

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Scrutiny Sub-Committee for LIFELONG LEARNING
held at the County Hall, Durham on **MONDAY 25 JUNE 2007** at **10.00 a.m.**

Present

COUNCILLOR A BARKER in the Chair

Councillors Armstrong, Burlison, Coates, Ebbatson, Holroyd, Manton, Meir, Ord, Porter, Simmons, Stelling, and Stradling

Other Members:

Councillors R Carr, Davies, N C Foster, Priestley, and Vasey

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Brown and Mrs Tallentire.

A1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

In relation to Minute A4 in connection with the visits to the library service, The Head of Corporate Policy advised of the response received from the Adult and Community Service. The survey is undertaken for a whole week at time so if it suddenly started raining/ snowing on any one day they would not be able to stop the survey and reconvene on another day. Councillor Coates suggested that this was not acceptable, and that this could be looked into further.

David Williams, the Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Services provided an update to members on the situation with BSF. The Outline Business Case had been submitted sometime ago to the DfEs and they were waiting to find out if the bid had been successful. They were optimistic that they would get funds for the Sedgefield and Easington areas, and once received progress could be made.

Councillor Vasey advised that all members were invited to the bidder's day at the Ramside Hall on Friday.

In relation to Minute A5, The Head of Overview and Scrutiny advised that himself and Councillor Armstrong had given a presentation to the Local Children's Board and that discussion about the Local Area Agreements is ongoing. He advised that they want to ensure that they are well placed to scrutinise the Children's Boards.

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 Future Priorities and Key Issues with the Sub-Committee's Remit

The Sub-Committee received a presentation from David Williams, the Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Services about future priorities and key issues relating to the Sub-Committee's remit (for copy of slides of presentation see file of Minutes).

His presentation included the service structure, key partners, the source of priorities, the basis of priorities, Every Child Matters outcome areas, and the key improvement priorities.

He explained that many of their priorities were the same as their partners, although there were some differences and gave the example of the Building Schools for the Future programme. His presentation focussed on those shared priorities.

He explained that all the key partners have a statutory duty to work together for the benefit of children and young people, and that they were currently establishing multi-agency teams across the county. He circulated copies of the First Annual Review of the Children and Young People's Plan (for copy see file of Minutes).

He advised that 4,000 8 to 18 year olds were surveyed from a random sample of primary and secondary schools throughout the County. The survey was carried out to provide baseline data to assess key improvement priorities. He advised of the results from this and the information that is now held by his service.

The Sub-Committee discussed the work that was being undertaken to reduce alcohol consumption by children and young people, and that this work was being undertaken in partnership with other agencies and of the scrutiny project that members had recently completed.

The Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Services advised of the three projects he would welcome scrutiny looking into. In response to Councillor Armstrong advising of the capacity issue The Corporate Director advised that officers from his service could assist with the scrutiny process.

The Sub-Committee discussed the areas they would like to scrutinise over the forthcoming year and these included support for young carers, NEET, teenage pregnancy, substance misuse, school attendance, bullying, parenting, pre-school provision, and activities for children and young people. The Co-ordinating Panel would discuss the programme for scrutiny work for the forthcoming year. Councillor Armstrong advised that they would look into as many areas as possible and as there are many cross cutting issues they would avoid duplication with other agencies.

The Sub-Committee discussed the importance of being involved in Local Area Agreements at both local and strategic level and to ensure that the structures supported lifelong learning. It was reported that an internal Member working group, comprising Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Members, had been established which would input in the development of the new partnership arrangements of the Local Area Agreement.

The Head of Overview and Scrutiny advised that they had been considering how to engage children and young people in the scrutiny process and that their input would play a part in the project working.

A5 Key Stage 4 Scrutiny Working Group

The Sub Committee noted the report of the Key Stage 4 Scrutiny Working Group (for copy see file of Minutes)

A6 Performance Update for 4th Quarter of 2006/07

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Head of Corporate Policy which provided a performance update for the 4th quarter of 2006/07 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)

In relation to BV38 concerning better educational attainment at Key Stage 4 members noted the improvements that had been made and that Durham County Council was the 16th most improved local authority that year.

Councillor Coates referred to BV 181a in relation to the deteriorated performance of the number of 14 year olds pupils achieving level 5 or above in Key Stage 3 test in English, and requested that the targeted improvement strategies that had been implemented in schools be monitored to see if they

were effective and that a report be brought back to the Sub-Committee at an appropriate time.

Resolved:

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