

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

**At a Meeting of the Promoting Strong, Healthy and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee** held at the County Hall, Durham on **Friday 4 July 2008** at **10.00 a.m.**

**COUNCILLOR D Boyes** in the Chair

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors Armstrong, A Bell, Bowman, L Marshall, Mavin, Nicholson, M Potts, Shield, Stradling, L Thomson, J Wilkinson, M Wood and Wright.

**Other Members:**

Councillors Campbell, A Cox, Simmons, C Walker and Willis.

**Co-opted Member:**

Councillor D Bates

**A1 Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Promoting Strong, Healthy and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee.

**A2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**A3 Any Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties**

There were no items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties.

**A4 Work Programme**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny regarding the Work Programme (for copy of slides of presentation see file of Minutes).

The Committee discussed at length its programme for the year ahead. Members felt that community engagement was an area that should be looked at however accepted that it was an issue that was cross cutting across other service areas and should be looked at by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Management Committee.

Feisal Jassat explained to the Committee that there were some areas that they would need to be looking at over the year ahead and these were the Blueprint on 'Vision, Values and Strategic Principles', responding to the Sustainable

Community Strategy, locality arrangements to support Members in their front line role, LAA review in relation to the stretch targets. He went on to explain that from 1 April 2009 there would be a role to scrutinise Partnership Arrangements and they would have to consider revising the constitutional arrangements.

Councillor Bates referred to the boundary commission review and enquired whether the Committee would make an appropriate response to it. Councillor Armstrong advised that this had been responded to by the Authority and he presumed that Town and Parish Council representatives would also be making an appropriate response.

Members were keen to look further at some of the reviews undertaken by scrutiny and that they look at those in relation to fear of crime, alcohol and drugs, and domestic abuse. Members raised specific issues in relation to a lack of support for victims of crime, drinking aspects of fear of crime, retailers selling alcohol, and parents buying alcohol for young people.

Councillor L Marshall advised there was much good work relating to scrutiny undertaken by the District Councils and this would all need pulling together.

Councillor Mrs Wright suggested that more resources should be put into detached youth work. She suggested that a project to look at fear of crime tie in with looking at having better resources for detached youth work so that they can attract youth workers to stay in post.

Cllr Bell suggested that they need to invest in youth services for the future as there is a lack of facilities and that many problems such as obesity and anti social behaviour are linked.

Peter Appleton pointed out that anti social behaviour is caused by adults as well as young people.

Councillor Armstrong suggested they broaden the debate to reduce fear of crime particularly in relation to the provision of better youth services for the future, and employ quality youth workers.

Feisal Jassat explained that the issues of more engagement with young people and initiatives in relation to anti social behaviour were part of the recommendations arising from the fear of crime scrutiny working group report in 2005. He advised that arising from the domestic abuse scrutiny group £100,000 was put in to support for victims and perpetrators.

The Committee felt that in relation to personalisation concerning direct payments for peoples own care, Members could receive a presentation on this in the current year, and perhaps look at this in next years work programme.

The Committee agreed that the membership of Working Groups be arranged by officers in consultation with Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Members determined that they would have a Scrutiny Working Group to look at the issues of library resources/ community hubs. The project would be to look at having a new resource in line with community engagement and access to services. Peter Appleton advised that they would be able to assist the project by appointing a project worker from Adult and Community Services.

It was pointed out that issues relating to the work programme would be reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 July.