

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Friday 1 April 2016 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor C Potts (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Armstrong, D Bell, O Gunn, D Hall, C Hampson, J Hart, D Hicks, K Hopper, P Lawton, S Morrison, M Simmons and P Stradling

Co-opted Members:

Mr D Kinch and Mr R Patel and Mr R Patel

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Corrigan, K Dearden, J Measor, M Nicholls, L Pounder, H Smith, M Stanton, W Stelling, Mr K Gilfillan and Mrs G Harrison

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the special meeting held on 3 February 2016 and the meeting held on 25 February 2016 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record (for copy see file of Minutes).

4 Declarations of Interest

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 the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (for copy see file of minutes). The articles were:-

- New Families First teams will support children, young people and families – Northern Echo 24/03/16

- 10 new teams had been set up to ensure young people get the best start in life.
- Princess Anne Awards Youth Offending Service Butler Trust Award – In & Around 17/03/16
2 officers specialising in speech, language and community work had been awarded for their outstanding dedication, skill and creativity. Lord McNally had praised their work.
- County Durham PSCO's idea leads to new police missing child alert – Evening Chronicle 21/03/16
A new missing child alert system has been launched to reunite parents with their children quicker. Under the scheme a text message would be sent to all parents at a missing pupil's school.

The Chairman asked that a letter be sent to the Youth Offending Service to offer congratulations from the Committee on their outstanding achievements of receiving their second Butler Trust Award.

Resolved:

That the content of the presentation be noted.

7 Review of Youth Support Consultation

The Committee received a joint report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Children and Adults Services that informed about the current Review of Youth Services Consultation (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Head of Children's Services gave a detailed presentation that highlighted:-

- The Review
- VCS Provision in County Durham
- Proposal 1 - A Strategy for Youth Support in County Durham
- Proposal 2 - Deploy Council resources according to need to deliver a Targeted Youth Support Service
- Proposal 3 - Ceasing the existing youth work support grant and the allocation of funding to each Area Action Partnership (AAP) to address local priorities linked to youth services
- Impact on Service Delivery
- How will we know if we have been successful?
- Next Steps– ends on 27 April 2016 with a final decision of Cabinet in Autumn 2016
- Consultation Process
- Consultation Information

The Head of Children's Services explained that there were 42,614 14-19 year old young people in County Durham and 45% of those lived in deprived areas. Historically, the main focus of council funded youth services has been the provision of universal youth sessions which any young person could access through attendance at youth clubs across the County. This was in addition to youth provision from other sources such as VCS, churches, sports groups and arts groups. The committee were shown within the

presentation a map that indicated the amount and location of the current youth provision in county Durham.

Members were advised that since 2010, all of the regional authorities had made significant changes to their service delivery models by providing a more targeted service. Information gathered from regional authorities indicated that reductions to their youth work budgets ranged from 45% to 70%. Durham County Council in comparison had made 19% reduction to its youth services budget to date.

Details were given of the three proposals that focused in the consultation, proposal one concentrated on the strategy for Youth Support in County Durham that sets out the aim to ensure all young people navigate their teenage years and achieve their full potential. Members were advised that to do this the Council must ensure that those young people who need additional help are identified early and receive targeted approach which will achieve outcomes such as improved school attendance, improved health and wellbeing and improved lifestyle.

Proposal two highlights the need to redirect resources to a targeted youth support service, this proposed model recognises that outcomes for young people can be affected firstly by a range of social issues within the family, home and community and secondly by issues which may affect their education and school life.

In relation to the third proposal members were advised that the current Youth Work Support Grant for the financial year 2015/16 was £194,684. Distribution levels for this grant had ranged from £430 to £27,768. These amounts had not been based on strategic assessment and there had been no rationale in place for distribution other than historical arrangements which had evolved over time. Members were advised that the 2015/16 grant would be reduced by a minimum of £56,000 to deliver MTFP savings, following the delivery of MTFP savings the remaining Youth Work Support Grant would be redirected to Area Action Partnerships.

Members were advised that the consultation had begun on 1 February until 27 April, information had been presented to all 14 AAPs and feedback on the consultation was accepted through any medium. Information was provided on the range of stakeholders that had been consulted including a wide range of young people who had completed questionnaires.

Councillor S Morrison was advised that the Interactive MAP was in the process of being uploaded and would be available shortly.

Councillor O Gunn said that the AAPs already support a range of activities and that they already carry out a mapping service. She asked what criteria would be used to ensure that the distribution of funding was fair across all AAP areas. The Head of Children's Services explained that feedback on this would feed into the consultation so welcomed any views the Members had.

Referring to the ASK process, Councillor P Lawton asked if the Spennymoor Youth Provision was going through this and was advised that all areas were going through this at present and had been encouraged to do so.

Councillor K Hopper was advised that the One Point Service managers would look at needs in an area and that youth workers would work together, following her question about dual co-ordinators working across different towns/ villages. She further asked if sessions could be bought in to allow targeted work to be carried out by youth workers. The Head of Children's Services explained that with £1m cuts to make staff would be affected and following the consultation, decisions would be taken on how to deploy staff. She advised that there would be a mix of full-time and part-time staff. With regards to paying for sessions she advised that each Management Committee would be able to make these arrangements.

Going back to the point about AAPs, Mr D Kinch asked if there would be any guarantee for the next few years regarding funding for the AAPs as if not could not understand the need for change. The Head of Children's Services said that there could be no guarantees about future funding but hoped that a new model of delivering services would make them more sustainable. Councillor J Armstrong said that if the funding level was available in future then it could be guaranteed. He added that strategically the service must save £1m and continue to deliver a service. As far as AAP funding he said that each area would be looked at in terms of need and funding would be allocated accordingly.

Councillor J Hart said these proposals were about investing to save for the benefit of young people and the community, and not just savings.

The Chairman referred to recent communications with young people during a scrutiny project, and said that the clear message from young people was that they often preferred to talk to youth workers rather than teachers or parents. She asked if this provision would still be available. She was informed that the team around the school model would be in place and there would still be opportunities for young people to be able to communicate in this way, either in small groups or with individuals. She added that there was nothing in the review that gave any criticism of youth workers and that there was a feeling that they were very special people with very special skills.

Councillor D Hall asked if it was possible to find out where the organisations shown on the interactive map receive their funding and if there was a way that we could help these groups move forward. The Head of Children's Services informed the Committee that she had met recently with a local MP and chair of a management committee in relation to funding. She advised that there is money out there for organisations to access and that the Council would continue to support and guide organisations. She added that they could look at how to help groups to be cost-effective. Members were informed that some organisations had paid staff, some had voluntary and some had a mix of both to help them to operate.

The Chairman asked if young people had been consulted on the proposals and was advised that this had been carried out via youth activity groups and schools.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Children's Services for a detailed and informative presentation.

Resolved:

That the report and presentation be noted.

8 Quarter Three 2015/16 Performance Management Report

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Management Team which presented Members with progress against the Councils corporate basket of performance indicators for the Altogether Better for Children and Young People theme, as well as other significant performance issues for the 2015/16 financial year, covering the period October to December 2015 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Strategic Manager, Performance and Information Management, highlighted the key achievements and key performance improvements issues, giving a detailed analysis of the figures within the report.

The Chairman referred to the information on childhood obesity and highlighted that some schools have introduced an activity whereby children can walk a mile a day. The Head of Children's Services said that a lot of schools were doing this and had come up with a lot of other practical solutions to get children active. Councillor Stradling suggested that as the figures were on the increase that it would be helpful to add this to the work programme. The Chairman agreed that a presentation would be helpful. The Head of Children's Services informed the Committee that the Director of Public Health's Annual Report was on childhood obesity this year.

Referring to the key target indicator about the '*achievement gap between Durham pupils eligible and not eligible for pupil premium funding achieving level 4 in reading, writing and maths at key stage 2*', Councillor Hart asked if a presentation could be brought to Committee to encourage best practice. The Strategic Manager, Performance and Information Management would refer this to the Head of Education.

Mr Kinch referred to the young person re-offending indicator showing 'red' and was informed that this was a national measure based on the number of young people in the offending cohort who re-offended in a period. The Head of Children's Services advised that the number of children who offended and then re-offended had reduced from 728 in 2008 to 190 in 2013/14. She informed the Committee that there were a small group of 20 young people who carried out the most incidents of re-offending and that they typically had a range of complex needs.

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

9 Quarter 3: Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2015/16 - Children and Adult Services

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Finance that provided Members with details of the forecast outturn budget position for Children and Adult Services, highlighting major variances in comparison with the budget for the year, based on the position to the end of December 2015, as reported to Cabinet in March 2016 (for copy of report see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

10 Refresh of the Work Programme

The Committee received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive, which provided Members with information contained within the Council Plan 2016-2019, relevant to Children and Young People's Services. This would allow members to refresh the Committee Work Programme to reflect the 3 objectives and subsequent outcomes identified within the Council Plan or Altogether Better for Children and Young People (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor Hall suggested that meetings should be arranged before or after the Youth Service consultation to look at the open access to the service, and that it would be helpful to receive a presentation from people in the third sector on how they deliver services. The Head of Children's Services explained that the third sector and youth activity were only one part of the Innovations Programme and advised that third sector alliances had been set up. The Council offer ongoing support and have good relationships with these organisations. Councillor Hall appreciated that the restructure of the Youth Service was unavoidable but asked if the Council could help groups become more sustainable and how best to direct them to the help available. Councillor Armstrong advised that it would be best to wait until after the consultation period had ended and then proceed with any discussions with the third sector.

Councillor Armstrong suggested that a presentation on childhood obesity was added to the work programme but reminded Members that they needed to be aware of the already large workload. Councillor Stradling said that where possible any issues may be able to be fit into what was already in the programme for the forthcoming year.

Councillor Gunn asked if a presentation could come forward on exclusions and how managed moves were working between schools. She had been informed that the system was not working so would like the opportunity for the information to be brought to Members attention. Councillor Stradling suggested that this may be an area of work that could be dealt with as a small working group that could report back to this Committee.

In addition, Councillor Armstrong informed Members that additional work could come up during the year, such as the recent developments with academies.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report be noted
- (ii) That a further report be brought to Committee on 1 July 2016.

11 Verbal update on Review of Take up of Free School Meals and Holiday Hunger

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised Members that the review group had their first meeting in March where they received information from the School Meals Service. This included information on free school meal claims, take up, the level of use for the service for our schools and out of County.

She went on to advise that one of the first recommendations to come from the group was that a free school meals form should be completed at the same time parents complete an admission form to school. This would ensure that all children were assessed for free school meals.

The second issue discussed at the group was about a private members bill in relation to the automatic registration of eligible children for free school meals. The group had asked for a letter of support in favour of the bill to be sent and to advise of the work of the review group taking place. The second reading had been rescheduled and would now take place on 22 April 2016.

Members were advised that the next meeting would take place on 7 April 2016 where they would discuss school referrals to the School Nurse about malnutrition and obesity.

Resolved:-

That the update be noted.