

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

AT A MEETING of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to promote Strong and Healthy and Safe Communities held at the County Hall, Durham on **MONDAY 7 MARCH, 2005** at 10.00 a.m.

Present:

Councillor M Nicholls in the Chair

Members:

Councillors Armstrong, Barker, Blenkinsopp, Cordon, Douthwaite, Ebbatson, E Foster, Howarth, Marshall and Stradling

Other Members:

Councillors Coates, Dormer, Ebbatson, Hogan and Watson

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Mrs Hunter and Quigley

A1 Welcome

Councillor Nicholls. Chairman welcomed Cameron Gordon, Chairman of the Health, Safety and Communities Partnership to the meeting of the Sub-Committee.

A2 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December, 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the removal of paragraph 3 in the Performance Management item (Item No.A2b).

A3 Performance Management

(a) Report of Director of Social Care and Health

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Director of Social Care and Health including the information for the third quarter position and year-end estimates for BVPI's for 2004/05 for Promoting Strong, Healthy and Safe Communities. Also included was performance for relevant Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) targets (for copy of report see file of Minutes).

Keith Newby, Quality and Performance Monitoring Manager, informed the Sub-Committee that in order to find out more information about the impact of delayed discharges on the local community, Northumbria University had been commissioned to undertake a study and it was hoped that an input from Members could be achieved as part of the process.

With reference to Target 5 to improve the educational attainment of children and young people in care, performance had not improved and the LPSA target will not be achieved, Keith highlighted the need to make significant improvements in this area.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

(b) Presentation by Corporate Policy Unit

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Head of Corporate Policy updating Members on the third quarter position and year end estimates for BVPI's for 2004/05 for Promoting Strong, Healthy and Safe Communities and also performance for relevant Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) targets (for copy of report see file of Minutes).

With reference to the LPSA Targets, the Committee was informed that of the three relevant LPSA objectives for this Corporate aim, none was expected to fully achieve the stretch LPSA targets.

As regards LPSA target 4 (reducing preventable hospitalisation and delayed transfers of care - Durham and Chester-le-Street), the Sub-Committee was informed that although there had been significant reductions in delayed discharges and more speedy issue of equipment, emergency admissions to hospital had increased greatly.

With reference to Target 5 (improve the educational attainment of children and young people in care) it was pointed out that this target takes no account of the Special Educational Needs of children and the moving population of children in care. The authority is concentrating on getting the best outcome for each child, setting targets on an individual basis.

In relation to Target 6 (maximise the contribution that adoption can make to providing permanent families for children in care) the authority was likely to achieve the 60% threshold but not the stretch target.

With reference to LPSA 4, (Emergency Admissions Durham and Chester-le-Street) Councillor Ebbatson asked for a further explanation about why the Authority had not met the target and suggested that a more detailed report be prepared for a future meeting of the Sub-Committee on this issue.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

A4 Review Report from the 'Minding the Gap' Scrutiny Working Group

The Sub-Committee considered a review report from the 'Minding the Gap' Scrutiny Working Group together with a presentation (for copy of report and slides of presentation see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

That the progress to date be noted and a further review take place in approximately 6 months' time.

A5 Review Report from the 'Aids and Adaptations' Scrutiny Working Group

The Sub-Committee considered a review report from the 'Aids and Adaptations' Scrutiny Working Group together with a presentation (for copy of report and slides of presentation see file of Minutes).

Members asked if it would be possible to provide a patient pathway/patient journey outline as part of the assessment process.

Resolved:

That the progress to date be noted and a further review take place in approximately 6 months' time.

A6 Review Report from the Sickness Absence Scrutiny Working Group

The Sub-Committee considered a review report from the Sickness Absence Scrutiny Working Group together with a presentation (for copy of report and slides of presentation see file of Minutes).

Councillor Cordon commented that this project had been very useful, however, he suggested that scrutiny should be extended to cover other departments as there was a need to tackle this issue corporately.

Councillor Coates commented that at a recent meeting of the Human Resources Committee, concern had been expressed about the level of stress and depression related illness within the authority. In addition, concern was expressed that the new training for Managers had taken 6 months to implement. There was a need for such training to be delivered more quickly.

Councillor Dormer asked how pro-active the authority was in preventing stress in its workforce.

Councillor Armstrong suggested that the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Panel consider how the issues raised be progressed.

Resolved:

That the progress to date be noted and a further review take place in approximately six months.

A7 Scrutiny Development Session

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny concerning the Scrutiny Development session held on 11 January 2005 (for copy of report see file of Minutes).

Members were informed that the session had been hosted by Northumbria University. One of the tasks undertaken was the ranking in priority of topics suitable for future Working Groups.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

A8 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 noted.

A9 **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).

Resolved:

That the programme be noted.