

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the Scrutiny Sub-Committee to Promote Strong, Healthy and Safe Communities held at the County Hall, Durham on **Monday 3 March 2008** at **10.00 a.m.**

COUNCILLOR J DAVIES in the Chair

Members of the Sub Committee:

Councillors Armstrong, Barker, Bowman, Douthwaite, E Foster, Robinson, Southwell, Stradling, and Wright.

Other Member:

Councillor Chapman.

Co-opted Members:

Mr B Scott, and Mrs H Gibbon.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Cordon.

A1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2007 were considered. Councillor Southwell advised that his apologies for the meeting had not been recorded. The minute amended accordingly was agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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 Presentation- Age Concern

The Sub-Committee received a presentation from Mrs H Gibbon, Chief Officer of Age Concern Durham regarding the Age Concern Durham County Ageing Well Programme (for copy of slides of presentation see file of Minutes).

She advised that the Healthy Horizons Project was a three year project jointly funded, and was delivered and managed in partnership by Age Concern, Durham County, and Durham and Chester-le-Street Lifestyle Initiative. It focussed on increasing levels of participation in physical activity aged 50 and

above. It seeks to increase social contact, offers a wide range of physical activity, and takes place in multi activity environments including community centres, church halls and care homes.

The second phase of the project is to extend it into Derwentside in partnership with Derwentside Leisure. They will sustain the exercise activities developed in the first phase, expand the range of exercise classes currently being delivered in Derwentside, increase the number of participants with emphasis on men, and those in hard to reach groups, continue to expand the pool of volunteers who lead exercise classes, and train staff in residential care homes in Derwentside to deliver exercise programmes.

She advised of the Good Companions Project that is a 3 year pilot project in Easington which builds upon pilot work undertaken in partnership with a GP surgery in Easington. It aims to reduce the isolation felt by older people, and focus on those identified as suffering from moderate depression. The project will work with 3 GP surgeries, it will provide opportunities for social interaction and mental stimulation.

From April 2008 the New Ageing Well Programme will be developed in the Durham Dales and will promote healthy lifestyles to people aged 50 and above, and offer physical activity and healthy lifestyle classes.

In response to a question from Councillor Douthwaite, Mrs Gibbon advised that if any existing groups wanted assistance they could help.

She advised that they do work in partnership with other organisations to provide services, they send their newsletter to hard to reach groups, they do not duplicate work that is provided by other organisations, however what they do provide depends on funding.

In relation to the Sedfgefield area she advised that she would be meeting with representatives of leisure centre next week to discuss how they can work closer on their healthy agenda

She advised that do work with the PCT however under the new arrangements the PCT have not yet declared what they are going to fund. In terms of providing exercise classes she pointed out that the location of them is important, cost can be an issue however the main thing people get from them is the social activity.

She advised that they no longer receive a core grant from the County Council, although through an SLA they receive £200k per annum. In terms of performance monitoring she advised that she sends a report to the Divisional Commissioning Manager in the Adult and Community Services each quarter.

A5 Quarter 3 2007/08 Performance

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Head of Corporate Policy which provided an update of the quarter 3 performance for the authority's priorities for improvement and the Best Value Performance Indicators relevant to the Corporate Aim of Promoting Strong, Healthy and Safe Communities (for copy see file of Minutes).

In response to a question from Councillor Southwell on how targets are set and are they set at the right level, Bev Stobbart advised that the vast majority of targets are set by the County Council, others if relating to educational attainment are set elsewhere, there are also LAA targets, and some that are negotiated by GONE and central government. The Chairman pointed out that if the authority sets its targets higher than the national average there is room to ensure the authority is performing better than then the average.

Councillor Barker questioned whether there was enough rigour in the system of performance monitoring to challenge those service areas that do not deliver. Bev Stobbart advised that the CPA report has recently been received and this will be looked at in great detail to see where improvements in the system could be made. She pointed out that the scene of performance monitoring was changing nationally, and they should have the final specification from the government by the end of March. It looked like the burden of performance management was increasing. There would be new indicators however they would need to keep the existing ones for sometime for purposes of continuity.

Councillor Stradling suggested that should a service fall down on an indicator for two consistent quarters a scrutiny light touch review be undertaken.

Resolved:-

That the report be noted, and that subsequent quarterly performance progress reports be received.