

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**At a Meeting of the Scrutiny Sub-Committee LIFELONG LEARNING COMMITTEE** held at the County Hall, Durham on **MONDAY 26 MARCH 2007** at **10.00 a.m.**

#### **Present**

**COUNCILLOR N WADE** in the Chair

#### **Members:**

Councillors Burlison, Chaplow, Chapman, Coates, N C Foster, Gray, Manton, Mason, Meir, Ord, and Stradling.

#### **Co-opted Members:**

Mrs Tallentire.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barker, Iveson, and Porter.

#### **A1 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2007 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 Update for 3rd Quarter of 2006/07**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Head of Corporate Policy which provided a performance update for the 3rd quarter of 2006 for the

authority's corporate priorities, Best Value Performance Indicators and Public Library Service Standards relevant to the Corporate Aim of Developing Lifelong Learning (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Coates referred to the library indicator in relation to physical visits to libraries which showed deteriorating performance, and questioned whether the timing of the samples as to generate this indicator are rigidly prescribed, and if not could there be flexibility with the day be changed if the weather was poor. The Head of Corporate Policy would look into this with the library service and report back.

Members considered that the number of half days missed both in primary and secondary schools required further examination and they would like to look into this to see how it could be addressed. The Sub-Committee determined that they could have a scrutiny working group on school attendance.

**Resolved:**

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

**A5 Children's Trust**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Services on the partnership proposals for the structure and governance arrangements for a Children's Trust for County Durham to be established on 1 April 2007 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Corporate Director explained that they need effective scrutiny arrangements for this new Partnership. In response to comment from members about involving children and young people further in the scrutiny process, The Head of Overview and Scrutiny advised that had been talking with the community education service about how they could involve young people in the scrutiny process.

Members determined that they should insist rather than negotiate with partners to secure county councillor membership on the Local Boards, and that in addition to there being scrutiny of the Local Children's Boards by the District Councils this should also be undertaken by the County Council. The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised that he would be raise this with the Cabinet.

**A6 Exclusion of the Public**

**Resolved:**

That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be

excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the said Act.

## **B7 Outline Business Case for Building Schools for the Future**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the BSF Board which provided an update on the Outline Business Case in relation to Building Schools for the Future (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Meir, declared an interest in this item as a governor of Seaham School of Technology. Councillor Coates who declared an interest as a governor of Shotton Hall School requested that the schools be kept informed of developments and that the Sub-Committee receive feedback on a regular basis.

Graham Johnson, the BSF Programme Manager explained that following the Gateway Review which had examined the process, they had been working on improving communication which was an issue that had been highlighted in the review for improvement.

In response to a question from Councillor Mason about the possibility of an ICT funding gap Graham Johnson explained that this should not be a problem as they would be able to use other funding to fill the gap.