

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 5 September 2005** at **10.00 a.m.**

Present:

Councillor M Nicholls in the Chair

Members:

Councillors Armstrong, Barker, Bowman, Douthwaite, Ebbatson, Fenwick, Lethbridge, Marshall, Priestley, Stradling, Trippett and Vasey.

Other members

Councillors Chaplow, Coates, Gray, Iveson, Magee, Meir, Myers, Pye, Smith and Walker

Co-opted Members

Mr K Ibbotson and Mr A M Williams

A1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

A2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

A3 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

There were no items raised.

A4 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 year-end 2004/05 and also for the first quarter of 2005/06 (for copy of report see file of Minutes).

Keith Newby, Quality and Performance Monitoring Manager, informed the Sub-Committee that the report was positive and action was being taken to improve performance against the appropriate indicators.

In response to a question from Councillor Fenwick about an issue relating to home care and where responsibility lay between Sunderland and Durham Authorities, Keith Newby advised that he would look into this issue and report back to the Member.

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 first quarter performance for BVPI's relevant to the Corporate Aim, Promoting Strong, Healthy and Safe Communities (for copy of report see file of Minutes).

As regards Target 127a- (Violent Crimes per 1,000 population), the Sub-Committee was informed that violent crime had increased in-line with the national trend, however part of the increase was attributed to the changes in recording methods and more offences being included in this category of crime. Although the responsibility for this indicator lay primarily with the police, through partnership working the authority could have an indirect influence.

With reference to Target 54 (older people helped to live at home) it was pointed out that in the first quarter performance was ahead of target.

Members welcomed the performance indicators.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

A5 Registered Traders Scheme

Phil Holman, Head of Trading Standards gave an informative presentation regarding the recently established registered traders scheme (for copy of slides of presentation see file of Minutes).

He explained the background to setting up the scheme and that this had been undertaken in partnership, although the County Council was the main body involved. The continual expansion of the scheme should in the long term create a standard for legitimate trade, promote fair competition, and help reduce the fear of crime.

He explained that the next steps would be to give the scheme publicity and encourage traders to apply.

He advised that much work is being undertaken by trading standards authorities throughout the country to prevent cold-calling by companies.

A6 Aids and Adaptations and Domiciliary Care Issues

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Acting Director of Social Care and Health about the National Service Framework for Older People (for copy see file of Minutes)

Following a question from Councillor Barker, John Thornberry advised that progress is being made on the backlog of referrals for assessment and delivery of services, and that not all cases required an occupational therapist's assessment. He went on to explain the measures that are being taken to address this problem and this included self-assessment, and working more closely with other agencies so that only one assessment is undertaken.

In relation to domiciliary care, members expressed concern at the continuity of care during staff annual leave, and sickness. It was explained that retention of staff is difficult. There was a discussion about the training of employees in the independent sector and although the county council does provide training, the independent sector's commitment to funding and training of their staff was an issue.

Members were informed that on 22 November there would be a Users and Carers Forum where members would learn first hand the concerns of carers and clients.

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).

Resolved:-

That the programme be noted.

