

**DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

**At a Meeting of the Promoting Strong, Healthy and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee** held at the County Hall, Durham on **Monday 24 November 2008** at **10.00 a.m.**

**COUNCILLOR D Boyes** in the Chair

**Members of the Committee**

Councillors Armstrong, L Marshall, Mavin, Nicholson, A Shield, Stradling L Thomson, C Walker J Wilkinson, and Wright.

**Other Members:**

Councillors J Moran, D Southwell, B Wilson, and M Wood.

**Co-opted Members:**

Councillor D Bates, Mrs H Gibbon, and K Ibbotson.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor B Harrison, and Mrs M English.

**A1 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2008 were considered. The apologies for Councillor B Harrison had not been recorded and the minutes amended accordingly were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

In relation to Item A5, Tom Bolton advised that the Terms of Reference for the Domestic Violence Champion had been drawn up and a copy had been given to Councillor Bowman, who would undertake the non-executive champion role. He understood that there was to be some member development sessions in relation to domestic violence early in 2009 about which members would be contacted in due course. Councillor Shield advised that Citizens Advice had undertaken some work with Derwentside District Council in relation to a family intervention project and suggested that the Committee may like to receive a presentation on the work undertaken in that area. It was suggested that this could be incorporated into the member development training or dealt with at a future meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Bowman enquired whether there had been any development in having a women's refuge for Newton Aycliffe. Tom Bolton advised that he would make appropriate enquiries.

## **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 Carers (New Deal)**

The Committee received a presentation from Sarah Briggs, Commissioning Policy and Planning Officer, Adult and Community Services and Les Grey, Joint Commissioning Manager, NHS County Durham that provided an overview of carer development both nationally and within County Durham (for copy of slides of presentation see file of Minutes).

Their presentation looked at County Durham Carers Strategy, new national carers strategy, other related national developments, an action guide for GPs, development of new local carers strategy, current adult carers strategy, and future developments.

In response to a question from Councillor Southwell about the aids and adaptations service and the criteria for getting a stair lift, Peter Appelton advised that he would speak to the Member separately about the details of the individual case.

Sarah advised that many people do not recognise themselves as carers. Carers range from those that provide 24 hour care to those that make a quick call to check up on someone. It was pointed out that there are individual care packages however receipt of these is subject to the eligibility criteria which is determined by social workers. There is an emergency scheme which is available to all carers.

It was pointed out that the organisation does work with many voluntary organisations including Age Concern however they are not one of their contract providers. Harriet Gibbon advised that Age Concern do much work in relation to carers including securing welfare benefits for the elderly, and their carers. They are hoping that the system for getting aids and adaptations will be easier when the unitary authority comes into operation. They are involved in a case at the moment where the County Council is not providing a stair lift.

Councillor Moran enquired about the service for young people who are carers and whether Head Teachers are aware of that person's situation, and whether there is a single phone number the young people could contact for help.

Mrs Wright asked for more information on the carers centre, and the transport arrangements for carers to go to the centres. She was concerned that people did not know that these centres were in existence.

Members were informed that there is a young people's carers strategy. DISC and Barnados do a lot of work with young people, and they get involved

with Head Teachers and schools. They were aware that they must do more work with young people who are carers and could link this into the work they do with GPs. They were not aware that there was a single phone number they can ring for help.

They are setting up County Durham Carers Network which will be a website for people to use. This will link into the websites of Age Concern, DCC, and NHS. Transport is provided to get people to centres. Extra information will be supplied on the carers' centres and how many carers provide 24 hour care.

Members welcomed the emergency services for carers. This was subject to one off funding and they were conscious not to commission work that is not sustainable.

Carers centres are expected to identify carers and keep a register, however some people do not want to be included on the register.

Mr Ibbotson explained the history of how he had been involved in discussions many years ago on the definition of a carer. Many of these carers provide 24 hour care and he believed it was these carers who should receive the most support. He wanted to ensure that these carers do not become patients themselves. He asked for any resources to be focussed on that group. Sarah advised that she would ensure that they get the support they need and that this would be reflected in the strategy that comes forward.

## **A5 Community Libraries/ Community Hubs Scrutiny Project**

The Committee noted a report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny that provided an update on the progress to date with the scrutiny investigation into community libraries as community hubs (for copy of report see file of Minutes).

The Committee noted that a visit to libraries would take place on the afternoon of Wednesday 26 November. The Group would be visiting Clayport Library, Pelton Library, and look at the new mobile library. This was seen as a mixture of the libraries, however it was suggested that Members look at a library that was performance challenged. A further visit would be made to combine looking at a library outside of the county to look at best practice, with a visit to a library that was performance challenged.