

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2 - County Hall, Durham on **Monday 16 July 2012 at 10.30 am**

Present:

Councillor J Blakey (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors C Potts, J Armstrong, B Bainbridge, R Crooks, G Huntington, S Iveson, S Robinson, P Stradling, J Wilkinson and S Zair

Co-opted Members:

Mr C McCaughey

Also Present:

Councillors A Bainbridge and J Moran

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Brookes, K Holroyd, J Lethbridge, J Maslin, M Simmons and B Wilson and Mr G Moran

1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that a response had been provided to Councillor Simmons regarding her query about educational psychologists. The Chairman had also been provided with a copy of the response, which was available to Committee Members if they so requested.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

There were no items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties.

4 Media Relations

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer showed examples of press articles relating to Children and Young People's Services. The articles related to:

- The Durham Dash and Lesson on Healthy Food – these articles were relevant to the Scrutiny Review of Excess Weight in Primary Aged Children which was currently taking place.
- Plan to Improve Family Life – this article related to the Children and Young People's Family Plan 2012-2016 which was Item No. 8 on the agenda.

5 Communities of Learning

The Committee considered a joint report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services regarding Communities of Learning and received a presentation from David Priestly, Head Teacher, Greenfield School and Mark Turner, Head Teacher, Gilesgate Primary School (for report and copies of slides see file of Minutes).

Mr Priestly informed the Committee that Communities of Learning (CoL's) were established in 2004/05 and there were 15 CoL's within County Durham, which comprised clusters of nursery, primary, secondary and special schools. CoL's met regularly in each locality and were chaired by elected representatives from schools, supported by local authority staff. CoL Chairs also met together with Local Authority officers on a termly basis to share practice and discuss priorities. CoL's aimed to raise achievement and extend opportunities for children through collaboration and partnership.

In response to a question from Councillor Bainbridge regarding extended needs of children, for example, those with children with parents who were alcohol or drug dependant, Mr Turner replied that CoL's looked at the extended schools structure, which included the needs of both pupils and their families.

In reply to a question regarding how CoL's related to the recently introduced One Point service Mr Priestley informed the Committee that CoL's had supported the evolution of the One Point service, and each One Point area had a CoL representative on it, together with a One Point representative being invited to CoL meetings.

In response to a question from Councillor Stradling, Mr Priestley confirmed that each area within County Durham was represented with a CoL. Councillor Stradling expressed concern in the area of speech therapy in schools, which was being provided by trained staff and not by fully trained speech therapists. Mr Turner replied that some CoL's had employed speech therapists so that speech therapy provision was available in schools, however, there were difficulties with the therapists travelling between schools to provide the service. A pupil would be referred to the therapist for an assessment to take place, following which a programme of work would be produced to be delivered by trained staff in schools.

Councillor Armstrong asked about contingency plans within CoL's if their funding was reduced or stopped. Mr Priestley replied that schools would identify priority areas and allocate funds accordingly, adding that if funding was cut then the service provided would be affected.

Resolved:

That the presentation be noted, and that an update be provided to Committee in 6 months to include priorities from other CoL's within the County.

6 Places To Go, Things To Do Strategy and Strategy for Youth

The Committee considered a joint report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services regarding the 'Places to Go Things to Do' strategy and received a presentation from Paul McGinnety, Commissioning Manager, Children and Young People's Services (for report and copies of slides see file of Minutes).

The Places to go Things to do strategy was approved by Cabinet in December 2009. Although there was an abundance of activities there were barriers preventing children, young people and families from accessing activities. One of the barriers was marketing of places to go things to do.

The presentation highlighted what work had been done to help reduce barriers to accessing services and explained the two phased approach which had been adopted and provided an update on significant developments of the marketing of Places to go Things to do. Phase One involved marketing and promotion linked to the Olympics and school summer holidays, while Phase Two involved the production of a services for youth strategy.

The draft of the Strategy for Youth would be designed to:

- Protect and develop local services
- Target specific local and national agendas
- Work with local communities, AAP's and the One Point service to create local community partnerships to involve all sectors
- Suggest a mixed economy of funding and service delivery

Councillor Stradling informed the Committee that Horden had a local community partnership but he was unaware of the piece of work being undertaken at Phase Two. The Commissioning Manager, Children and Young People's Services replied that Phase Two had not yet commenced. Councillor Stradling stressed the need to keep activities and information relevant to localities.

Councillor Armstrong informed the Commissioning Manager, Children and Young People's Services that it was very important to work closely with AAP's as they were both a possible source of funding and also had a good knowledge of local areas.

Resolved:

That the report and presentation be noted and that the Strategy be re-visited once Phase Two was operational.

7 Quarter 4 2011/2012 Performance Management Report

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive that presented progress against the Council's corporate basket of performance indicators and reported other significant performance issues for the fourth quarter of 2011/12 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Blakey referred to the indicator on page 26 of Appendix 5 of the report and asked that the data for conceptions for 13-15 year olds be provided. Claire McLaren,

Quality and Research Manager, Children and Young People's Services replied that this data would be provided from quarter one onwards for 2012/13 and could be provided for quarter four of 2011/12. Councillor Blakey then referred to the indicator for child poverty and asked whether this may increase over the forthcoming year due to welfare reform. Councillor Armstrong replied that this indicator may need to be re-visited as the target may not be a realistic one due to welfare reform.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

8 Children, Young People and Families Plan 2012-2016

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services that provided an update on the Children, Young People's and Families Plan 2-12-2016 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Armstrong asked how performance against the priorities within the Plan would be measured. Claire McLaren, Planning, Quality and research Manager, Children and Young People's Services replied that there was an action plan in place for the Plan and also a performance framework. The Overview and Scrutiny Manager added that there was a key role for scrutiny in the monitoring of the Plan and this was outlined on page 61 of the papers.

Councillor Iveson referred to the need to promote healthy eating and reduce obesity levels among young people and asked what impact the cessation of the free school meals project may have. The Overview and Scrutiny Manager replied that a Scrutiny Working Group was currently looking at the issue of obesity in primary aged children. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer added that outcomes from the free school meals project were expected in July 2012.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

9 Refresh of the Committee's Work Programme 2012/2013

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive that provided an updated work programme for the Committee for 2012-2014 for consideration (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor Stradling reminded the Committee that any work programme would need to be completed by January 2013 because of the issue of purdah in the run up to elections in May 2013. Therefore the work programme would need to be both manageable and realistic within this timescale. Councillor Armstrong suggested the areas for consideration for the Committee to consider as Mental Health Issues of Children and Young People and Alcohol and Substance Misuse of Children and Young People. Councillor Stradling agreed with these areas, adding that the maximum the Committee could consider in the timescale would be two Light Touch reviews and one Review. The Overview and Scrutiny Manager informed the Committee that there would be a need to add the Effectiveness of Academies to the Work Programme.

Resolved:

That reviews of Support for Children and Young People with Mental Health Issues and Alcohol and Substance Misuse of Children and Young People be undertaken.

10 Update on Joint Working Group's Scrutiny Review of Excess Weight

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that the Working Group had completed its' evidence gathering and would be considering a draft report of findings at a meeting to be held on 26 July 2012.

11 County Durham Children and Families Trust Executive Board

The Committee considered the Minutes of the Children's Trust Executive Board held on 12 March 2012.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes be noted.