

Ambition for Education in North Tyneside

2020 - 2024

August 2020



North Tyneside Council

Ambition for Education in North Tyneside 2020-2024

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Foreword

Welcome to our 'Ambition for Education in North Tyneside' 2020-2024 strategy, which sets out the vision and priorities for ensuring that all children and young people in North Tyneside have access to a high-class education in order to achieve their full potential.

In line with the Children and Young People's Plan 2020-2024, our vision for education in North Tyneside is:

“Making North Tyneside an even greater place for children and young people to thrive; where all can access a high-class education with a culture of inclusion and achievement.”

This builds upon the strategic vision set out within Our North Tyneside Plan and the Children and Young People's Plan for the borough, with the aim of ensuring every child or young person is safe, happy, healthy, has opportunities, and a voice. It is also based upon a detailed understanding of our successes, the challenges that we continue to face, and feedback from children, young people and families, about what is important to them.

“By 2024 our success will be seen within our children and young people; they will be both physically and mentally healthier. They will all be able to access quality education, employment or training. Our schools, colleges and training providers will be enhanced to support those who need more help to thrive and our partnerships will be strengthened.”

Our purpose and ambition is to work as a partnership, children and young people, schools, school leaders, local authority, further and higher education providers and stakeholders to make the standard of education in this borough exceptional, and nationally recognised as such. North Tyneside has a strong tradition of partnership working, we have a well-founded family of schools and wider networks including early years providers, further education and higher education providers, and local businesses. This provides an excellent foundation to build upon.

Our plan references the potential and actual impact of Covid-19 on our children and young people, following the period of extended closure of schools and settings. In North Tyneside, schools and partners have worked tirelessly in these extremely challenging circumstances to continue to provide the best possible education for our children and young people. We know this resilience will form a solid foundation upon which we must restore the outstanding work of the past and work towards our ambitions.

As a partner within the North of Tyne Combined Authority, our strategy dovetails with the wider ambition to develop an inclusive economy and an Education Challenge with our partners from North Tyneside, Newcastle and Northumberland.

Councillor Peter Earley

Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Learning

Executive Summary

We believe that education is the key catalyst for social mobility and the mitigation of deprivation; championing the learner continues to sit at the heart of our decision making. Over time, we have built and sustained highly effective partnerships across the borough to transform lives and uncap the potential of our children and young people.

Our success is evidenced by the high proportion of schools and colleges in North Tyneside which are judged by Ofsted to be 'Good' or better, and the number of our young people who are in education, employment or training. Our 'Ambition for Education in North Tyneside' document sets out the joint priorities and targets for education from 2020-2024. Our strategy builds on the vision provided by 'Our North Tyneside Plan' and the 'Children and Young People's Plan'. Our targets align with the 'North of Tyne Education Challenge' and 'Joint School Improvement Strategy.'

By 2024 we will:

- Have mitigated the impact of Covid-19 on all children and young people's achievement, particularly those who are disadvantaged.
- Improve the health and communication of our youngest learners to make sure that are ready to thrive in school and achieve their full potential.
- Work in partnership to maintain vulnerable children and young people in their local communities.
- Champion the learner, so that every young person has access to appropriate and engaging education, employment or training.
- Commit to transforming the lives and wellbeing of our children and young people, ensuring every school has the resource to support them to be emotionally healthy and resilient.

Whilst there are some areas of North Tyneside in the 10% least deprived areas nationally, there are other areas of significant deprivation. Learning and progress gaps between many disadvantaged students and their peers are forecast to have increased significantly as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Addressing this and mitigating effects will be a priority for all services who support education in North Tyneside.

Work across partnerships to date is evident in improved indicators, including attainment figures versus national averages, Ofsted judgements, reductions in exclusions and reductions in financial deficits; however there is a great deal of work still to do to work towards our ambition of **Making North Tyneside an even greater place for children and young people to thrive; where all can access a high-class education with a culture of inclusion and achievement.**

At the forefront of the development of our 'Ambition for Education' is recovery from the impact of Covid-19, this is instilled within the priorities and targets of our strategy. We must adapt our practices to manage the ongoing presence of Covid-19 within the community and work with our schools and partners to recover from the potential impact of an extended period of closure. Each priority will have associated workstreams within the Local Authority School Improvement Implementation Strategy that will determine and focus the efforts of the school improvement service.

The agreed priorities for our Ambition for Education are:

- 1. Recovery from the impact of Covid-19:** We aim to have all North Tyneside schools open, to ensure the continuity of learning throughout the remainder of this period despite any further partial or full closures. We will have effective procedures in place to control infection and manage any localised Covid-19 outbreaks. Schools will have a secure understanding of the term 'blended curriculum' and of the impact of extended school closure on pupils attainment levels, allowing us to work collaboratively to target intervention and catch up programmes, particularly in specific groups of pupils who have been greatly impacted by school closures and periods of self-isolation. We will work with our wider partners including further and higher education and independent training providers to support a continuation of learning for all young people.
- 2. Ready for School and Learning:** In North Tyneside, statistics for reading in the primary phase compare favourably to national averages. However, gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged counterparts vary markedly. We will work collaboratively to improve early language acquisition and reading attainment across the borough. By 2024, through targeted solutions, gaps in speech, language and communication attainment at the end of EYFS will be reduced, gaps in reading achievement will be closing and we aim to see significant and sustained improvement in reading attainment. In Reception, 10% of pupils are very overweight and 25% have excess weight. By Year 6, these figures increase, so that 21% of pupils are very overweight and 35% have excess weight. We will work to reduce the increase in the proportion of pupils who are classed as very overweight or who have excess weight by the end of Year 6.
- 3. Achievement for All:** We will work together to support and facilitate a culture of 'Achievement for All' across North Tyneside through ambitious expectations for student progress, work to improve academic transition practices and continued work on the 'keeping children in school agenda.' We aim see a reduction in the spike of exclusions seen at Year 7 and Year 8 across the borough following transition from primary to secondary school, we will see improvements to the progress of key stage 2 pupils within the middle school system and despite more recent inspections against the new inspection frameworks, a high proportion of our schools will remain rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted by 2024.
- 4. Ambition and Employability Skills:** We will continue to reduce the proportion of young people who are NEET, including minimising the impact of Covid-19 on these statistics. We will see increased entry to EBacc and strength and depth across a suite of subjects and qualifications. We will ensure there are an appropriate range and quality of progression pathways for young people leaving school and further education including vocational provision, apprenticeships and routes into higher education to support the development of higher level skills that young people need to work in new and emerging industries and a growing economy.

5. **Leadership, Recruitment and Retention:** We will utilise the economy of scale across the North of Tyne Combined Authority footprint to ensure access to high quality, cost effective skills training for current and aspiring educational leaders. Leaders will be confident and competent to manage change and manage the impact of extended school closure, and any future surge of Covid-19 and there will be clear well supported and well signposted pathways for future leaders to become exceptional leaders of the future.

6. **Emotionally Healthy Schools:** Mental health conditions affect about 1 in 10 children and young people and it is estimated that 75% of mental health problems in adult life, excluding dementia, start before the age of eighteen. Pre-Covid-19 saw an increase in Education Health and Care Plans, approximately a quarter of which are accountable to Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. Therefore, we will work to develop resilience, confidence and independence, and reduce the level of mental ill-health in our children and young people. There will be strong commitment from all stakeholders to embed a strong emotionally healthy culture and to provide robust support for school communities of North Tyneside post-Covid-19.

We will work in line with the pledges adopted across North Tyneside Children and Young People's service to achieve our ambitions with transparency and integrity. Safeguarding, closing the gaps for disadvantaged children and young people, vulnerable groups and financial and pupil place planning and management are inherent principles within each of our priorities and objectives.

1.0 Introduction & Strategic Vision

1.1 Our North Tyneside Plan and Children and Young People's Plan

The Our North Tyneside Plan sets out the strategic objectives for North Tyneside. It has been developed with the North Tyneside Strategic Partnership (NTSP) and is the key driver for the work of the partnership.

The Our North Tyneside Plan focuses on three policy priorities, which are:

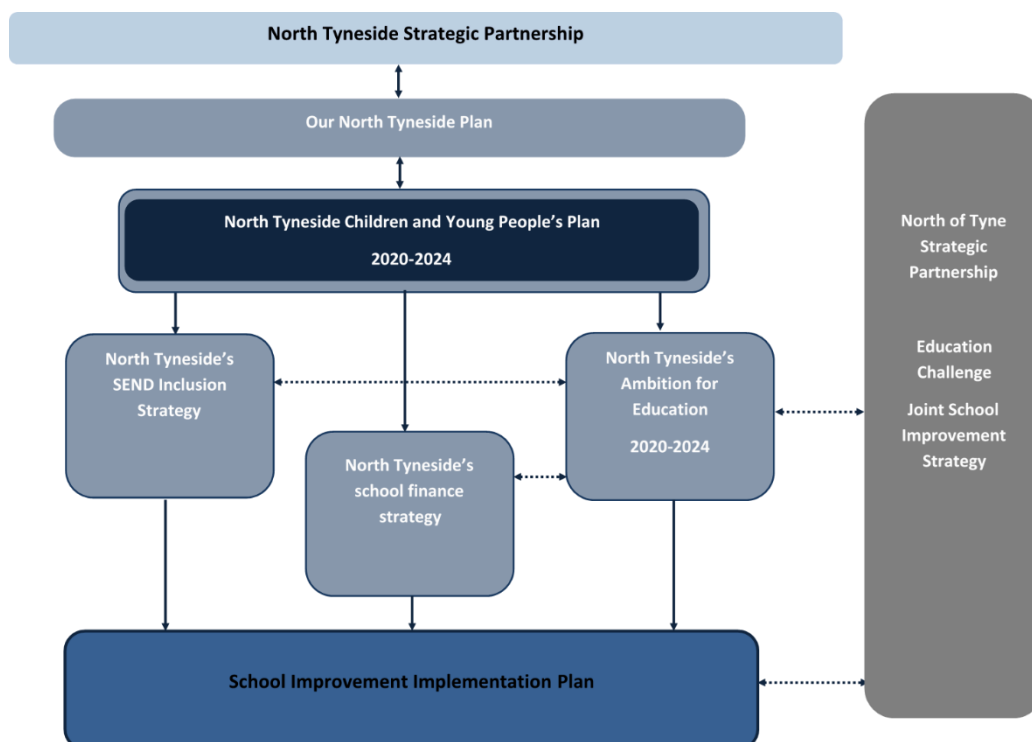
- Our People
- Our Places
- Our Economy

The Children and Young People's Plan sets out the partnership's strategic intent, vision and priorities to improve outcomes in the 5 areas that children, young people and their families tell us matter most to them:

1. I am Safe
2. I am Healthy
3. I am Happy
4. I have Opportunities
5. I have a Voice

The diagram below demonstrates how our Ambition for North Tyneside sits beneath these plans and alongside the SEND inclusion strategy and schools finance strategy.

Figure 1: North Tyneside Children and Young People's Supporting Strategies



1.2 Strategic Vision

Our vision for education in North Tyneside is to: ***“Make North Tyneside an even greater place for children and young people to thrive; where all can access a high-class education with a culture of inclusion and achievement.”***

In line with our vision for education in North Tyneside, Our ‘Ambition for Education in North Tyneside’ focuses on delivering objectives that impact on the education of all children and young people up to the age of 19 years, and those young people aged up to 25 years who are care leavers, have special educational needs or a disability and live in the borough. This strategy is aligned with the aims of the SEND Inclusion Strategy for Children and Young People (0- 25).

Our purpose and passion is to work together with children and young people, schools, school leaders, further and higher education, childcare providers, training providers and wider networks and partners to make this happen. In the development of our ambitious strategy, we have worked closely with the North of Tyne Combined Authority, ensuring that we maximise on the focus and economy of scale that this relationship brings.

1.3 North of Tyne Combined Authority

The North of Tyne Combined Authority’s Vision describes how the Authority aims to support:

“A high quality, inclusive education system, which ensures our young people have the skills and qualifications to take up good quality training, apprenticeships and jobs.”

The North of Tyne Devolution Deal between the Government and the three constituent authorities; Newcastle upon Tyne City Council, North Tyneside Council and Northumberland County Council, provided the opportunity to seek an Education Challenge: Powers and funding to improve education for over 120,000 children and young people who live in the area.

Based on the evidence and engagement with a range of stakeholders including advice and support from Department for Education officials, the Elected Mayor and Cabinet of the North of Tyne Combined Authority agreed three priorities for the Education Challenge: ensuring everyone is **ready for school**; securing **educational achievement for all**; and to support **leadership, recruitment and retention**.

To deliver those priorities they also agreed six ambitions:

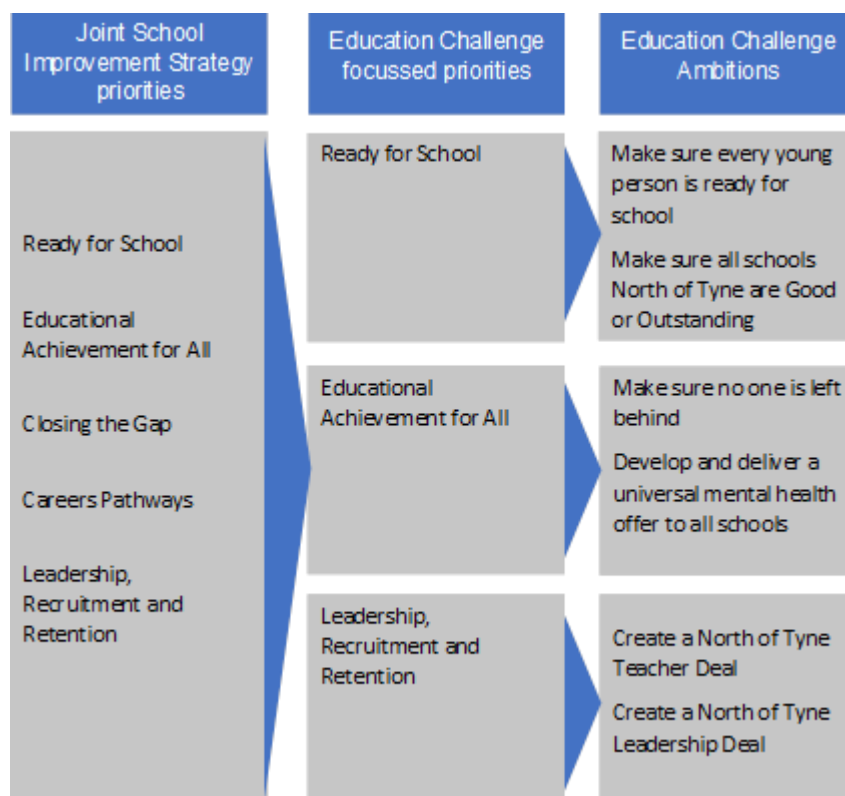
- Make sure every young person is ready for school;
- Make sure all schools North of Tyne are Good or Outstanding;
- Make sure no one is left behind;
- Develop and deliver a universal mental health offer to all schools;
- Create a North of Tyne Teacher Deal; and
- Create a North of Tyne Leadership Deal.

In addition, The North of Tyne Devolution Deal calls for a unified approach to school improvement. Building on discussions in the Sub-Regional School Improvement Board and engagement with school leaders, the North of Tyne Combined Authority began work on a Joint School Improvement Strategy in 2018 and Cabinet have since agreed a set of underlying priorities (which align with those of the Education Challenge):

- Ready for school
- Educational achievement for all
- Closing the gap
- Leadership, recruitment and retention
- Career pathways

The Joint School Improvement Strategy represents a unified approach to school improvement across the constituent North of Tyne authorities. It identifies how our education teams will collaborate to add value, contributing to improved performance against five key priorities, considering national and local best practice. Our collective impact will raise the standard of education and improve life chances for the young people we serve. This work will be enhanced with the interventions from the ambitious Education Challenge.

Figure 2: North of Tyne Combined Authority Education priorities



1.4 Impact of Covid-19

In formulating our strategy, we are mindful of the challenges faced by our education providers and the children and young people of North Tyneside. We must adapt our practices to manage the ongoing presence of Covid-19 within the community and work with our schools and colleges to recover from the potential impact of an extended period of closures on children and young peoples' mental and physical health and wellbeing.

It is anticipated that the impact of extended closures as a result of Covid-19 will exacerbate concerns for the achievement of all pupils and students, most especially the disadvantaged.

The extent of the impact of Covid-19 on attainment is currently unknown. Statisticians believe any pre-existing gaps in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils compared with non-disadvantaged pupils could widen considerably between 11% and 75%, with an average thought to be 36%¹. It is also felt that the work undertaken over the last 10 years to minimise such gaps in the attainment could be eradicated. School leaders, networks and partners are preparing for this alongside the impact on public examination year groups and the expected increased prevalence of mental health issues among children and young people.

During summer 2020, there was concern from school leaders about the impact of centre assessed grades on pupils satisfying their destinations. This, concomitant with the ending of the furlough scheme and the prospect of resulting widespread unemployment, means our efforts to support our young people to achieve desired outcomes and avoid being 'not in education employment or training' (NEET) are crucial.

¹ Education Endowment Foundation, Rapid evidence assessment, 3rd June 2020
[Impact of school closures on the attainment gap](#)

2.0 Demographics & Context

2.1 Population

- North Tyneside has a current population of 205,985, which is expected to increase by 2% by 2030.
- Our 0 -18 population is 43,415.
- There are 30,963 pupils in North Tyneside.

2.2 Provision

We have excellent education and childcare assets in North Tyneside, which include:

- 133 Childminders
 - 30 Out of School clubs
 - 13 Playgroups
 - 45 Private nurseries

 - 1 nursery
 - 8 first schools
 - 47 primary schools
 - 4 middle schools
 - 11 secondary and high schools
 - 1 all-through school
 - 6 special schools, including 1 pupil referral unit

 - 1 further education college & 1 specialist further education centre
 - 9 school sixth forms
 - 4 High Needs & 5 work-based/ apprenticeship post 16 specialist providers
- Across the 78 schools in North Tyneside, 4 are academies.
 - We are also one of the very few local authorities to retain both a three-tier and two-tier system.
 - A higher proportion of schools in North Tyneside (91%) are judged by Ofsted to be Good or better, than the national average (86%).
 - Tyne Met College and North Tyneside Council Adult Learning Service are both graded Good by Ofsted.

2.3 Demographics

- North Tyneside is the least deprived of the five Tyne and Wear authorities.

- Whilst there are some areas of North Tyneside in the 10% least deprived areas nationally, there are other areas of significant deprivation.
- The proportion of children entitled to free school meals is:
 - In primary schools, 19.3% (compared to a national average of 17.7%)
 - In secondary schools, 15.6% (compared to a national average of 15.9%)
- Evidence suggests that 25% of the pupil premium cohort in the North are “long term disadvantaged”, of which the vast majority are White British.
- A child born in one part of the borough can expect to live 10 years less than a child born in another part of the borough.
- The gap is visible from a very young age across a range of issues; including in the rate of childhood obesity which doubles from Reception (1 in 10) to Year 6 (1 in 5). The increase is more significant for boys living in more deprived communities.
- Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 9.3% of all children living in the area, compared with 33.2% nationally.

Additional Needs

- Just under 5,000 children and young people in North Tyneside schools have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), with 3,792 (12% of the overall school-age population) supported through a SEN Support Plan and 1,119 (3.6%) with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This is high when compared to national averages.
- For children and young people with an EHCP, we have seen a 32% increase between January 2019 and January 2020. Again, this is high when compared to national averages. We also place a higher proportion of our children and young people in specialist provisions than is seen nationally.
- The most prevalent need recorded by schools for SEND pupils in North Tyneside is Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), at 30%, which is higher than the national average. This is followed by Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH). We are aware that the proportion of different primary needs is changing over time.

2.4 Attainment and Progress

- 72% of children reached a Good Level of Development at the end of the Reception year in 2019, improved by 49% since 2013 and in line with national average (71.5%).
- At Key Stage 1 across reading, writing, maths and the combined measure, North Tyneside have performed significantly better than the national figure at both the

expected level and at the higher, greater depth standard. The disadvantaged gap in this age group has narrowed from 16.3% to 12.9% between 2017 & 2019.

- Overall, while attainment & progress at KS2 is above national, a review of 2018-19 assessment outcomes indicates that several of our primary and middle schools have KS2 reading progress data (42%) that is significantly below average.
- Likewise, too many of our secondary schools have below average or well below average progress 8 scores (58%). We are acutely aware of the impact of poor literacy levels for long term employability.
- At 39%, our schools fall short (36%) of the government's ambition of 75% of students to enter all aspects of the EBacc.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged children and young people are stubbornly low despite the additional funding and focus. The differences between disadvantaged pupils, particularly White British boys, and their peers widen as pupils progress through the school system and are not in line with our aspiration for them. This is a key group for us to support if we want to ensure that all children and young people thrive.
- A higher proportion than national average of our disadvantaged pupils enters alternative provision and this number is increasing.
- 2.9% of 16- and 17-year olds are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), which is an improvement from 4.1% in 2013/14. While these figures indicate high levels of post-16 progression into employment, education and training, this is not the case for all groups of young people, including children in care & care leavers.

3.0 Recent Achievements

There are several strong indicators of the impact of a range of partnership work over recent years:

- 8 in 10 young people attending a school that is judged as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted.
- 67% of pupils achieved at least the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics (combined) at key stage 2. This is 2% above the national figure and 11 percentage points increase from 2016. Therefore, at the expected standard at key stage 2 the local authority performance is significantly above the national level.
- At key stage 4 attainment in 2017 remains higher than the latest national averages: 65% of students achieved 4 or above in English and maths well above the national average of 59%.
- Attainment 8 (the attainment of students across 8 qualifications) is 47.0 points which is above the national average of 44.6 points.
- 22% of pupils in North Tyneside achieved the English Baccalaureate in 2019; this is below the national average (all schools 25%).
- School attendance and exclusion rates have reduced and are lower than national averages.
- In the 2019/20 financial year the Authority authorised licenced deficit agreements with 11 schools, the total value of the deficit agreements granted was £10.052m. Those schools who were operating under a licenced deficit agreement in 2019/20 exceeded their recovery plan target and as result, an improvement of £0.763m was achieved, reducing the deficit school balances to £9.289m.
- 92% of parents and carers received their first choice Primary School compared to 90% nationally.
- 89% of parents and carers received their first choice Secondary School compared to 82% nationally.
- Service improvements include the establishment of schools-led, peer-to-peer, exclusion panels, as part of a borough-wide Keeping Children in School programme.

While there have been improvements in recent years, there is still much more to do. A report to Cabinet in July 2019 proposed the next set of priorities for Education in North Tyneside; these priorities are embedded within our 'Ambition for Education' targets and ways of working, ensuring that we are continuing to focus on the areas which make the most difference to children and young people.

4.0 Strategic Outcomes and Priorities

The five outcomes, as set out in North Tyneside's Children and Young People's Plan set the strategic framework for all our work. These are:

1. I am Safe
2. I am Healthy
3. I am Happy
4. I have Opportunities
5. I have a Voice

The priorities for this strategy have been developed in line with the North of Tyne Joint School Improvement Strategy and the 5I's Outcome's framework; each of these priorities is linked to one or more of these outcomes for the children and young people of North Tyneside.

We will work in partnership to deliver outcomes on our priorities, many of which will be delivered in part or full through our Ambition for Education Implementation Plan.

Priorities

1. Recovery from the impact of Covid-19
2. Ready for School and Learning
 - a. Speech, language communication and reading readiness
 - b. Physical and emotional readiness
3. Achievement for All
4. Ambition and Employability Skills
5. Leadership, Recruitment and Retention
6. Emotionally Healthy Schools

4.1 Priority 1: Recovery from the impact of Covid-19

Why is this important?

Appendix 1 illustrates how we have balanced our ambitions within the context of recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic; focussing on an initial period of recovery and restarting followed by transition, rebuilding and growth with renewed focus on long-term priorities and outcomes.

During this initial period of recovery and the restarting of our local education provision, we will work in collaboration to ensure that all schools and providers operate in a Covid-secure manner, in order that children and young people attending schools, settings, colleges and training do so in the safest possible environment. Where learners are unable to attend, we must work in partnership to ensure that they are provided with the best possible remote learning opportunities.

We are mindful that this is an evolving situation and we need to continue to be responsive to Government Guidance, Local Outbreak Management systems, and the needs of our schools and children and young people.

What will we do?

- In the context of Covid-19 recovery we will work together with an increased focus on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.
- We will be focused on the successful implementation of protective infection control measures in all our educational establishments, to ensure that pupils and students are equipped for learning and life in its new context. This will include:
 - New routines and procedures
 - Handwashing & hygiene skills
 - Social distancing requirements
- We will continue to work collaboratively during the post Covid-19 period, supporting the safe maintenance of high-quality education delivery during this time.
- All stakeholders will work collaboratively to ensure that schools and education providers have the advice, guidance, and practical capabilities to operate in the safest possible way.
- We will work closely with Public Health England to co-ordinate a local response to continuing outbreak management. In turn working closely with Headteachers and Principals to ensure an early response. Related procedures and responsibilities will be regularly reviewed and communicated with clarity and confidence.
- As it continues to be necessary, we will collaborate to develop blended curriculum approaches. The impact of Covid-19 would indicate that some

measure of social distancing will remain, and the link with remote learning will become ever more important. As such we will continue to work to address disadvantage, ensuring effective blended curriculum is accessible for all pupils and students.

How will we know we have made a difference?

- We aim to have all North Tyneside education settings open, to ensure the continuity of learning throughout the remainder of this period despite any further partial or full closures.
- Children, young people and families will be well-informed and confident to return to school, this will be evidenced through attendance data. Effective support will be in place in the event of further isolated closures, to recover subsequent attendance.
- We will have effective procedures in place to control infection and manage any localised Covid-19 outbreaks.
- Schools will have a secure understanding of the term 'blended curriculum' and all its forms and will have effective practices in place to provide a purposeful blended learning structure. We will share best practice and work collaboratively where necessary in order to support families to help pupils access this blended curriculum. Ultimately, this will be evidenced by the attainment levels of pupils which have been affected by the pandemic.
- Schools will have a secure understanding of the impact of extended school closure on pupils' attainment levels and will be able to identify how much the disadvantaged gap has widened as a result. We will work swiftly and collaboratively to target solutions and appropriate catch up programmes for our pupils and schools most in need.

4.2 Priority 2: Ready for School and Learning

4.2a Speech, language, communication and reading readiness

Why is it important?

Evidence demonstrates improvement of speech, language and communication as well as early reading attainment, specifically in our most disadvantaged children, will enhance achievement in later life. We also recognise the importance of reading confidence and competence as a central component for success in future learning and life.

Additional focus on these aspects of early learning will be particularly important in the recovery phase following the Covid-19 pandemic, as research indicates that a decline in early reading skills is more prevalent following a period of school closure.

In North Tyneside, statistics for reading in the primary phase compare favourably to national averages. However, gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged counterparts vary markedly as pupils move through each assessment milestone. See appendix 2 which highlights key statistics to support this priority.

What will we do?

We will work collaboratively to improve early language acquisition and reading attainment across the borough. This will include opportunities to upskill first quality teaching, support and appropriate implementation of additional speech, language and communication assessment and support to identify those aspects of language development that require greater support.

We will identify precisely where the gaps exist between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged counterparts to gain a better understanding of the impact of school closure on pupils' achievement. We will undertake a review of the impact of any additional funding on reducing gaps in pupils' achievement and share this understanding collaboratively across the borough.

We will offer early speech, language and communication training to develop high quality first teaching as well as intervention and support. This will be for teachers and support staff. We will encourage a focus on pupils' wider reading especially in subjects across the curriculum.

How will we know we've made a difference?

- By 2024, gaps in speech, language and communication attainment at the end of EYFS will be reduced.
- By 2024, gaps in reading achievement will be closing and we will see greater consistency in results feeding into Key Stage 1 and 2.
- We aim to see significant and sustained improvement in reading attainment by 2024, where any gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers still exist,

they will compare favourably to those seen nationally. We will see more disadvantaged children in the early years secure in the early learning goal in reading and we will see consistently improved outcomes by the end of Key Stage one.

- Despite this period of school closure, North Tyneside statistics for reading in the primary phase will continue to compare favourably to national averages, with a longstanding ambition to exceed the National standards in both attainment and reading progress.

4.2b Physical and emotional readiness

Why is it important?

Most children in North Tyneside are ready, physically and emotionally, to start school.

North Tyneside performs strongly across several measures in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): 93% children were at or above the expected level in all five areas of development when they completed their 2-2½ year review and 72% reached a good level of development at the end of the EYFS. Currently 88% of children have a complete 2-year-old check.

However, when a child isn't ready for school, it can have a negative impact on their lives.

In Reception, 10% of pupils are very overweight and 25% have excess weight. By Year 6, these figures increase, so that 21% of pupils are very overweight and 35% have excess weight.

What will we do?

Partners and settings will work together to maintain the threshold of 80% of children having a completed 2-year-old check. We will work with partners to seek out mechanisms for closer tracking of the development of children from disadvantaged families from birth to 5 to ensure that children who are falling behind are identified and appropriately supported.

We will strengthen collaborative work with Health and Social Care to promote healthy lifestyles. We will encourage a strong focus on personal social and emotional curriculum development, helping practitioners to reach out more effectively to families as children's first and most enduring educators.

In partnership we will ensure a strong personal, social and emotional curriculum offer in our schools. This will include support for practitioners to better understand and foster the personal qualities which help disadvantaged children to learn effectively.

How will we know we've made a difference?

- We will work to maintain the threshold of 80% of children born and raised in North Tyneside completing a 2-year-old check.

- The progress in development of pupils from disadvantaged families will be more closely identified through partnership working and early intervention offers increased.
- We will work to encourage more pupils to be physically active and healthy.
- Ultimately, we aim to reduce the increase in the proportion of pupils who are classed as very overweight or who have excess weight by the end of Year 6.
- This will link with Priority 6: “Emotionally Healthy schools.”
- **By 2024, more disadvantaged children will meet the early learning goals for Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development than previously. This will compare favourably with national standards.**

4.3 Priority 3: Achievement for All

Why is it important?

While North Tyneside schools perform well compared to national averages overall, we recognise that there continues to be room for improvement to ensure every child and young person in the borough can achieve their full potential.

Gaps in attainment for disadvantaged pupils increase as pupils transfer through the school system and are wider than national averages at all measures. Our efforts must be channelled to work with school leaders to reduce the differences in disadvantaged pupils' achievement compared with their non-disadvantaged peers across the borough. Please see achievement addendum, which pinpoints the issues to tackle.

What we will do?

We will work together to support and facilitate a culture of 'Achievement for All' across North Tyneside by:

- Having ambitious expectations for student progress, promoted and supported through the School Development Partner (SDP) programme.
- Evidence-based work to improve the quality of curriculum provision to meet the needs and interests of **all** pupils.
- Working to smooth the impact of transitions on children and young people at all transition points. This will include:
 - A culture of partnership and networks between transition schools.
 - Upskilling staff in transition year groups to enable them to prepare pupils for next steps; including independent learning and life skills.
 - Continued guidance and training on how to construct a progressive and challenging curriculum across key stages 2,3 and 4.
 - Implementing an early transition framework for those pupils with additional needs.
 - Continue this consideration of transition into further and higher education, apprenticeships, training and employment through a review of post 16 provision.
- Continued work on the 'keeping children in school agenda' which has improved inclusion practices in all schools and increased multi-agency strategic support for students who have engagement or curriculum accessibility issues. This will include collaborative working, sharing best practice and working in partnership to refine the quality of leadership at Key Stage 5.
- The provision of needs-based accessible training, support and network programmes to support this priority.

How will we know we've made a difference?

- We will see a reduction in the spike of exclusions seen at Year 7 and Year 8 across the borough following transition from primary to secondary schools.
- Curriculum modelling will acknowledge and build upon previous learning objectives.
- We will see improvements to the progress and attainment of key stage 2 pupils within the middle school system.
- The proportion of schools rated 'Good' and better by Ofsted schools remains high and at least in line with the national average by 2024.
- We will see a reduction in the differences in disadvantaged pupils' achievement in all accountability measures, compared with their non-disadvantaged peers across the borough.
- We will see greater participation in post 16 employment, education and training and lower rates of NEET.

4.4 Priority 4: Ambition & Employability Skills

Why is it important?

While skills shortages and unemployment continue to be challenges for some of our residents and businesses, particularly in those parts of the borough with higher levels of deprivation, much progress had been made. More of our young people now leave school with very clear idea of their next steps and how they fit with the labour market and there will continue to be opportunities in new and emerging industries that we need to capitalise on; ensuring our young people have the higher level technical skills and employability skills to do so.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, 4.3% of 16-17-year olds were Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET), which compares well to the regional and national positions. However, this still equates to around 180 young people. Modelling of the impact of Covid-19 is reflective of a 5% uplift in figures for NEETs, it's impact will need to be closely monitored and addressed within North Tyneside through a collective partnership approach.

The impact of Covid-19 will inevitably increase the challenges faced by young people leaving education and entering the workplace. With apprenticeships reduced due to ongoing reforms and economic uncertainty and demand increasing, there will certainly be a short and medium-term impact on employment opportunities for school leavers. The provision of high quality further and higher education opportunities, the coordination and promotion of apprenticeships as a pathway and tailored and bespoke provision of vulnerable young people will be a priority.

Please see appendix 2 for the key issues to tackle.

What will we do?

In formulating our strategy, we must ensure future proofing, and reference our ambition to those targets identified within the government's international education strategy, alongside the North of Tyne ambition for employability. We will therefore prioritise the development of:

- Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and technical advances linked to local industry and employment opportunities.
- Global education linked to emerging markets for trade and climate change.
- Artificial intelligence, digital and general-purpose technologies.

Along with the North of Tyne Combined Authority, North East LEP and business representatives we will work to create strong and lasting relationships between local employers, schools, colleges, higher educational establishments and independent training providers; to provide tangible ambitions for all children and young people to study and work in North Tyneside. We will ensure that guidance and learning opportunities are clearly informed by labour market intelligence (LMI) and linked to future economic opportunities.

Schools, Colleges, the Local Authority and partners will work together to develop young people's employability and life skills (in line with those identified by the CBI) in order to better prepare them for the journey to employment and the workplace.

We will undertake a review of post 16 provision delivered by schools, colleges, the Local Authority and independent training providers to ensure that it provides the progression opportunities, including high quality apprenticeships, required for our young people and for businesses to be able to recruit skilled and well prepared individuals.

We will develop the programme of school-leavers support to ensure that young people leaving education in North Tyneside are provided with a strong network of support in their first year after leaving school.

Across the borough we will share good practice in relation to EBacc entry; ensuring all schools have the support and guidance needed to strengthen and improve EBacc entry.

How will we know we've made a difference?

- Our schools will achieve all eight of the Gatsby benchmarks.
- We will continue to reduce the proportion of young people who are NEET, including minimising the impact of Covid-19 on these statistics.
- We will ensure there are an appropriate range and quality of progression pathways for young people leaving school and further education.
- We will see increased entry to EBacc and strength and depth across a suite of subjects and qualifications.
- We will see a reduction in the differences in outcomes between disadvantaged young adults and their peers.
- We will see a reduction in businesses reporting skills gaps and unfilled vacancies.

4.5 Priority 5: Leadership, Recruitment and Retention

Why is it important?

For our strategy to be successful, it is essential that we harness the strong collaboration among our leaders, and the strong moral purpose that already exists across the borough.

Strong leadership is pivotal to the success of any school and education provider. Leaders improve teaching and learning most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions. School leadership has a greater influence on schools and students when it is widely distributed. We need to make sure all our leaders are equipped with the skills to impart a shared vision, that is rooted in a strong moral purpose. Where there is a shared commitment among staff to encourage all pupils to be the best that they can be, and where all pupils are valued for the unique individuals they are.

Through our shared programmes of training and support, we need to ensure that all leaders and aspiring leaders are well equipped with the knowledge, skills and expertise to promote a culture of high expectations for all pupils.

In line with this we need to work with our schools and education providers to ensure our young people receive the very best provision and are taught by the best practitioners with recruitment of strong candidates for teaching roles (particularly across STEM subjects) and secure retention of staff.

What will we do?

We will utilise the economy of scale across the North of Tyne Combined Authority footprint to ensure access to high quality, cost effective skills training for current and aspiring school leaders.

- We will collaboratively improve our headteachers' induction programme, ensuring that it is reflective of Covid-19.
- We will work with system leaders to ensure that leaders at all levels are supported and encouraged to undertake additional responsibilities.
- We want to raise the bar for all school leaders across North Tyneside by shining a spotlight on aspirational, pioneering school leaders in our region and providing high-quality opportunities to share and implement best practice. Thus, demonstrating that North Tyneside schools are an ideal place to teach and lead.
- We will consider and utilise best practice from the wider education sector including further and higher education where this is deemed appropriate.
- Through a national study tour programme, we will work to create a culture of leadership in North Tyneside where reflective practice is integral and school development and improvement is insightful.

How will we know we've made a difference?

- Leaders will be confident and competent to manage change and manage the impact of extended school closure, and any future surge of Covid-19.
- There will be clear well supported and well signposted pathways for future leaders to become exceptional leaders of the future.
- We will continue to appoint to leadership positions at the first round of advertisement.
- At least 75% of our schools will continue to be judged as good or better with good leadership.
- We will be successful in meeting our targets within our Ambition for Education strategy.

4.6 Priority 6: Emotionally Healthy Schools

Why is it important?

This is a growing area of importance both nationally and locally. Mental health conditions affect about 1 in 10 children and young people and it is estimated that 75% of mental health problems in adult life, excluding dementia, start before the age of eighteen. Locally, young people, through the “Make Your Mark” campaign, voted for young people’s mental health to be their top priority, which aligns with the findings from the MH2K youth-led project which explored mental health. Pre-Covid-19 saw an increase in Education Health and Care Plans, approximately a quarter of which are accountable to Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. Nationally, the government’s Green Paper requires a mental health lead in schools. All schools are required to have a Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policy in place, a requirement of which is to have a mental health first aider in every school.

What will we do?

We will work to develop resilience, confidence and independence, and reduce the level of mental ill-health in our children and young people. There will be strong commitment from all stakeholders to embed a strong emotionally healthy culture and to provide robust support for school communities of North Tyneside post-Covid-19.

This will be delivered through the North Tyneside Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Board, which is working toward the vision of all children, young people and their families achieving their optimum mental health and emotional wellbeing.

We will develop a universal ‘emotionally healthy’ offer in North Tyneside schools and settings, which includes mental health first aid and mental health champions training.

In order to develop emotionally healthy schools, we will also need to provide all pupils with the opportunity to engage in physical education, school sport and physical activity and to create a life-long approach to being physically active to support their mental health.

How will we know we’ve made a difference?

- Leaders will be committed to ensuring they build a strong mental health offer for pupils, staff and their communities.
- There will be a reduction in the proportion of pupils being referred for Social emotional mental health referrals.
- The rapid increase in the number of children and young people with SEMH being noted as their primary need will slow and the proportion will be closer to what is seen nationally. Managed moves and exclusions for this group of pupils will reduce.
- Schools’ confidence in managing children and young people with Social Emotional and Mental Health issues will increase.

- Parental confidence in schools to manage children and young people with Social Emotional and Mental Health issues will increase and they will report better experience of the support they have received.

5.0 Principles and Ways of Working

We will work with transparency and integrity, as we strengthen relationships to deliver on our priorities.

Each priority will have associated workstreams within the Local Authority School Improvement Implementation Strategy that will determine and focus the efforts of the school improvement service.

We will use school improvement officers and the school development partner programme to support the key priorities identified within this strategy document.

Leaders will be sighted on these priorities and we will identify ways of incorporating a focus on them within our training materials and delivery models.

In addition to this we will embed the following pledges, principles and underlying objectives within all our work.

5.1 Pledges

We will work in line with the pledges adopted across North Tyneside Children and Young People's service:

1. We intervene early with evidence-based, family-focused services.
2. We work in partnership to keep children in school.
3. We keep children safe and connected to their communities.

5.2 Safeguarding

Statutory guidance makes clear that safeguarding children and learners is everyone's responsibility. All adults who work with children should have a child-centred approach and always consider what is in the best interest of the child.

We need to be confident that the culture of safeguarding in all our schools is effective and that there is a strong commitment to keeping pupils safe. All staff will be sighted on their responsibilities and will be well trained.

Ideally, we need to check that staff can:

- Identify children and learners who may need early help or are at risk of neglect, abuse, grooming or exploitation.
- Help prevent abuse by raising awareness among children and learners of safeguarding risks and how and where to get help and support if they need it.
- Help those children who are at risk of abuse and need early help or statutory social care involvement, keeping accurate records, making timely referrals and working with other agencies to ensure that children and learners get the help they need.
- Manage allegations about adults who may be a risk and check the suitability of staff to work with children, learners and vulnerable adults.

In order to be confident about the safeguarding culture of our schools, it is necessary to triangulate what leaders say. Some checks on policies, procedures and records are therefore necessary if we are to be reassured that children and learners are safe and that schools are complying with their statutory requirements.

School Development Partners should have a secure understanding of the statutory safeguarding requirements in which schools operate and review of safeguarding arrangements across the local authority and our partners will show that schools have a strong culture of safeguarding, with all staff and pupils clear about their responsibilities.

Schools' policy and practise will be compliant with their legal responsibilities and School safeguarding procedures will be judged as effective at inspection.

5.3 Closing the Gap

While North Tyneside has a very good education offer for most pupils, there continues to be a persistent gap in educational attainment between disadvantaged pupils, such as those receiving free school meals or in care, and other non-disadvantaged pupils in the borough.

This gap gets wider as pupils move through the educational system. The overall average for pupils in North Tyneside, achieving grade 4 or higher in English and maths GCSEs, was 65%. For the non-disadvantaged cohort, this increased to 72%, which was 1% higher than their national peers. However, this reduces to 44% for North Tyneside's disadvantaged cohort.

For children and young people for whom mainstream schooling is not working, we are able to identify several themes:

- Students who have gaps in their learning particularly in reading and general literacy outcomes.
- Students who may have been 'transient' (either several primary schools or arriving at a point other than usual transition).
- Students who are displaying issues with self-regulation and resilience and as a result may have had several fixed term exclusions, have low attendance or fall foul of local behaviour systems.
- Students for whom statutory assessment is sought in relation to additional needs following their 'exit' from mainstream.
- Vulnerable students in years 8 and 9.

Our actions will be driven by a focus on these groups and clearly link into other areas for the strategy for example, 'Ready for School and Learning.'

Embedded within every aspect of our work across the borough, we will work to narrow the gap in educational outcomes. We will work together with our Partners and the North of Tyne Combined Authority, to create an inclusive culture in our schools in order to tackle the issues of widening gaps (particularly in disadvantaged boys) and levels of exclusion in years 7 & 8. This will be governed by the well-established forums we have in place, including our Primary Learning Partnership and Education Improvement Partnership.

We will use the school development partner programme to have a strong focus on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Not least in assessing the impact of Covid-19 on their attainment. We will emphasise the importance of focusing on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils when we support and deliver training courses and undertake assisted reviews.

We always aim to:

- Make sure the right support is identified at the right time for our children and young people.
- Plan for the changing needs of our children and young people ensure support is available to them within their local community.
- Be clear what is available across education, health and care to all children and young people and ensure that access is as simple as possible.
- Simplify access to support for children, young people and their families where it is needed and reduce waiting times.
- Enable our children and young people to be ready for their next stage in education, employment, training and everyday life.
- Ultimately, by detailed analysis of the differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged counterparts, we will work to reduce the gaps across the board between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

5.4 Vulnerable learners

Through North Tyneside's SEND Inclusion strategy and SEND accessibility strategy we seek to achieve the aims of our Ambition for Education in an equitable way, providing equal opportunity for all children and young people in our borough; ensuring that vulnerable learners and learners with SEND are well supported and able to access the same opportunities, taking into account personal needs, as their peers.

5.5 Financial & Pupil Place Planning and Management

Schools, partners and the Local Authority work closely to ensure strong financial planning and financial management in schools across the borough.

The Schools Financial Services team offer a full range of financial advice and support services to schools. This includes the provision of annual budget guidance and support with Budget Planning including 3-year Budget Modelling which complies with Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) requirements. In addition to supporting schools with Financial reporting, the Team also provide advice and training to schools in relation to their statutory duties.

The funding framework (which replaces Local Management of Schools) is based on the legislative provisions in sections 45-53 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and sets out rights and responsibilities of schools and local authorities in relation to school budgets. In North Tyneside we work collaboratively to support schools with their statutory duties in ensuring there are effective controls for managing within available resources and ensuring regularity, propriety and value for money.

The authority is responsible for ensuring that schools work within this funding framework and discharge their statutory duties relating to finance. It is universally recognised that school budgets are under increasing pressure with rising costs relating to pay awards including the implications of the National Living Wage and North Tyneside Living Wage, pension contributions, apprenticeship levy and inflationary pressures on premises and equipment and materials costs.

Where schools are operating in deficit, the local authority and partners will work with school leaders, including governors, to improve financial management in these schools and try to bring back in-year balanced budgets. In 2019 the Authority introduced a 'Support and Challenge Framework' which is aimed at helping schools currently in deficit recover financial sustainability as quickly as possible. This framework also introduces earlier intervention and prevention measures for schools showing signs of future financial difficulties. Under the framework, schools are provided with an annual RAG rating, based on the three-year budget plan produced by 31st May each year. Where appropriate, additional support is then agreed with individual schools.

In the 2019/20 financial year the Authority authorised licenced deficit agreements with 11 schools, the total value of the deficit agreements granted was £10.052m. For a licenced deficit agreement to be granted, a school must submit a 3-year recovery plan which shows that a school will reach a balanced position within 3 financial years. As part of the deficit agreement a school is required to attend deficit clinics where officers from the Authority support in working to this recovery plan. Where any issues or progress concerns are identified, the Authority will work with the school to understand what remedial action is being taken to ensure that the school does not exceed its deficit agreement.

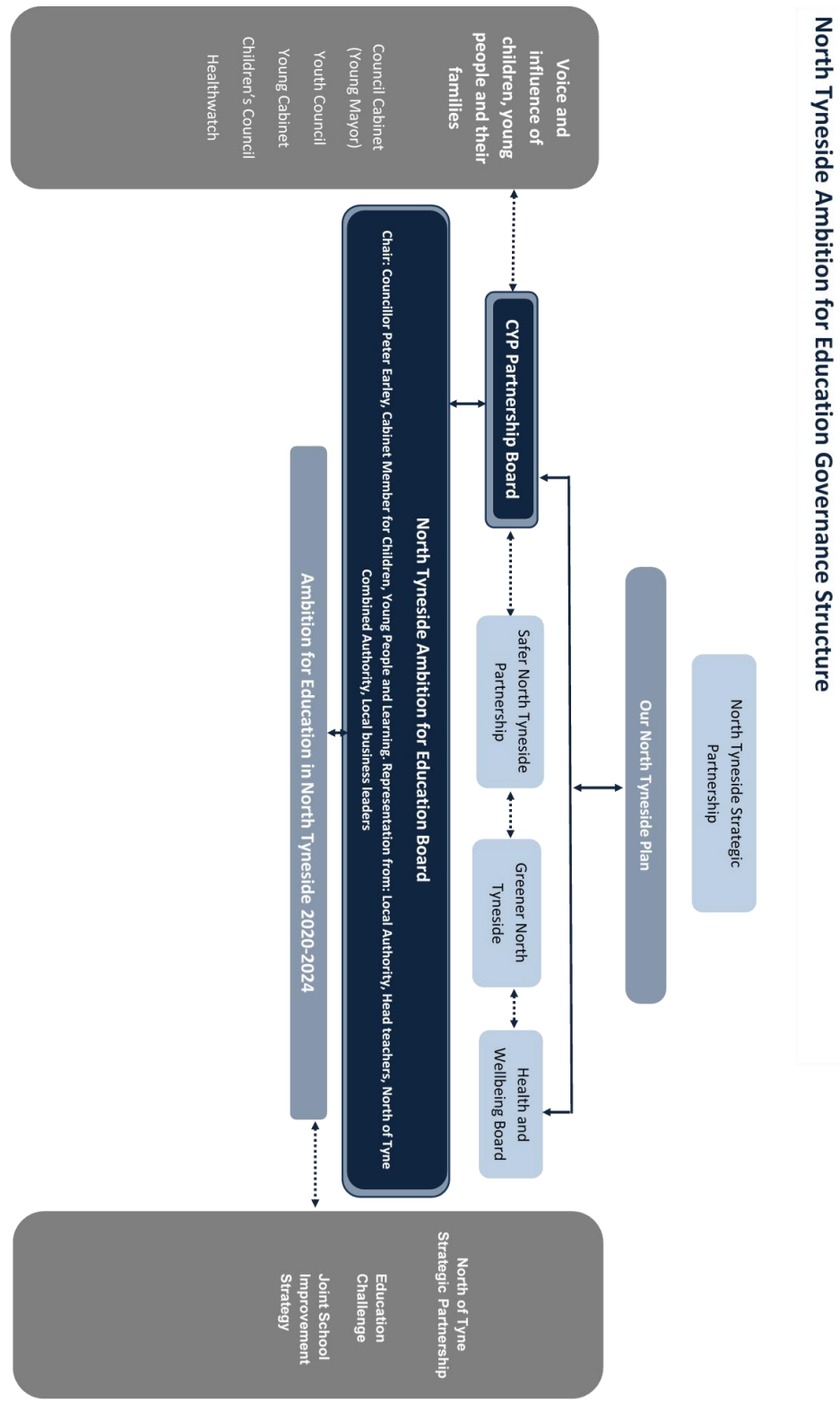
Those schools who were operating under a licenced deficit agreement in 2019/20 exceeded their recovery plan target and as result, an improvement of £0.763m was achieved, reducing the deficit school balances to £9.289m.

It is important to note that this position is based on two sets of issues. In the first instance, the pressure in some parts of the Secondary School system is a direct consequence of the current surplus capacity. This has dropped from the peak of 20% to 15%, and is expected to reduce further, to less than 10%, by 2022/23. It is also the case, as a consequence of parent choice, settlement patterns and individual school choices, that surplus is concentrated in three Secondary Schools.

Planning and modelling are inherent in what we will do to achieve our ambition for education in North Tyneside and work underway includes a review of pupil admission numbers and revised pupil modelling with ongoing support to Head Teachers, Governing Bodies and school leaders.

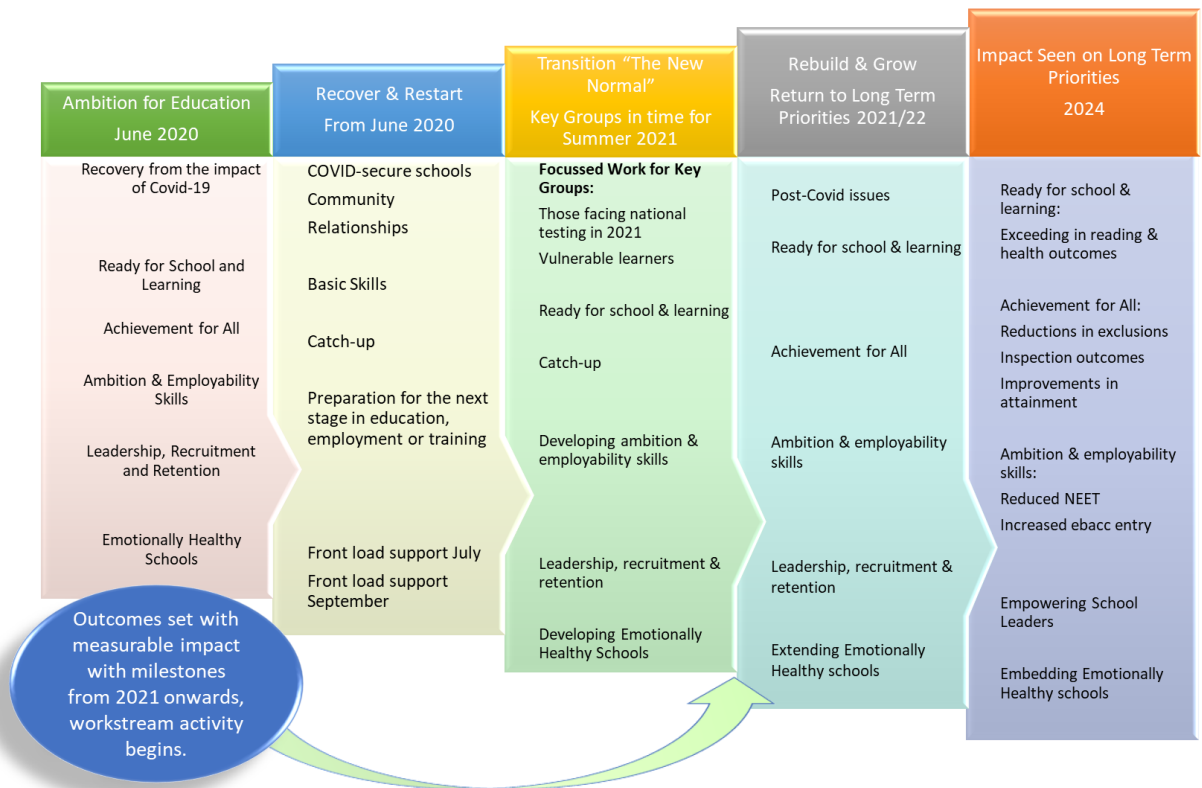
6.0 Governance and Delivery

The diagram below shows how the delivery of our Ambition for Education in North Tyneside will be overseen: **TBC**



Appendix 1:

Timeline: Ambition for Education in North Tyneside post-Covid-19



Appendix 2: Additional data and evidence to support priorities

Priority 2: Ready for School and Learning

Speech, language, communication and reading readiness

We know that few disadvantaged children in the early years exceed the early learning goal in reading, and that gaps between our disadvantaged girls and their non-disadvantaged peers is wider than the national average.

By the end of Key Stage 1, although overall outcomes appear strong there has been much variability between cohorts, suggesting a focus on overall outcomes rather than a more granular approach.

Reading attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with the national average, but too many of our schools have well below or below average progress measures. Overall, the progress made by disadvantaged boys is below average and their attainment is variable over time. Again, we see gaps between disadvantaged girls' attainment compared with non-disadvantaged peers higher than the national average.

Priority 3: Achievement for All

Most North Tyneside schools are judged as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. However, we recognise that many of our Outstanding schools have not been inspected in several years and, in this time, inspection frameworks have changed considerably, as have the requirements and demands for public examinations at key stage 2, key stage 4 and post-16.

In parts of the borough we operate a three-tier system which offers benefits to many pupils; However, it also presents additional transition points that can potentially impact negatively on pupils' progress scores at Key Stage 2. This requires careful curriculum planning and management.

We see a spike in exclusions for our Year 7 and Year 8 pupils. This surge in exclusions follows transition from primary to secondary school and mirrors the profile seen nationally. While exclusion figures remain below the national average, we are determined to improve this further and keep more of our pupils in their maintained school.

We know the impact that transition points have on children and young people at all stages of their learning journey. We believe that enabling smoother transitions will have a significant impact on attainment, narrowing gaps, reducing exclusion levels, mental health and wellbeing and outcomes for children and young people. We recognise that extended school closures in the academic year 2019/2020 has greatly disrupted pupils in all transition years groups.

At the end of 2019, despite overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 being in-line 2018 performance and slightly above national averages, performance of disadvantaged pupils has decreased over the same period. In 2019, the percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving L4+ Basics has reduced by 5%, down to 39%.

Overall Progress 8 measures across the local authority area has seen a small increase from last year as has Progress 8 for disadvantaged pupils. However, both remain significantly below national average at -0.16 and -0.8 respectively.

At the time of writing, progress for Looked After Children at Key Stage 4 remains in line with last year and in line with the latest published national progress (2018). Attainment for Looked After Children has decreased from last year, reflecting a cohort with lower prior attainment as well as greater rates of Special Educational Needs. North Tyneside CLA attaining the “Basics” (Level 4+ in English and maths) in 2019 is 13% compared to 2018 rate of 24% and a 2018 national rate of 17%.

Priority 4: Ambition & Employability Skills

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, 4.3% of 16-17-year olds were Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET), which compares well to the regional and national positions. However, this still equates to around 180 young people. Modelling of the impact of Covid-19 is reflective of a 5% uplift in figures for NEETs.

We must prepare our school leavers with a suite of qualifications, and the employability and life skills needed to succeed. We want young people of North Tyneside to leave education and enter local employment opportunities that fulfil their capabilities and aspirations.

We currently fall short of the government’s ambition that 75% of pupils are entered for the English Baccalaureate (EBacc).