

Scrutiny Committee for Developing Lifelong Learning

23 March 2009



Youth Provision Scrutiny Project

Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

Purpose

1. To update members of the Committee about progress to date with the scrutiny investigation into youth provision.

Background

2. I reported to the Committee on 15 December 2008 about progress with the scrutiny project into youth provision. This is joint project with the Strong, Healthy and Safe Communities Scrutiny Committee and is being led by the Chair of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee. The aim of the project is to examine what actions the council and its partners can take to establish an integrated approach to service provision which:
 - (i) Recognises the rights of young people aged 11 and over, and
 - (ii) Offers places to go and things to do which help young people enjoy and achieve and make a positive contribution through engaging in positive activities

Project Progress

3. The first meeting of the Scrutiny Working Group was held on 2 October 2008 when members considered the terms of reference and project plan and received a presentation about Durham County Council's Youth Service. In subsequent sessions members have received evidence about:
 - (a) What young people want in their areas – an Investing in Children report for the Children's Trust to aid commissioning of services for young people
 - (b) A survey of young people in the Clavering area of Hartlepool about youth-related issues
 - (c) "Your Shout" - Views from young people living in poor communities in the North East
 - (d) Comments from young people - Investing in Children
 - (e) District Council leisure provision for young people
 - (f) The role of the Connexions Service
 - (g) Children's Trusts and Boards
 - (h) Dance for your Future – Positive Futures

- (i) The “Get Out There” Website
- (j) The Empowering Young People Pilot Project
- (k) “Choysez” – A programme to support and empower young people in Northumberland
- (l) Transport barriers to young people accessing leisure and education
- (m) The County Durham Youth Engagement Service

Emerging Themes

4. The project is now nearing completion with only one or two more meetings planned (plus visits). Some of the emerging themes (the list is not exhaustive) are:
- Ensuring that the rights of young people are recognised and that they are listened to when plans, policies and strategies are being developed
 - Developing a more strategic and joined up approach for services and opportunities for young people
 - Promoting opportunities for young people to access community provision and leisure and the development of common, young-people-friendly, policies by the new Unitary Council for young people accessing leisure provision across the County
 - Overcoming the barriers to young people accessing leisure and educational activities including:
 - Publicity about activities
 - Cost
 - Transport
 - Resourcing the Youth Service
 - Addressing Public Perceptions of Young People
 - Improved information for members about what’s happening on youth offending in their localities
5. It is expected that the project will finish taking evidence in March/early April 2009, with a view to producing a report (and recommendations) thereafter.

Recommendation

6. That the Committee note progress in relation to the scrutiny investigation.

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Supporting Papers:

- Youth Scrutiny Project Working File