

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

At a Meeting of **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 29 September 2016 at 9.30 am**

#### **Present:**

**Councillor C Potts (Chairman)**

#### **Members of the Committee:**

Councillors J Armstrong, K Corrigan, O Gunn, D Hall, C Hampson, J Hart, S Morrison and H Smith

#### **Faith Community Representative:**

Mrs A Swift

#### **1 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Bell, D Hicks, K Hopper, M Nicholls, M Simmons, P Stradling and Mr D Kinch.

#### **2 Substitute Members**

There were no substitute Members in attendance.

#### **3 Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 1 July, 25 July and 5 September 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **4 Declarations of Interest, if any**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **5 Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties**

There were no items from Co-opted Members or interested parties.

#### **6 Media Relations - Update on Press Coverage**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer referred Members to recent press articles relating to the remit of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The articles were:

- County Durham Students – Durham County Council had issued a press release congratulating students with regards to their A Level results
- Durham County Council was presented with the Young Carers Charter, developed by Family Action – The Bridge Young Carers Service, for its commitment to supporting young carers across the county
- Sugar intake in children double recommended level – a national survey had found that four to ten year olds were consuming twice as much sugar as the recommended intake and teenagers were consuming three times as much
- The Youth Offending Service had received three nationally recognised accolades

The Chairman requested that a letter be sent to the Youth Offending Service, recognising the achievement and congratulating them on behalf of the Committee.

## **7 County Durham Teenage Pregnancy**

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Adult Services which provided an update on local plans and progress to reduce under 18 conceptions and unplanned teenage pregnancies (for copy see file of minutes).

Members received a presentation from Portfolio Lead for Public Health, (for copy see file of minutes) which gave an overview on the need to reduce teenage conceptions, an update on the current U16 and U18 conception rate, a summary of the findings from the teenage pregnancy HNA 2015 and six key actions to reduce teenage conceptions in County Durham.

Members were advised that the information regarding the reduction of both under 18 and under 16 conceptions in County Durham related to 2014 and this was due to a data time lag.

Councillor Hart referred to a time when there was significantly high rate of teenage pregnancy in Newcastle which had required government intervention and following the setup of a Teenage Pregnancy Unit, the figures had reduced by 51%. The reduction had been in conjunction with a rise in sex education and there was always a worry that there would be another influx of unplanned teenage pregnancy if the measures in place were relaxed. The Portfolio Lead in Public Health confirmed that even when considering reductions in budgets, teenage pregnancy was a priority and would continue to be monitored. It was important that Schools and School Nurses continued to identify and support young people who may need it. There was also a lot of support for teenage parents who were being encouraged to pursue aspirations. There was funding available for 16-19 year olds and she referred to the Care to Learn scheme and the Teen Parents Support Programme which was a 20 week course to develop skills and knowledge such as self-esteem and confidence, sexual health awareness and money management. The programme had been successful enough to be nominated for a national award, however funding was non-recurrent which was a continued concern.

Councillor Gunn referred to the importance of childcare for young people and referred to the recently appointed shadow education secretary who, having been pregnant at 16 years old with no qualifications was an inspiration to young teenagers in the same situation. The shadow secretary had publically credited Sure Start for helping her to overcome the difficulties she had faced being a teenage parent. The Portfolio Lead for Public Health

confirmed that many of the parents on the Teen Parents Support Programme were anxious at being separated from their children and therefore it had been delivered within Children's Centres in order to ensure that babies were cared for on the premises. As a result of the programme some parents had gone on to higher education, employment, or had returned as a mentor.

The Head of Children's Services confirmed that since the review in 2014, Sure Start had improved and there was now consistent engagement with all young mothers.

In response to a question from Councillor Hart, the Head of Children's Services confirmed that the possibility of registering births at Children's Centres had been considered, however it was acknowledged that contact levels with new teenage mothers was 100% and therefore no improvement was required.

## **Resolved**

That the report and presentation be noted.

## **8 Update on School Funding Reforms**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships, Interim Corporate Director Resources and Interim Corporate Director Children and Young Peoples Services which provided information on School Funding Reforms (for copy see file of minutes).

Members received a presentation from Finance Manager, Education Services (for copy see file of minutes), which provided Members with information on the ongoing Government consultation with regards to Authority proposals affecting 2017/18 school funding and changes to the National Funding Formulas (NFF) for;

- Mainstream Primary and Secondary Schools
- Early Years (nursery schools)
- Special Educational Needs

Early Years Funding was based on historical spend and proposals were for a national formula to allocate funding to local authorities from 2017/18. Indicative allocations provided as part of the consultation indicated that Durham would receive a 3% increase in funding. The early years funding formula would require greater equality in distributing funding to providers. However the specific impact for County Durham, for Early Years providers and SEN Funding would not be known until the outcome of the consultation.

Councillor Gunn referred to the information which had been presented to Members and the significant impact it would have on young people in County Durham for years to come. It was not a case of a few changes or minor changes, but a significant amount of huge changes which would affect schools drastically. A reduction of £7.5k was the difference in having a teacher or not having a teacher and although she had many unanswered questions, she acknowledged that they could not be answered until the consultation had ended.

Councillor J Armstrong acknowledged that the presentation had raised more questions than answers, however the changes which the Government were making were essentially leading up to remove the responsibility of education services from Councils and pushing schools to becoming Academies. There was no clarity to the plans other than there would be a reduction to the budget and the Finance Manager, Education Services agreed that when more information was available, he would present it to the Committee.

Councillor Hart referred to the potential impact the new formulas could have on small rural primary schools and the Finance Manager, Education Services confirmed that a potential reduction in budget of £30k would have a huge impact on any school, however until the outcome of the consultation, no modelling work could be undertaken as there was too much uncertainty.

In response to a question from Councillor Smith, the Finance Manager, Education Services confirmed that sparsity funding may be applicable to small schools which were located in areas where pupils would have to travel long distances to the nearest alternative school.

Mrs Swift commented that Governing Bodies were anxiously waiting for the consultation to end and queried what would happen to those schools who were sitting on large surplus budget balances which they had carried forward. The Finance Manager, Education Services confirmed the capping mechanism had been removed a few years ago and however some schools were carrying money forward because of required capital works or to assist contingency plans following the Reform.

Councillor Gunn suggested getting the information that this was a Government reform, into the public domain should to be a priority. Councillor Armstrong agreed that the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young Peoples Services would be consulted in circulating information to all Members, Schools and how to address and keep the public informed. It was agreed that a letter should be sent from the Children and Young People's Services which advised the Portfolio Holder of the Committees concerns and requested a communication plan be put in place following the outcome of the consultation to ensure that the relevant information was disseminated and all concerned be informed that any future funding reductions as a result of the reforms were not within the Council's control.

## **Resolved**

That the report be noted and a letter be sent to the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services, as requested.

## **9 Children and Young People's Services Ofsted Single Inspection Framework**

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Corporate Director Children and Young Peoples Services which presented Members with the final improvement plan for submission to Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) following the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services in February 2016 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Children's Services presented Members with an overview of the report and confirmed that the Service response was not entirely with regards to the outcome of the

Ofsted Inspection, as they had already been working towards making improvements before receiving the judgement. She reassured the Committee that the whole workforce was committed to responding to the outcome of the Inspection.

The Chairman confirmed that the work plan included a presentation to the Committee on the role of Social Workers and would give Members an idea of the problems that were faced within the Service.

Councillor Hall queried the response of Local Authorities to make improvements on the outcome Ofsted Inspections and suggested that occasionally the response was to throw money at the Service. The Head of Children's Services agreed that was sometimes the case and referred to Stockton Borough Council who had been offering new employees up to £10000 for signing up with them. She was pleased to report that Durham had only lost a couple of employees because of this, however there was a worry that the Social Work Programmes which were being offered by Durham, would be used to gain excellent skills through training would then be recruited by other Councils. There was also an issue in recruiting Managers as people didn't seem to want the responsibility. A Management Development Programme had been started alongside South Tyneside Council, and now Durham was continuing to offer the programme in the hope that it would give people the confidence to put in for those roles that were proving difficult to fill.

In response to a query from Councillor Hart, the Head of Children's Service confirmed that cases were open longer, but the new model of work did take longer to complete. In addition the Court process was taking a lot longer, which had in turn impacted on the time it took to go through the adoption process. There had been a 20% increase in the number of care orders and interim care orders which required Court involvement and therefore impacting on cases. Considering the problems in recruiting Social Workers, there had also been an increase in LAC's - there were 120 more than there had been in 2014.

Councillor Hart then queried why £360k was being spent on agency staff and the Head of Children's Services confirmed that it was simply because agency staff were paid more. People were signing up to agencies as they were paid twice as much for carrying out the same work and were not tied into the Councils terms and conditions.

Councillor Hart referred to the extensive amount of work the Portfolio Holder had to do and suggested that like Newcastle City Council, it could be beneficial to have a Junior Cabinet Member to share the responsibilities. The Head of Children's Services confirmed that the Service was well supported by the current Portfolio Holder and Councillor Armstrong confirmed that should Councillor Hart wish to make suggestions about the structure of Cabinet, that he should put them in writing to the Group Secretary.

With regards to the relationship with Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Head of Children's Services confirmed that there had always been good engagement with Members, however it was acknowledged that there had been oversights with regards to the reports presented to the Committee. For example, Members were regularly updated on performance but there were never any performance issues and this may have led to false assurances. One of the themes covering the 14 recommendations identified by Ofsted was to strengthen political and management oversight and Members could be assured that there would be more transparency in future.

Councillor Armstrong confirmed that all Members of the Council were Corporate Parents and Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny had a strategic role, therefore the Committee would receive an overview on the Role of the Social Worker to a future meeting of the committee.

### **Resolved**

That the report be noted.

### **10 Draft Oral Health Strategy For County Durham**

The Committee considered a report of the Interim Director of Public Health which presented Members with the Draft Oral Health Strategy for County Durham for consultation (for copy see file of minutes).

The Portfolio Lead, Public Health presented Members with an Overview of the report.

Councillor Armstrong confirmed that there was evidence in North West Durham that fluoridation worked and recommended that the information be presented to Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Gunn welcomed the report and commented on how far schools had come with regards to restricting the amount of refined sugar in schools and encouraging fruit as an alternative. The problems with regards to adult oral hygiene, were compounded by a phobia that many people had of dentists was and also poor oral health in residential homes. The Portfolio Lead, Public Health also drew members' attention to the link between areas of deprivation and poor oral health.

### **Resolved**

That the report be noted.

### **11 CAS - Revenue and Capital Outturn 2015/16 and CAS - Quarter 1: Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2016/17**

The Committee considered reports of the Head of Finance which provided them with details of the actual outturn budget position for the CAS service grouping based on the final position at the year end, and details of the forecast outturn budget position based on the position to the end of June 2016 (for copies see file of minutes).

### **Resolved**

That the reports be noted.

### **12 Quarter One 2016/17 Performance Management Report**

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Management Team which presented progress against the Council's corporate basket of performance indicators, Council Plan, and service plan actions and other performance issues for the first quarter of the 2016/17 financial year, covering the period April to June 2016 (for copies see file of minutes).

The Strategic Manager, Performance and Information Management presented Members with an overview of the report.

Councillor Hart queried whether there had been a response a question he had raised at the meeting in July with regards to CASCYP 30 and the waiting times for CAMHS referrals. The Strategic Manager, Performance and Information Management confirmed that a response had been received from the CCG and Tees, Esk and Wear Valley Foundation Trust. Both had had acknowledged that the 22% increase in referrals needed addressing, possibly by re-evaluating the service in order for patients who require lower level services to be referred quickly and also free up clinical staff to treat patients requiring more complex treatment. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer confirmed that the written response would be forwarded to Councillor Hart following the meeting.

### **Resolved**

That the report be noted.

### **13 Summary of Minutes from Children and Families Partnership**

Members received a copy of the Summary of Minutes from the Children and Family Partnership (for copy see file of minutes).

### **Resolved**

That the minutes be noted.

### **14 Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration**

Councillor Gunn confirmed that at the meeting on 1 April 2016, she had raised the issue with regards to the management of school exclusions and asked that it was included as part of the Work Programme. The Chairman confirmed that this issue would be covered at the meeting in February 2017.