

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Scrutiny Sub-Committee for Developing Lifelong Learning held at the County Hall, Durham on **Monday 26 September 2005** at **10.00 a.m.**

Present:

Councillor A Cox in the Chair

Members

Councillors Armstrong, Gray, Holroyd, Iveson, Meir, Ord, Porter, Simmons, Stradling, Tennant and Whitfield

Parent Governor Representatives

Mrs A Atkinson and Mrs A M Tallentire

Co-opted Members

Mr J Dormer

Other Members

Councillors Chapman, Douthwaite and Myers

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Sub-Committee listened to a recording of a recent radio programme, which involved the Chairman, to celebrate the European Day of Languages.

A1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

A2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

A3 Family Learning in County Durham

The Sub-Committee received a presentation from David Hughes on the Family Learning in County Durham project which has been supported by funding from the Single Regeneration Budget.

Councillor Dormer questioned the role of men in the Project, as most of the slides shown in the presentation seemed to show women participating. Mr Hughes replied that although, generally, more women than men did get involved in the Project, several initiatives had taken place to encourage more participation by men, these including Family Learning through football and also a celebration of fatherhood event to be held at Beamish Museum on 1 and 2 October.

Members expressed concern regarding the future of the Family Learning Project post March 2006, when funding from the SRB will cease. Councillor Armstrong suggested that other forms of funding, for example Local Area Agreements, NRF and the LCS funding be investigated for the Project.

The Head of Overview and Scrutiny informed the Sub-Committee that the presentation had been made following a request by Mr Cadaxa, and thanked David Hughes for an informative presentation. The Chairman stressed the importance of the Project and the concern over its future funding.

A4 Modern Foreign Languages in County Durham

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny regarding the continuing decline both nationally and locally in the study of Modern Foreign Languages at GCSE level and possible strategies to address this (for copy see file of Minutes).

Margaret Bell, General Inspector with responsibility for Modern Foreign Languages outlined to the Sub-Committee the draft 14-19 Modern Foreign Languages Strategic Plan, and also the Modern Foreign Languages Action Plan for year one.

Councillor Armstrong thanked Margaret Bell for her presentation, and supported the recommendation that this new direction to encourage more focussed language learning be recommended to Cabinet.

Resolved:

That the recommendation contained in the report be approved.

A5 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

Mrs Atkinson asked about trials carried out using fish oils in schools to improve pupil behaviour and achievement. Mr Charlton replied that trials had

been carried out, and a report about them had been submitted to Cabinet. However, for reasons of confidentiality, details of the trials have been kept vague. The trials needed a thorough evaluation, which was now in its preliminary stages.

A6 Performance Management

The Sub-Committee noted a performance management report for lifelong learning for the first quarter of 2005/2006 (for copy see file of Minutes).

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 Free School Transport

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny which explained that a review of recommendations made by the School Transport Scrutiny Working Group had taken place and suggested that the project should be considered completed (for copy see file of Minutes)

Resolved:

That the recommendation contained within the report be approved.

A9 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.

A11 Dates of Future Meetings

The dates of future meetings were noted.