

## **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 6 September 2004 at 10.00 a.m.**

#### **Present:**

**Councillor M Nicholls** in the Chair

#### **Members:**

Councillors Barker, Blenkinsopp, Coates, Cordon, Douthwaite, Forster, Howarth, E Hunter, O'Donnell, Priestley, Stradling and Wright

#### **Other Members:**

Councillors Dormer, Firby and Hogan

#### **Co-opted Members**

Mrs H Gibbon

#### **A1 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **A2 Aids and Adaptations Service- Occupational Therapists**

John Thornberry gave a presentation to the Sub-Committee about the current position with the Aids and Adaptations Service.

He explained that there were now no delays with the service in the Derwentside area, the situation in Sedgefield was improving, and all the other areas were within manageable proportions. In relation to the Sedgefield area he stressed that the situation there was unacceptable and that measures had been taken to address this, and since June the outstanding issues had been falling.

A recruitment campaign is ongoing for filling vacant occupational therapy posts, and now there were 16.5 members of staff. In addition they are looking to recruit a peripatetic team that will move around the county to target problem areas as they arise supported by 6 additional clerical posts.

One significant problem was that the District Councils are responsible for providing the equipment. As they have different priorities and different funding issues to those of the County Council, this was impacting on the provision of services. It was also accepted that, as people are living longer and are discharged from hospital earlier, more equipment is required to meet everyone's needs, and the situation is compounded with the difference in criteria between whether a client lives in private or rented accommodation.

Councillor Mrs Wright questioned how the Authority intended to keep the occupational therapists in post, as she understood that they were better paid by the health service. In response John Thornberry advised that they retain staff by emphasising how they are a better employer. He did advise that the levels of pay were being considered.

Tom Bolton suggested that it may be appropriate for there to be a further meeting of the Working Group to meet with the users and providers of the service and report their findings back to the Sub-Committee.

**Resolved:-**

That a further review meeting be held as set out above.

**A3 National Service Framework- Older People**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Head of Quality and Performance about the National Service Framework for Older People (for copy see file of Minutes)

**A4 Youth Engagement Service Inspection Report**

The Sub-Committee received a presentation from Christina Blythe, Head of The County Durham Youth Engagement Service about the Youth Engagement Service Inspection Report (for copy of slides of presentation see file of Minutes).

The presentation included the aims of the inspection, the process, the scoring approach and the results of the Inspection in Durham together with how it compared with those of other authorities.

Members congratulated Christina and her staff on the excellent inspection report that had been received, and was thanked for the hard work undertaken.

## **A5 Performance Management**

The Sub-Committee received a report from the Performance Monitoring Manager with an update on performance information within the first quarter of 2004/05 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Coates referred to some areas of performance in the report shown orange and commented on the need to ensure that performance in these categories improved over time. Peter Appleton advised that in relation to ethnicity much work had been done with children, however more needed to be done with adults, but this was not an easy task particularly as the Department for Health statistics excluded white non british members of the public.

## **A6 Children's Bill**

The Sub-Committee received a joint report from the Acting Director of Social Care and Health, and the Director of Education concerning 'Every Child Matters' The Way Forward in County Durham (for copy see file of Minutes).

Debbie Jones, Acting Director of Social Care and Health, and Amanda Johnson, Head of Education Services gave a presentation on the progress made in County Durham towards the implementation of 'Every Child Matters' (for copy of slides of presentation see file of Minutes).

In response to a question Debbie Jones advised that there would be £123,000 from 2004-06 from central government towards implementation.

Amanda Johnson explained that there is still much work to be undertaken and part of this would include the mapping out of what children and families would achieve.

Councillor Forster explained that the ever increasing expectations and requirements to meet the needs of children would need to be properly funded.

### **Resolved: -**

That the report be received.

## **A7 Forward Plan**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny about the section of the Council's Forward Plan, which is within the remit of the Sub-Committee (for copy see file of Minutes).

### **Resolved:-**

That the report be received.

## **A8 Work Programme**

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

Tom Bolton advised that the further Aids and Adaptations Review, as mentioned earlier in the meeting, would be included in the programme.

### **Resolved:-**

That the programme be noted.