

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Monday 11 January 2016 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor C Potts (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Armstrong, D Bell, K Corrigan, K Dearden, O Gunn, D Hall, C Hampson, J Hart, K Hopper, J Measor, S Morrison, M Nicholls, L Pounder, M Simmons, H Smith and P Stradling

Faith Community Representative:

Mrs G Harrison

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Hicks, P Lawton, M Stanton, W Stelling and Mr D Kinch.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2015 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, with the inclusion of Councillor O Gunn being recorded as giving her apologies for the meeting (for copy see file of Minutes).

4 Declarations of Interest, if any

There were no declarations on interest.

5 Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

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

6 Media Relations - Update on Press Coverage

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer referred Members to recent press articles relating to the remit of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (for copy see file of minutes). The articles were:-

- Pupils get healthy with a little help from superhero Spiderman – Evening Chronicle 2.12.15
Children from St. Anne’s Church of England Primary school in Bishop Auckland have been enjoying walking to school accompanied by Spiderman. A pupil from the school won a Mega Motion competition and chose Spiderman to join her and her class mates as they walked, cycled and scooted to school
- Failing Children’s Services face takeover – The Week 14.12.15
This headline relates to a statement by Prime Minister that failing children’s services departments within Local Authorities will face tough new measures. High performing councils such as Durham, Leeds and Hampshire and charities will be asked to form a ‘think tank’ to provide advice to the worst children’s services and will have authority to make changes.
- Schools told to keep pupils safe online – BBC 22.12.15
schools in England have been told they must set online filters and monitor pupil’s internet use. The proposed measures include showing young people how to use the internet and making sure parents and teachers are able to keep youngsters safe from exploitation and radicalisation.
- Families skimp on heat to meet housing costs, says Shelter – BBC 4.1.16
A report by Shelter indicates that due to high rents and mortgages families in England are skimping on heating and winter clothes and food to make ends meet.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer also reported that three of our children’s homes, High Etherley, West Rainton and Framwellgate Moor, had been inspected and found to be outstanding. The Chairman asked that a letter of congratulations sent to the Head of Service.

Resolved:

That the content of the presentation be noted.

7 Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs

The Committee received a joint report from the Assistant Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Children and Adults Services that provided information relating to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Manager, First Contact and Intervention gave a detailed presentation that covered the following key points:-

- What is the MASH?
- Who is involved?
- What progress has been made since March 2015?
- Screening of Referrals
- Activity and Performance
- Decision Making in the MASH
- What difference has the MASH made?
- Examples of Success
- Challenges
- Future Development Plans

Councillor J Hart referred to child protection issues and the obstacles that were hard to overcome, and asked about how the team would go about teaching how to share the necessary information. The Strategic Manager said that there was a dataflow agreement in place and some of the usual obstacles were less of a problem for the MASH. There were clear parameters but the MASH could override data protection due to the nature of the issues. She advised that people were more inclined to share information and people were now asking more for information.

Referring to the one education representative on the MASH, Councillor O Gunn expressed concerns that this may not be sufficient and asked for the role to be described. The Strategic Manager advised that the education representative would be responsible for contacting schools and let them know if a referral had been made and would compile a MASH report with them. The benefits of this relationship could change a rating from a red to amber alert and she assured Members that the education representative had a better understanding of how the school system worked and that this approach works well.

Councillor H Smith said that this was a hugely positive development but queried the capacity issues from health care colleagues, and asked what strategies and policies were in place to support the huge numbers. The Strategic Manager advised that services were commissioned via the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and that there were ongoing negotiations with the CCGs and Foundation Trust. An agreement had been made to increase the number of health staff within the MASH and new staff would be in post in February. She informed the Committee that with the addition of a nurse and administration staff they were confident that it would help deal with the capacity issue. These staff would be able to access referrals within the IT System, called System 1. This was also accessed by health visitors and school nurses. Some health colleagues (health visitors and school nurses), could access data from a GPs, but GP records are not available to view therefore direct calls could be made to the GP to gain valuable information. She advised that parents and adults could make it more difficult to access data.

Mrs G Harrison asked if there was a process in place for lessons learnt and was advised that there were robust systems in place and weekly meetings took place to assess the activity of that week. Mrs Harrison added that she had been involved in a recent case but was surprised that she had not been contacted asking for her opinion and that no information was shared on the outcome. The Strategic Manager would follow this up but said that Mrs Harrison could report any issues to her manager that would be fed back into the weekly meetings.

With regards to Adults Services, Councillor Hart asked if there was a corresponding service. The Strategic Manager advised that this service was not as multi agency based and that the system works in a very different way. There were additional issues about consent for data to be shared. She added that for adults it was about support and therefore the system was difficult to replicate.

Councillor D Hall asked about the quality of referrals and if people come back into the system that should have been given more support. The Strategic Manager advised that the first point of contact had a very quick turnaround and there were people who were referred back. 20% of social care referrals come back. She advised that there was a

staircase model of need with signposting to early help services. She added that this was a national problem but that Durham were doing well in this area with a small number of children who repeatedly come back into the system. The Head of Children's Services assured the Committee that she was confident that the service offers support to all stages of need and a range of help for early response was given.

Councillor J Armstrong asked how success was measured and if there was a benchmark. He suggested that this service was monitored and that an update be given to the Committee in 6 months' time. The Head of Children's Services said that it was monitored and the impact was seen. The Children's and Families Partnership were developing a framework. The Strategic Manager advised that staff at the MASH were office based and that they were a small but significant piece of the jigsaw. She added that the MASH provide a critical interface with social workers. The Head of Children's Services said that an update would be provided in 6 months but suggested that in the meantime Members of the Committee were welcome to visit the new premises of the MASH.

Resolved:

That the report and presentation be noted.

8 Refresh of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment & Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2019

The Committee received a joint report of the Corporate Director of Children and Adults Services and the Director of Public Health County Durham that provided an update on the refresh of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-19 (for copy of report and slides of presentation see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Manager, Policy Planning and Partnerships gave a detailed presentation that covered the following key points:-

- National Context
- Engagement Process
- JSNA Key Messages
 - Demographics
 - Health
 - Social Care
- Strategic Objectives
- Next steps
- Consultation Questions

Councillor M Nicholls commented that obesity is a concern and that some children no longer play out and chose to stay indoors on computers instead. He also commented that there was an increasing problem with younger children drinking with older children and was concerned that people still bought the alcohol for them.

Councillor J Armstrong referred to the data lag and the Strategic Manager said that the most up to date information was included in the JSNA at the time of writing but recognised that for some datasets, the data lag is a national issue. He referred to teenage pregnancies and asked for specific data in relation to 13-15 year olds in school.

Referring to physical activity Councillor D Hall asked if a framework had been developed and if so when. The Strategic Manager advised that this was currently out for consultation led by Neighbourhood Services and closes on Friday 15 January. She would request that information on the framework be circulated to Members.

Councillor Hall went on to ask if there was a clearer link to employers and the regeneration strategy. The Strategic Manager advised that action was being taken forward as a cross-cutting issue for the County Durham Partnership.

With reference to the data lag, Councillor P Stradling said that it was important to ensure we were still on the right strategic lines and that he could not see any gaps in the strategic actions.

Councillor O Gunn referred to the recent government guidelines about the consumption of alcohol and asked if there were any figures relating to alcohol related illnesses and hospital admissions. She said that the information would be helpful and the Strategic Manager agreed to circulate this.

Resolved:

- (i) That the content of the report be noted
- (ii) Members of the Committee were to report feedback to the Overview and Scrutiny Officer, and comments would be fed into the Health and Wellbeing Board.

9 Refresh of the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2016 -19

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Adults Services which provided an update on the refresh of the Children, Young People and Families Plan (CYPFP) 2016-19 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Partnership Manager, Policy, Planning and Partnerships (CAS) gave a detailed presentation that highlighted the following points:-

- What is the Children, Young People and Families Plan?
- Engagement Process
- What has informed the CYPFP?
- Focus of CYP Overview and Scrutiny
- Strategic Actions

She advised that the comments of scrutiny members were welcomed on the refresh, with the final version of the CYPFP being presented to the Children and Families Partnership for agreement on 21 March 2016 and being reported to Cabinet on 11 May 2016.

In response to a question from Councillor Hall, the Head of Children's Services advised that "Think Family" was a key strand of work taking place across Children and Adults Services and within Partnerships.

The Partnership Manager advised that a full list of actions were included within the plan further to a question from Councillor Gunn about child sexual exploitation.

Resolved:

- (i) That the content of the report be noted and;
- (ii) Members of the Committee were to report feedback to the Overview and Scrutiny Officer.

10 Durham Local Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report 2014/15

The Committee received a report of the Independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, which shared with Members the Annual Report of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) (for copy see file of minutes).

The Independent Chair informed the Committee of the objectives of the Board, the challenges faced and achievements made. She advised of the priorities until 2018 including self-harm, a priority that young people had advised was important to them.

In response to a question from Councillor Hart the Independent Chair advised that Serious Case Reviews are available on the LSCB website for a period of 12 months.

The Head of Children's Services advised that the key themes from serious case reviews were the same as experienced nationally. She said that the UK had one of the most effective safeguarding systems in the world.

Councillor Gunn asked if further review of the size of the board was required. The Independent Chair advised that a recent review had ensured that the correct people were now around the table and confirmed that the education representatives would make a real difference. She advised that the board had focused agendas and would continue to review and monitor their progress.

Councillor J Measor congratulated the Board on the report and Councillor Armstrong endorsed the priorities for 2015/16.

Resolved:

That the content of the report be noted.

11 Quarter 2 2015/16 Performance Management Report

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director Management Team which presented Members with progress against the Councils corporate basket of performance indicators for the Altogether Better for Children and Young People theme, as well as other significant performance issues for the 2015/16 financial year, covering the period July to September 2015 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Strategic Manager, Performance and Information Management, highlighted the key achievements and key performance improvements issues, giving a detailed analysis of the figures within the report.

Further to a question from Councillor Hall about the school improvement team, the Head of Children's Services advised that although some smaller authorities have struggled in this area Durham have a sound service and continue to contract services to other local authorities in the region. She advised that we have the expertise and capacity to meet the level of demand. Councillor Hall enquired if we receive feedback from schools and advice

about what they need to do to improve. Mrs Harrison said that the support available to struggling schools was wonderful and access to the overall support network, including the Durham Teaching Alliance, was helpful. She also advised that schools support and partner each other.

Councillor Hart pointed out the data lag and asked if there was an explanation to the decline in the obese/overweight performance and was advised that this was a nationwide problem. The Strategic Manager advised that the data presented was the latest available. He advised that the issue was complex and is one that other areas in the country are also facing. The Public Health team are involved in new pilots and commissioned work to better understand and help tackle this issue. The Chairman added that this was an area of concern that needed addressing. Councillor Dearden added that obesity was entrenched and difficult to get out of for families who could only afford cheap bad food which was easier to obtain.

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

12 Review of the Council Plan and Service Plans

The Committee received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which provided an update on progress on the development of the Altogether Better for Children and Young People section of the Council Plan 2015-2018 including the draft aims and objectives contained within the Plan and the proposed performance indicator set to measure our success (for copy see file of minutes).

The Corporate Scrutiny & Performance Manager referred members to the addition of a new indicator on Child Sexual Exploitation and highlighted the other changes to the plans.

Comments from the committee were welcomed and it was advised that overview and scrutiny comments would be fed back into the reporting process, with the final council approval being reported to Council on 13 April 2016.

Resolved:

That the content of the report be noted.

13 Quarter 2: Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2015/16 - Children and Adult Services

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Finance that provided Members 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 September 2015, as reported to Cabinet in November 2015 (for copy of report see file of minutes).

In response to a question relating to an overspend in Child Protection and Disability Services the Head of Children's Care advised that some authorities were giving golden hellos to attract social workers to work for them and that this was an emerging situation

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

14 Summary of Children and Family Partnership Minutes 21 September 2015

The Committee considered the minutes of the Children and Families Partnership on 21 September 2015 (for copies see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the minutes be noted.