

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE TO PROMOTE STRONG HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES

At a Meeting of the **Scrutiny Sub-Committee to Promote Strong Healthy and Safe Communities** held at the County Hall, Durham on **Monday 2 December 2002** at **10.00 a.m.**

Present:

COUNCILLOR MRS E HUNTER in the Chair.

Members of the Sub-Committee:

Councillors J Armstrong, Blenkinsopp, Douthwaite, Mrs Fergus, Fenwick, E Foster, Graham, Mrs Howarth, G Hunter, Langham, Myers, O'Donnell, Priestley and Quigley

Other Members:

Councillors Firby, Forster and Watson

Co-opted Member:

Mrs H Gibbon.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Nicholls

The Chairman welcomed Harriet Gibbon from Age Concern who was attending her first meeting as a Co-opted Member.

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2002 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

2. Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Carrier Bag Culture Working Group

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Carrier Bag Culture Working Group which has been investigating the issue of disaffected young people in the Wheatley Hill, Thornley and Shotton areas of Easington (for report see file of Minutes)

A number of members who had been involved in this project explained that it has highlighted young people's desire to be part of their community. Responding, Bernie Stock of Investing in Children agreed that the young people he had worked with had been both keen and positive, but added that it was essential for dialogue to be ongoing.

The Head of Overview and Scrutiny informed the Sub-Committee that the aim of the project had been to look at a local area, however, if it proved successful it could be extended across the County. This led to concerns being expressed from Members from areas which are not eligible for Neighbourhood Renewal or Single Regeneration funding. Councillor O'Donnell said it was essential to have a joined-up approach to projects.

Resolved:

That the report together with the recommendations included therein be approved.

4. Children's Services Strategic Planning

The Sub-Committee received a presentation by Dave Shipman, Operations Manager, Commissioning about the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership for County Durham (for copy of presentation slides see file of Minutes).

Dave explained that the process of developing the Strategic Partnership for County Durham has been underway for over 12 months and that it had included officers from the County Council along with representatives from a number of other interested parties/groups.

The proposal to establish the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership has been approved by Cabinet and meetings of the Strategic Partnership have commenced. Work is also progressing to establish close working links with the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs).

With regard to the areas where LSPs have not yet been fully developed, Dave explained that it was essential that work on this project continue.

5. Social Services Performance Management

The Sub-Committee received a presentation by Peter Appleton, Head of Service Quality Performance about the changes in performance with regard to the Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) Indicators between the first and second quarter of 2002/03.

Peter explained that 5 service areas had improved their banding; 3 had worsened; there had been no change in banding for 17 service areas and that there were no statistics available for 23 areas as they were not produced on a quarterly basis. He did add however, that at this stage none of the services, based on national performance indicators, required immediate attention (red “traffic light”).

With regard to indicators currently banded as orange in the Adult Category, 3 were national indicators and 6 were local indicators. Peter drew particular attention to L3 – ‘Percentage of referrals (new or closed cases) where an assessment was completed within 28 days of receipt’ as locally this was banded red. In respect of Children’s Services 2 were banded orange, (where questions might need to be asked) both based on national indicators. These were the average gross weekly expenditure for looked after child and the percentage of children in need from minority ethnic groups.

Peter suggested and it was agreed that at future meetings he would provide more information on improving orange indicators and on user satisfaction.

6. Aids and Adaptations

The Sub-Committee noted an update report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny about improvements in the Aids and Adaptations Services which have been reviewed by a Scrutiny Group (for report see file of Minutes)

It was noted that a further meeting with users and carers would be held next year. The importance of providing a high standard of service in this area was emphasised. The possibility of using the Council’s strategic partners for adaptations was raised.

7. Improving Road Safety in relation to Child Deaths and Injuries

The Sub-Committee considered a Report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny which detailed the outcome of a Seminar about improving road safety in relation to child deaths and injuries (for report see file of Minutes). This topic was an issue identified for improvement in the CPA.

Resolved:

That the report be approved and a further presentation about progress towards the LPSA target be arranged next spring.

8. Forward Plan

The Sub-Committee noted the sections of the Council's Forward Plan which are within its jurisdiction (for report see file of Minutes).

9. Work Programme

The Sub-Committee considered a Report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny about the work programme for the Sub-Committee (for report see file of Minutes).

The Head of Overview and Scrutiny referred to a new project which is to consider the issue of supporting vulnerable 16-25 year olds with mental health problems. He asked that any member wishing to be part of the Working Group contact either himself or the Chairman of the Group, Councillor Mrs Hunter.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

10. Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

There were no items.