

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 **Thursday 2 April 2015 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor J Blakey (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Armstrong, D Bell, C Hampson, K Hopper, J Measor, S Morrison, C Potts, L Pounder, M Simmons, H Smith and M Stanton

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Dearden, J Hart, D Hicks, P Stradling, Mr K Gilfillan, Mrs G Harrison and Mr D Kinch

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received by Councillors Dearden, Hart, Hicks, Stradling and Mr Gilfillan and Mr Kinch.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members in attendance.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 12 January and 24 February 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 Declarations of Interest, if any

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

6 Innovations Programme:

The Committee received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which introduced a presentation on the governments Innovation Programme (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Children's Services gave a presentation which detailed the Councils Innovations in Children's Services, which was to be undertaken in 2015 following Durham

County Councils successful bids of £0.5m and £3.36m from the governments Innovation Programme (for copy see file of minutes).

The first successful bid was for £0.5m and was to fund a therapeutic programme developed in conjunction with Barnardos. The programme provided welfare beds for children who had been exposed to Child Sexual Exploitation and were traumatised by abuse.

Following the successful bid, another was put forward for £3.26m and as Durham had already been working towards an innovative programme since 2007, this would continue with a third phase of work. The plan was to permanently change the way Social Services operated and therefore in future there would be no need to access grants to fund the programme as the existing budget would be utilised in a different way.

In response to a query from Councillor Armstrong regarding the timescale for the programme and the possibility of an additional £12m of savings to be made, the Head of Children's Services confirmed that the programme would reduce the number of Looked after Children and this would be a considerable saving. It would also continue to save money in future by the nature of a new, permanent process which focused on early intervention.

The Chairman queried whether the Youth Service and Housing Providers were involved in the referral process as many troubled families would be known to these services. The Strategic Manager Think Family Services confirmed that there would be an event in the Summer which would involve housing providers, who were very keen to be involved in the programme and the Youth Service was part of One Point which had regular contact.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted and a further update provided in six months.

7 Performance Management Report Quarter 3

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Management Team which presented progress against the council's corporate basket of performance indicators for the Altogether Better for Children and Young People theme and report other significant issues for the third quarter of 2014/15 covering October to December 2014 (for copy see file of minutes).

In response to a comment from Councillor Armstrong regarding working group findings with regards to child obesity and the Head of Children's Services referred to obesity becoming a problem at a late age, however work was being done in schools to educate children on healthy eating and exercise, ensuring that they were aware of what a healthy diet consisted of. The issue was not that children did not know how to eat healthily, but was with getting children to eat healthy food and favour activity, rather than computer games or television. County Durham's figures were more positive than the national average and work in schools would continue in order to change children's habits and further improve the figures.

The Chairman referred to an event at a Primary School which she had attended with regards to children making their own recipes and praised the work that was being done by schools in an attempt to combat obesity in children.

Councillor Smith referred to the success within the EYFS and as the rationale behind the closure of Children's Centres was due to its ineffectiveness, queried whether the improvement in these figures would have impact on the decision made. The Head of Children's Services confirmed that although the figure had improved for children who received free school meals, there was still a significant issue with the attainment of vulnerable children, which would be addressed within the Review of Children's Centres.

In response to a comment by the Chairman, the Strategic Manager, Performance and Information confirmed that the data for underage conceptions was outdated, but this was due to the process that it went through before being published.

8 Update on Stronger Families Programme

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director, Children and Adult Services, which provided Members with an update on the Stronger Families Programme and in addition, (for copy see file of minutes).

The Committee received a presentation on the Councils Troubled Families Programme, from the Strategic Manager Think Family Services (for copy see file of minutes) and in addition, watched a short film of service users' stories and the positive impact it had on their lives.

In response to a query from Councillor Armstrong, the Head of Children's Services confirmed that the project was funded until 2020, however in terms of value for money, it would avoid the intervention of police and health services and therefore overall savings would be made. In addition, the programme would be incorporated into existing procedures and become standard practice.

Councillor Stanton commended the programme and the Committee were advised by the Strategic Manager, Think Family Services, that the women in the film had been invited to an event which they had been confident enough to attend and were unrecognisable from the film, their confidence had grown so much due to the service. In addition, she reported that two of them were now volunteers in Children's Centres.

9 Budget Outturn Report Quarter 3

The Committee received a report of the Head of Finance, (Financial Services), which provided the Committee with details of the forecast outturn budget position for Children and Adult Services, highlighting major variances in comparison with the budget for the year, based on the position to the end of December 2014 (for copy see file of minutes).

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

10 Draft Scrutiny Review Report: Self-Harm by Young People

The Committee received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive, which provided Members with the findings of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group Review Report on Self-Harm by Young People (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Children's Services queried recommendation E. There were two separate issues being dealt with however she confirmed that her interpretation for a single point of contact would be one person. Councillor Armstrong confirmed that the single point of contact was not with regards to one person, but to one section to advise and direct service users to the correct pathway. The Head of Children's Services confirmed that there was an existing single assessment process which directed service users to the correct pathway, however the second point which involved keeping a register of incidents.

With regards to recommendation F, the Head of Children's Services queried the inclusion of health visitors as they were for pre-school children of under 5 years old and would therefore not present themselves in schools.

RESOLVED

- That the Head of Children's Services would liaise with the Overview and Scrutiny Officer in rewording recommendation E.
- That recommendation F be amended to remove the reference to health visitors.

That the recommendations outlined in the report, subject to the amendments outlined above, be agreed.

11 Refresh of the Work Programme

The Committee received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive, which provided Members with information contained within the Council Plan 2015-2018, relevant to Children and Young People's Services. This would allow members to refresh the Committee Work Programme to reflect the 3 objectives and subsequent outcomes identified within the Council Plan or Altogether Better for Children and Young People (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor Armstrong referred Members of the Committee to the report and invited them to give consideration to what priorities they wanted in the forthcoming Work Programme to be discussed at the next meeting.