

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 3 November 2014 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor J Blakey (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Armstrong, D Bell, K Corrigan, I Geldard, C Hampson, J Hart, K Hopper, J Measor, C Potts, L Pounder, M Stanton and P Stradling

Co-opted Members:

Mr D Kinch

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Dearden, D Hicks, H Liddle, M Simmons and R Patel.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The notes of the site visit held on 30 September 2014 were received for information.

4 Declarations of Interest, if any

There were no declarations of 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 Committee received a presentation by the Overview and Scrutiny Officer on recent press articles relating to the remit of the Children and Young People's.

The first article related to Durham youngsters from St. Anne's primary Bishop Auckland and Sedgfield Primary School who have been awarded with free breakfasts if they cycle to school as part of the Sustrans 'Bike It' campaign. This campaign came following a national survey which revealed that only 2% of children cycle to school.

The second article related to funding which had been secured to offer vital cycle training to 1000 children in County Durham. It was reported that £20,000 had been awarded by the Department of Transport to deliver Bikeability sessions to primary children in year 3.

In conclusion the Overview and Scrutiny Officer then played a short video following the committee's visit to the Multi-Sensory Room at Spennymoor for Members information.

7 Impact of Smoking on Children and Young People

The Committee received a joint report and presentation of the Assistant Chief Executive and Corporate Director Children and Adults Services which provided information in relation to the effect of smoking on children and young people (for copy of report and slides of presentation see file of minutes).

Members were advised on smoking prevalence amongst young people, exposure to secondhand smoke and smoking in pregnancy. The presentation further went on to outline County Durham Tobacco Control Alliance Action Plan and its ambition to reduce the smoking population to 5% by 2030.

In order to implement those actions identified the council would seek to:

- Reduce exposure to secondhand smoke
- Provide stop smoking services
- Encourage media, social marketing and education
- Reducing the availability – including licit and illicit tobacco
- Reduce the tobacco promotion
- Tobacco regulation.

Further information was presented with regard to the impact of 'babyClear' and the smokefree families initiative.

Details were presented in respect of e-cigarettes and usage amongst adults smokers in Britain. Information was provided that e-cigarettes had proved successful in assisting regular smokers to quit, however the data was not as robust as for licensed stop smoking medications such as nicotine patches. In addition it was interesting to note that e-cigarette use was low amongst young people and was very rarely used by non-smokers.

Further details were provided regarding e-cigarettes, the chemicals they contained, secondhand vapour and their regulation. It was noted at this present time the sale of e-cigarettes was not licensed however work was underway to regulate the product and its sale.

In conclusion it was reported that use of e-cigarettes by children and young people was very low and users of were almost entirely currently or ex-smokers.

Data was presented on local smoking prevalence and young people from the CYP survey, however discussion then took place regarding the quality of data and it was recognised that the quality of data wasn't that good at this current time and out of 150 schools questioned only 65 had responded. It was agreed that the data could be presented in a clearer way.

In response to a question regarding the Fresh initiative, the Public Health Portfolio Lead advised that 30p per head of the population in the region was given in order to fund the regional office who lead on the Fresh campaign. This was also backed up locally with work such as having street teams out in October in conjunction with Stoptober.

Councillor Hart asked what impact Fresh was having in the region. In response the Public Health Portfolio Lead advised that reports are available and could be reported to members at a future meeting on its impact and success.

Councillor Stanton asked whether e-cigarettes were recommended through stop-smoking services. It was advised that until these products are licensed through the Medicines Health Regulatory Authority they can not be offered via stop-smoking services. In addition the offer of these products will have cost implications to the council .

Councillor Stradling commented that if cigarettes were eliminated from sale, the government would simply raise the duty elsewhere. The Public Health Portfolio Lead went on to advise that the cost to the NHS of treating smoking related conditions exceeds the tax revenues from tobacco duty . 87,000 people die in the UK every year from smoking related illness and 1 in 2 smokers die prematurely. The cost of treating smoking related illnesses in County Durham is £21million a year. She further pointed out that 17,000 children present with respiratory problems due to breathing second hand smoke.

This question relates to information in the second paragraph E Seed, Investing in Children queried how the survey had been pitched to young people. She commented that surveying schools may not produce the best results and it may be worth considering talking to children away from the school environment and also allowing them the opportunity to assist in the design of questions. In addition she further queried whether there was any statistics on the number of young people who smoked.

In response the Public Health Portfolio Lead advised that the national survey data is only currently only available at regional level .

Councillor Hart then asked if there was a trend emerging from the statistics that were available since the introduction of smokefree legislation. It was reported that there was a downward trend however this was now levelling off and there were stubborn areas, particularly in deprived communities which means that the inequality gap between deprived and affluent areas is widening.

Councillor Armstrong queried whether there was any gender data on the number of smokers. It was noted that data suggested that there were higher number of female smokers in the population.

Councillor Blakey asked whether a voucher scheme was in place for those trying to stop smoking. The Public Health Portfolio Lead advised that a voucher scheme was in

operation and for one prescription fee the patient would receive one month's supply of either gum, patches etc.

In conclusion the Public Health Portfolio Lead advised that further work was also being undertaken by the team to tackle the sale of illicit tobacco and successful operations had taken place in Chilton and Shildon.

Resolved:

That the content of the report and presentation be noted.

8 Update on School Funding

The Committee received a joint report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Corporate Director Resources which provided members with an update on the School Funding reforms and the impact on School Funding Formula, used to allocate Government funding to individual schools (for copy of report and slides of presentation see file of minutes).

The Head of Finance (Financial Services) advised that the way in which schools received their funding was complex with funding coming from a variety of sources. The main element of funding was however the Schools Funding Formula, which was, in the main, pupil driven.

The Government introduced reforms to School funding in April 2013 which had a significant impact on the formula factors allowable and were the first step towards greater central control and restrictions over funding allocations to individual schools. Within the formula transitional protection is provided via a Minimum Funding Guarantee which protects schools from the loss of funding in relation to formula changes but not in respect of changes in pupil numbers.

The Head of Finance (Financial Services) informed the committee that a standard national funding formula was the overall aim of the Government. Changes being introduced from April 2015 sought to simplify and equalise the funding allocations per local authority area and an additional £350m had been made available nationally to finance this.

The Head of Finance (Financial Services) advised that it was a statutory requirement to have in place a Schools Forum and this it was a requirement to consult with it on primary and secondary funding formula factors, though ultimately the decisions were for the Council to take. The Forum did however have decision making powers with regards to delegation of funding, central retention of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and application of Growth Funds.

Further details were presented regarding what was included in the centrally retained expenditure and the restrictions on what could be centrally retained. It was highlighted that from 2015/16 the Council was required to delegate funding currently retained for centrally managed capital repairs and maintenance expenditure and that amendments were being made to the Scheme of Financing for Schools to ensure schools were aware of the additional responsibilities with regards to asset management that would go with this funding.

The Head of Finance (Financial Services) then gave an overview of the primary and secondary formula factors in the formula and the cost pressures within schools next year. He advised that it was easier to predict secondary school numbers than primary school numbers and that most schools would benefit from the additional funding available next year but that the impact on individual schools sensitive to changes in pupil numbers and also to their historic funding levels and the amount of transitional protection via the Minimum Funding Guarantee.

The presentation further provided detail on Special Educational Needs (SEN) funding and how this was allocated to Special Schools and to Primary and Secondary Schools via top-up funding. It was noted that SEN had been subject to significant changes resulting from the Children and Families Act 2014.

Details were also provided on the allocation of Early Years – Pre School funding and an overview was given on the level school balances retained by maintained schools in the County, whereby schools are recommended to carry a balance as a contingency sum.

It was highlighted that there were no commitments from government regarding further funding reforms after 2015-16 and it was unsure whether continued protection from austerity would be in place. It was highlighted that Durham was an outlier in terms of the level of the lump sum provided within its formula and that any reduction in this would make it problematic for smaller schools

In respect of the pupil premium the committee was advised that this funding is received directly from the Department for Education. Members were also informed that universal infant free school meals had commenced from September 2014.

Councillor Armstrong asked whether these changes would result in a net gain or deficit to schools. In response the Head of Finance (Financial Services) advised that there would ultimately be winners and losers, with larger schools coming out a lot better. He advised that it may mean that smaller schools may in the future need to federate and share services and staff, particularly if the current “protection” afforded by having a higher lump sum provision was reduced..

In response to a question from Councillor Gun in relation to concern for nursery schools and small schools and governor training on the changes to the way in which funding was delivered. The Head of Finance (Financial Services) advised that reports and presentations were being given to School Forums and through Finance Committees of the schools to advise of the changes and that his team worked closely with the governor support service to help support Governors in understanding these changes.

Councillor Armstrong added that he was very happy with the work of the team regarding school funding and thanked the Head of Finance (Financial Services) for his comprehensive presentation.

Resolved:

That the content of the report and presentation be noted.

9 Health and Wellbeing Annual Report 2013-2014

The Committee received a joint report of the Corporate Director of Children and Adults Services and Director of Public Health County Durham which presented the first Health and Wellbeing Board annual report and the Boards' achievements in the first year of its operation, in addition to its future work programme (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the content of the report be noted.

10 Update on Recommendations on Support for Children and Young People with Mental Health Issues Review

The Committee received a joint report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Children and Adults Services which provided an update on the progress made against the recommendations from the review of Support for Children and Young People with Mental Health Issues (for copy see file of minutes).

It was reported that work against those actions listed within the report was ongoing and a further update would be provided in 6 month's.

Resolved:

That the content of the report be noted.

11 Verbal update on Self-Harm by Young People review

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised that two meetings of the group had taken place and the key messages coming out of those sessions related to:

- Coping with stress and emotions
- Most of those self-harming do not seek medical attention
- Looked after children – have good access to support
- Childline and the NHS offered some of the best advice online
- Samaritans telephone number charges for calls made from mobile phones
- Young people prefer to talk to people who have had first-hand experience of self-harm or a greater understanding of the issue.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised that a further meeting would be taking place the following day and a further evidence gathering exercise was planned for 6.00 p.m. the same day. Limited spaces for this meeting were available.

Councillor Stradling commented that that it was important to ensure that the working group pursued outcomes that the council were able to influence.

Resolved:

That the content of the report be noted.

12 Summary of the Children and Families Partnership Minutes

The summary of the minutes of the meeting of the Children and Families Partnership held 3 March 2014 were received by the Committee for information.