

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the Promoting Strong, Healthy and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee held at the County Hall, Durham on **Monday 1 September 2008** at **10.00 a.m.**

COUNCILLOR D Boyes in the Chair

Members of the Committee

Councillors Bowman, L Marshall, Mavin, Nicholson, M Potts, L Thomson, C Walker and J Wilkinson.

Other Members: Councillors A Bell, Blakey, Burnip, S Iveson, C Magee, J Moran, M Nicholls, E Paylor, M Plews and Williams.

Co-opted Members: Mrs H Gibbon, Mr K Ibbotson, Mr M Iveson, and Mr D Bates.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Armstrong, Campbell, and Maddison M Potts, and Mrs H Gibbon.

The Chairman referred to the death of Mr B Scott, and the Committee stood for a minutes silence as a mark of respect.

A1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings held on 16 June and 4 July 2008 were considered. The attendance of Mr K Ibbotson at the meeting on 4 July was agreed and the minutes amended accordingly were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. The minutes for 16 June were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

In relation to item A4 of the minutes of 4 July, Tom Bolton, Principal Scrutiny Officer clarified that it was for the relevant service area to appoint a project worker from Adult and Community Services to assist with the project. He advised that the first meeting of the Community Hubs/ Community Libraries Scrutiny Working Group would be on 25 September at 11 a.m. and would be chaired by Councillor Boyes. The first meeting of the Young Peoples Scrutiny Working Group that is a joint project with the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee to be held on 2 October would be chaired by Councillor Blakey. Those who were to be involved in the Working Groups had been notified.

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 Personalisation- Putting People First

The Committee considered a report and received a presentation from Phil Malyan, Personalisation Development Manager of Adult and Community Services (for copy of report and slides of presentation see file of Minutes).

His presentation included an outline of the key drivers behind the agenda, the intended outcomes of this change in philosophy, and the challenges and building blocks required for it to be transformational.

In response to a question from Mrs English, Phil Malyan advised that there will be a massive communication issue in making service users aware of this.

Phil Malyan in response to Councillor Walker advised that they do not have any enforcement powers in limiting the intake of alcohol providing that what they are doing is not illegal. Councillor Walker was concerned that they should use every opportunity to prevent drinking alcohol at as early an age as possible.

He pointed out that the private sector will have to move forward at the same pace as the authority on this. The work of the contracts team in the commissioning services would become more complex and increase significantly. He advised that an LGR work streams was required to undertake work on this.

Mr Ibboston suggested that much re-training of staff is required and for this to be passed onto the service user. It was acknowledged that this is a national issue and there will be a professional plan to work through.

Cllr M Potts suggested that there should be boundaries of what the funds could be used for, and that some of it should be mandatory care, and that individual homes should be looked at. In response Phil Malayan advised that there would be boundaries however at the current time homes were outside of the remit of this.

A5 Domestic Abuse- “A Hidden Truth”

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Adult and Community Services that provided an update on the Action Plan developed in response to the Scrutiny project “A Hidden Truth” Services (for copy of report see file of Minutes).

Rachel Green of Durham Constabulary, and Lee Alexander of Adult and Community Services provide an update on the review.

In relation to Action Point 2, it was reported that Councillor Hovvels, the Cabinet Portfolio Holder would be the Executive Member who would be designate as

domestic violence champion. The Committee agreed that Councillor Bowman should be designated the non-executive domestic violence champion.

An approach had been made to have a member on Safe Guarding Adults Board, as in action point 3.

In relation to Action Point 18 it was reported that as well as the Traveller's Liaison, Gay Advice Durham and Darlington will attend future meetings of the Core Strategy Group.

Mrs English asked whether there is any statutory funding for refuges, and if they have a drug/alcohol problem they were not allowed into the refuge.

Rachel Green advised that there is no specific funding for the outreach services, there is money from LAA but not specifically for refuges. She advised that they were to ask each partnership to see if they can mainstream some of the posts. There is a business case going to the Constabulary's Executive on 8 September and and that there would be many bids made for funding.

In terms of the refuges she explained that they have to be safe places, and risk assessments are undertaken. If someone has complex needs, and would put others at risk, they are unable to stay in a refuge. It was accepted that there is a need for refuges for someone who has drugs/ alcohol problems.

Councillor Bowman was concerned that not enough was being undertaken in relation to the Children involved in abuse. Rachel advised that she was to be a report to her Executive Group on 8 September to look at the issues, and that children were at the core of this.

Rachel Green advised that alcohol can be a part of someone being abusive, and that they do have statistics on the number of incidents that are related to alcohol.

Councillor Bowman suggested that Sedgefield does need a refuge and this should be looked into further by partner agencies.

It was suggested that a presentation be given to Members on domestic abuse.

The Chairman agreed that in order to keep Members informed that the next item could be considered.

A6 Performance Monitoring

Tom Bolton, Principal Scrutiny Officer advised that in the future performance monitoring would be looked at by the regular liaison meetings between the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, together with the Chair and Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, Portfolio Holders and leading officers. If there were any issues that the Group felt needed further investigation a report would then be brought to the attention of the Committee.

