

## **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 **Friday 13 April 2012 at 10.00 am**

#### **Present:**

**Councillor J Blakey (Chairman)**

#### **Members of the Committee:**

Councillors C Potts, J Armstrong, J Lethbridge, E Paylor, S Robinson, J Shiell, M Simmons and P Stradling

#### **Apologies:**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Bowman, P Brookes, K Holroyd, S Iveson, N Martin, J Wilkinson, B Wilson, S Zair and Mr C McCaughey

#### **1 Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 March 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer provided the Committee with the following updates to the Minutes:

- An officer from Children and Young People's Services had prepared a briefing note on progression of pupils with Special Educational Needs at Key Stages 2 and 3 and this would be emailed to Members.
- The Chairman and Vice-Chairman had been invited to attend a Communities of Learning Network meeting. An overview presentation on Communities of Learning would be made at the next meeting of the Committee in July.
- There had been no clarity from the Department of Education on the Government's intention to reduce the time limit on SEN statements from 26 to 20 weeks as set out in the Support and Aspiration Green Paper. However, it was anticipated that the Government would be publishing something soon that would describe the next steps.

Councillor Simmons referred to the issue raised at the last meeting of the Committee regarding educational psychologists to which no reply had been received. The Head of County Wide Services, Children and Young Peoples Services replied that she had asked the Educational Support Services Manager to respond to Councillor Simmons and undertook to chase this up. The Chairman asked that the response be reported back to the Committee.

## **2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

## **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:

- Analysis of Health Online – this article related to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which was Item No. 7 on the agenda. There was particular attention to the Instant Atlas interactive tool which allowed information to be looked at in greater detail at a local level.
- Pupils Olympics – this article referred to the Durham County School Games which were held at Freeman's Quay and Maiden Castle. Approximately 900 children took part in the event as part of the Council's Olympic Legacy programme.
- Riders' Miles of Smiles – this article related to a cycling club that had been set up at St Bede's Comprehensive School, Peterlee and Byron's Sixth Form College. The club was established with the intention of raising the profile of cycling in the area and to encourage people to get fit.
- Active Holidays Events – this article related to a number of events which were taking place during the Easter holidays for children with a disability.

## **5 Quarter 3 2011/12 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 third quarter of 2011/12 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Suzanne Carty, Planning, Performance and Commissioning Manager, Children and Young People's Services drew the Committee's attention to the following indicators:

- The results of the recent inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children had been published which confirmed judgements of 'Outstanding' for Safeguarding and 'Good' for Looked After Children with both showing outstanding capacity for improvement.
- Between October and December 2011 the number of hours of short breaks offered for disabled children had more than doubled, to 32,621 hours, with the range of short break provision also increasing.
- The percentage of children in need referrals that occurred within 12 months of previous referral had improved.
- The percentage of child protection cases which were reviewed within required timescales had improved from 97.2% to 98.3% for the period October to December 2011.

- The conception rate amongst girls aged 15-17 years had improved in performance to a 24.3% reduction from the 1998 baseline. The rolling quarterly average for Durham continued to display an improving trend showing a conception rate of 44.2 per 1,000 girls aged 15-17, which outperformed the north-east rate of 45 but still fell short of the England rate of 36
- There had been a slight increase in the percentage of children in 2010/11 reception year who were obese from 9.2% to 9.5%. However, Durham outperformed its statistical neighbours at 9.8%, but fell just short of the national benchmark of 9.4%. In County Durham, participation rates were higher than other areas across the country which meant that a lot more data was being captured which gave a more accurate picture of performance.
- Final pass rates for GCSE's and A-levels had been released and confirmed the continuous improvement in pass rates. However, the figures also confirmed the achievement gap between those eligible for free school meals and those not, and between male and female pupils.
- Risk management. The most significant risk to successfully delivering the objectives of this theme was 'Failure to meet escalating costs of external and high-cost placements effectively'. The implementation plan for the new contract to place children and young people with independent fostering providers was being monitored to ensure the risk was being effectively managed.

Councillor Stradling referred to the high-cost placements risk and suggested that this may need to be considered as part of the Committee's Work Programme.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

## **6 Quarter 3 2011/2012 Budget Outturn Forecast**

The Committee considered a report of the Finance Manager, Children and Young People's Services that provided details of the Children and Young People's revenue and capital outturn forecast for 2011/12 based on information as at 31 December 2011, the third quarter of the financial year (for copy see file of Minutes).

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted

## **7 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Early Intervention and Partnership Services that provided an update on the publication of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2011 and the key messages contained within it and received a presentation from Suzanne Carty, Planning, Performance and Commissioning Manager, Children and Young People's Services.

The Planning, Performance and Commissioning Manager informed the Committee that the JSNA was a reference document that defined current and future health and wellbeing need. There was a statutory duty to produce a JSNA and from April 2013 both local

authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups would each have equal and explicit obligations to prepare a JSNA. This duty would be discharged through the Health and Wellbeing Board.

A refresh of the JSNA had been carried out for 2011, with 'deep dives' into mental health and health, social care and deprivation. Also, for 2011, the JSNA included an Instant Atlas facility which enabled specific indicators to be examined by locality.

The Planning, Performance and Commissioning Manager then outlined the key messages from the JSNA that related to the 'Altogether Better' theme for Children and Young People's Services, including levels of obesity, teenage conception rates, children's safeguarding activity, child protection issues, alcohol issues, educational attainment, child poverty and deprivation.

Councillor Armstrong, referring to areas of deprivation and need, asked whether this information was fed to AAP's, where Members spend could be targeted to tackle issues. The Planning, Performance and Commissioning Manager replied that the information was fed to various bodies, including Scrutiny, AAP's and Health and Wellbeing Boards, adding that there was a wide communications strategy for the JSNA. The Overview and Scrutiny Manager added that each AAP had its own geographical profile.

Councillor Lethbridge expressed frustration that AAP funding often was committed to and locked in to programmes and asked what was actively being done to address child poverty. The Planning, Performance and Commissioning Manager replied that many AAP's had committed funding to places to go and things to do for young people, adding that rather than tackle the symptoms of child poverty, there was a need for early impact and intervention to tackle what led young people to these symptoms.

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager suggested that a more co-ordinated agenda and strategy was needed for joined up and targeted action to address the issue of poverty. There was a lot of activity already taking place, however, this needed to more co-ordinated in its response to poverty.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted

## **8 Work Programme Refresh**

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which provided details contained within the Council Plan 2012-16, relevant to the work of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This allowed the opportunity to refresh the Committee Work Programme to reflect the three objectives and subsequent outcomes identified within the Council Plan for Altogether Better for Children and Young People.

The Council Plan was the overarching high level plan for the County Council, which covered a four year period and was updated on an annual basis. Appendix 2 detailed the Altogether Better for Children and Young People section of the Plan for consideration.

During 2011/12, the Committee had undertaken budgetary and performance monitoring, in depth Scrutiny reviews, systematic 6 monthly reviews of progress against recommendations and overview presentations, which were outlined in the report. Areas for future consideration were also detailed.

Councillor Armstrong commented that the Committee needed to be minded that elections would be held in 2013 and therefore any areas identified for future work would need to be resolved by the end of January 2013.

**Resolved:**

- (i) that the information contained in Altogether Better for Children and Young People priority theme of the Council Plan 2012-2016 be noted
- (ii) that the work programme for 2012-2014 be refreshed by discussing and considering those actions identified in Appendix 2.
- (iii) that a further report detailing the Committee's work programme for 2012-2014 be brought to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 16 July 2012.

## **9 Excess Weight in Primary Aged Children**

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive that provided an outline for the proposed review of Excess Weight in Primary School Children (ages 6-11 years).

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer informed Members that following a presentation to the committee on Childhood Obesity at the January meeting it was agreed that further investigation of the topic was required.

Excess weight in children impacted on their current and future health and could cause conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes which could lead to limiting and life threatening illnesses. It could also cause stigmatisation and low self esteem which can lead to bullying.

In 2004 obesity was identified by the UK Government as a policy priority and targets were set to halt the progressive rise in childhood obesity by 2010. County Durham and Darlington Primary Care Trust developed a cross organisational childhood obesity strategy in 2004 to promote healthy weight for children and families. The strategy was now in need of updating and refresh to take account of recent legislation, changes in programmes, statistics and structure of organisations involved.

The focus of the review would be the effect of excess weight in primary aged children, with the following four key lines of enquiry:

- Review of the current obesity strategy to ensure it reflected current childhood excess weight programmes, changes in national policy, a multi-agency approach and consideration of social determinants;
- Social marketing of health promotions such as Change4life and behaviour change and the impact of their implementations

- Investigation of gaps in local data – was the data good or bad, and was it used to its maximum potential?
- The impact of commissioned programmes on excess weight in children

The topic had a cross-cutting theme with the Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and it was suggested that the membership of the Working Group be taken from this Committee and Adults, Wellbeing and Health, with a maximum of four members from each Committee

**Resolved:**

That the recommendation contained in the report be approved.