

## Item No 3

### DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

**At a Meeting** of the **Developing Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee** held at the County Hall, Durham on **Monday 15 December 2008 at 10.00 a.m.**

#### **PRESENT**

**Councillor J Blakey** in the Chair

#### **Members:**

Councillors Armstrong, A Bainbridge, P Brookes, M Dixon, Holroyd, Iveson, Lethbridge, Maslin, Savory, J Shiell, Simmons, Stradling, and B Wilson

#### **Other Members:**

Councillor R Todd

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

Mr R Pye, and Mrs Tallentire

#### **Faith Community Representative:**

Mr P Mackie

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Bainbridge, Bowman, C Potts, and Mrs L Bailey.

#### **A1 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meetings held on 22 September and 4 November 2008 were considered. With the addition of Mr A Barker, and Mr R Pye in the attendance for the meeting of the 22 September, and the apologies of Councillor Maslin recorded for that meeting the minutes as amended were agreed a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Referring to Minute A3 of the meeting on 4 November in relation to the consultation on Community Secondary Schools Admission Criteria, The Head of Overview and Scrutiny advised that the views of the Committee had been shared with Maureen Clare, Head of Access and Inclusion Services. The

consultation period had been extended until the end of February 2009, and the consultation document that had been circulated to other parties was to include the views of this Committee.

Councillor Stradling pointed out that a governor from Dene House School had shown him the consultation document he had received which did not include the changes made to it by the Committee. The Head of Overview and Scrutiny would discuss this with Maureen Clare and ensure that the consultation document did include the views of the Committee.

## **A2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest

## **A3 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties**

There were no items.

## **A4 BSF Update**

The Committee received a report from David Theobald, BSF Project Director that provided an update on the BSF Programme (for copy of report see file of Minutes).

He provided information on Procurement, Phase 1 Schools, Phase 2 Schools, and on Phases 3 &4. He explained that they were close to concluding negotiations with a private sector partner for a ten year period. He advised that they were hoping to submit to DCFS the schools in phases 3 and 4 of funding for next year, in order to enhance all schools in the final wave of funding. In response to a question regarding the current economic climate he explained that they were not yet aware of the repercussions this would have on the programme however they felt it would be better to seek funds earlier than later.

## **A5 Visit to Durham Johnston School Site**

The Committee received a report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny on the visit to the Durham Johnston School site on 21 November (for copy of slides see file of Minutes).

Councillor Stradling advised that he had been present on the visit and was very impressed that the project had gone so smoothly while still running a school. He advised that the building was very welcoming and would be a remarkable facility for the community as well as the school to use. He suggested that a further visit be made to the school prior to its opening, and

that any members who had not been present on the first visit would find it very interesting.

The Head of Overview and Scrutiny advised that the Head Teacher had invited members to make a return visit, and appropriate arrangements would be made.

## **A6 Academies Update**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Children's Services regarding the Development of Academies in County Durham (for copy see file of Minutes).

Mr R Pye declared an interest in this item as a Governor of one of the schools involved.

Sheila Palmerley explained that Cabinet had agreed for officers to work with sponsors and the DCSF to develop the Academies programme, to begin further consultation on the proposed options, and to seek DCSF support in the development of a formal "Expression of Interest" for Academies in Durham.

She advised that the consultation would involve all 7 schools and their staff, the parents of each school, the parents of children who go to the connected primary schools, and there would be information sharing evenings for each school. After the views were sought on the proposals a further report would be presented to Cabinet.

In response to a question Sheila Palmerley clarified the position in relation to the proposals relating the Durham Gillesgate Sports College and Sixth Form Centre in that the 11-16 year olds would go to the Academy and the 16-19 year olds would be at the one 16-19 school sixth form in Durham City.

## **A7 Children and Young People's Plan- Second Annual Review**

The Committee received a report of the Head of Strategic Commissioning that provided an update on the outcome of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Review of the Children and Young People's Plan (for copy see file of Minutes).

Carole Payne pointed out that the priorities remain the same however there are to be more accurate measures to monitor progress. She explained that the Children's Plan is owned by all partners in the Children's Board, and that it was a three year plan however many priorities would take longer to resolve .

In response to Carole asking the Committee to be more involved in its work, the Head of Overview and Scrutiny pointed out that the Overview and Scrutiny process had already involved Working Groups looking at many of the issues that are in the Plan as priorities. He advised of the work already

undertaken however there were more areas they could be involved in. He pointed out that through legislative changes, scrutiny would be focussing on its partners, through the LAA and the Children's Boards there was significant opportunity for members to be involved.

Councillor Armstrong suggested that the Committee need to be aware of what funding arrangements are in place by their partners prior to the Committee making any decisions on how it could input into the process. They would then need to discuss targeting and value for money. It was likely that they could build into their work programme for next year some of the issues that were priorities that they could get involved in.

Carole Payne advised that she would present to the next meeting further information on the joint commissioning that is taking place and on the Area Based Grants. She explained that they have spent the last eighteen months developing an integrated service, and will find efficiencies and new ways of working. They held a stakeholder event, and have consulted elected members. It was pointed out that faith groups are part of their statutory consultees.

Members welcomed the report, and noted the improvements that are being made in terms of the priorities as set out in the Plan.

The Committee would receive information from Carole Payne at the next meeting on funding issues of joint commissioning, and the Area Based Grants prior to making any decisions on how scrutiny would get involved is working towards its priorities.

## **A8 Youth Provision Scrutiny Project**

The Committee received a report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny that provided an update on the progress to date with the scrutiny investigation into youth provision (for copy of report see file of Minutes).

Councillor Stradling advised that during the school Christmas holidays there was to be a visit to the Investing in Children centre at Framwellgate Moor to meet the group of young people involved in the project, and he hoped that as many members as possible attend.