To approve the sale of the former Alex Smiles site and to undertake required remedial works.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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220210/693	To provide an annual update on the Council's Housing Service, review successes and regulatory and compliance requirements.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
220210/694	To seek approval to procure and award a contract for a provider for Refuse Bins and Waste Containers.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
220210/696	To consider a proposal to publish Notice of Statutory Proposals to increase the capacity of and establish satellite sites and a resourced provision for the City's Pupil Referral Unit and to procure and award contracts for Capital Works to support the proposals.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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220210/697	To seek approval for the proposed maintained school admission arrangements for the academic year September 2023-2024 and to describe proposed amendments to published admission numbers (PANs) for the academic year 2022-2023, where it is necessary to provide additional places.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
220214/698	To seek approval to award funding to Third Sector organisations providing social care related services.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet Report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
220214/699	To seek approval to the planned Highway Maintenance (including Bridges) and Integrated Transport Programme for 2022-2023 and approve amendments (additions/deferrals) to the 2021-2022 Programme.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet Report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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220128/687	To agree the proposed implementation and funding arrangements in relation to the North East Screen Industries Partnership and associated regional Memorandum of Understanding with the BBC.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
220218/700	To provide an update on New Wear Footbridge, including an officer delegation to place advance orders of materials where appropriate	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk

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220207/692	To approve the budget for fit out costs for the Beam and to authorise the procurement of the works.	Cabinet	Y	22 March 2022	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk
220106/682	To give consideration to the Draft Bus Enhancement Partnership Plan and Scheme	Cabinet	Y	During the period 22 March to 30 June 2022	N	Not applicable.	Cabinet Report	Governance Services Civic Centre PO BOX 100 Sunderland SR2 7DN committees@sunderland.gov.uk
220207/691	To approve the acquisition of strategic sites in the Commercial Road Area.	Cabinet	Y	During the period 1 May to 30 June 2022	Y	The report is one which relates to an item during the consideration of which by Cabinet the public are likely to be excluded under Paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, as the report will contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	Cabinet report	Governance Services City Hall Plater Way Sunderland SR1 3AA committees@sunderland.gov.uk

Note; Some of the documents listed may not be available if they are subject to an exemption, prohibition or restriction on disclosure.

Further documents relevant to the matters to be decided can be submitted to the decision-maker. If you wish to request details of those documents (if any) as they become available, or to submit representations about a proposal to hold a meeting in private, you should contact Governance Services at the address below.

Subject to any prohibition or restriction on their disclosure, copies of documents submitted to the decision-maker can also be obtained from the Governance Services team City Hall, Plater Way, Sunderland, or by email to committees@sunderland.gov.uk

***Other documents relevant to the matter may be submitted to the decision maker and requests for details of these documents should be submitted to Governance Services at the address given above.**

Who will decide;

Councillor Graeme Miller – Leader; Councillor Claire Rowntree – Deputy Leader; Councillor Paul Stewart - Cabinet Secretary; Councillor Louise Farthing – Children, Learning and Skills; Councillor Kelly Chequer – Healthy City; Councillor Linda Williams – Vibrant City; Councillor Kevin Johnston – Dynamic City.

This is the membership of Cabinet as at the date of this notice. Any changes will be specified on a supplementary notice.

Elaine Waugh,
Assistant Director of Law and Governance

21 February 2022