

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**At a Meeting of the Scrutiny Sub-Committee to Promote Strong, Healthy and Safe Communities** held at the County Hall, Durham on **Monday 2 June 2003 at 10.00 a.m.**

**Present:**

**Councillor M Nicholls** in the Chair

**Members of the Sub-Committee:**

Councillors Armstrong, Coates, Cordon, Dormer, Firby, E Foster, Mrs Hodgson, Mrs Howarth, Lightley, Marshall, Priestley, Pye and Quigley.

**Co-opted Members:**

Councillor A Ambler

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ebbatson, Mrs Gibbon, Mr Ibbotson and Councillor O'Donnell

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Ambler (Co-opted Member) and Councillor Ferguson (Observer) to the meeting.

#### **A1 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2003 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Referring to Minute A4(a), Tom Bolton (Senior Support Officer Scrutiny) informed Members that the performance in the final quarter for BVPI 162 (PAF20) had shown an improvement. The Director of Social Services explained that there had been various staffing difficulties in the North Durham area Children in Need Team, but these had now been overcome by recruitment or redeployment of staff. The figures for PAF20 had shown improvement as a result of these actions.

Referring to Minute A5, Tom Bolton informed Members that a planning meeting was to be held with the Chief Constable with a view to holding a Seminar for Members on the issue of speed cameras.

## **A2 Performance Management**

The Sub-Committee considered a presentation and report (for copy see file of Minutes) in relation to Performance Management within the Social Services Department.

Of the 33 performance indicators where both data and banding, 9 showed a very good performance, 9 a good performance, 10 an acceptable performance and 5 were in the “ask questions” banding. None were in the red “investigate urgently” banding. There was a trend of steady improvement in performance, with 18 indicators staying in the same banding as last year, 10 improving and five getting worse.

Councillor Coates referred to Audit performance Indicators B12, 13, 14 and 16 and asked for further information on the reasons for the apparent substantial rises in costs, particularly in 2000/2001 financial year. The Director of Social services responded that from financial year 2000/2001, the figure included management costs. The Social Services Department would provide members with a detailed breakdown showing the elements of costs in 2001/2002.

Referring to Audit Performance Indicators C27 and 29, Councillor Dormer requested that the targets necessary to achieve upwards changes in banding be shown for all indicators. The Director of Social Services undertook to address this for future performance management reports.

Councillor Ferguson referred to Audit Performance Indicator D41 and requested an overview of the “bed blocking” situation. The Social Services Department would supply Councillor Ferguson with a report presented at a recent Member Seminar about how these issues were being addressed.

### **Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

## **A3 Audit of Services to Children in Need in Durham**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Social Services regarding the outcome of an audit of services to Children in Need in response to the Victoria Climbié enquiry following the publication of Lord Laming’s Report at the end of January 2003 (for copy see file of Minutes)

Carl Docking, Standards and Development Officer in the Social Services Department informed the Sub-Committee that 60 files in County Durham had been audited, and these had been chosen at random. Of the 60 files audited, 59 had been satisfactory and one had presented some concerns.

The Audit was structured within seven standards, and within six of these the initial response was level two, mainly satisfactory but with some concerns, with the seventh being level three, which was satisfactory.

Carl Docking undertook to provide further progress reports to the Sub-Committee when appropriate.

Members requested that liaison between the Social Services Department and the Press Office take place about positive publicity surrounding the recent recruitment of 13 new Social Workers.

The information contained in the Audit would be presented to the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) and also be circulated as widely as possible around the public, to ensure that the public have knowledge of who to contact if the need arose. Councillor Cordon requested that members also be provided with an aide memoir of contacts for child protection issues.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

**A4 Forward Plan**

The Sub-Committee noted a report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny which contained the sections of the Council's Forward Plan which are contained within the Sub-Committee's jurisdiction.

**A5 Work Programme**

The Sub-Committee noted a report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny regarding the work programme for the Sub-Committee (for copy see file of Minutes)

With regard to the issue about unauthorised encampments of Travellers, Tom Bolton advised that it was proposed to progress this matter in consultation with the appropriate Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen.

**A6 Any Other Business**

Councillor Armstrong requested that the Sub-Committee be supplied with an update report at a future meeting on progress regarding Investing in Modern Services for Older People.