

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Special Meeting of **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Wednesday 3 February 2016 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor C Potts (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Armstrong, O Gunn, D Hall, C Hampson, D Hicks, J Measor, S Morrison, M Nicholls and P Stradling

Faith Community Representative:

Mrs G Harrison

Also Present:

Councillors O Johnson and T Smith

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Bell, K Corrigan, K Dearden, J Hart, K Hopper, P Lawton, L Pounder, M Simmons, H Smith, M Stanton, W Stelling, Mr K Gilfillan, Mr D Kinch and Mr R Patel.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members.

3 Declarations of Interest, if any

There were no declarations on interest.

4 Update on the Impact of Smoking on Children and Young People

The Committee received a joint report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Children and Adult Services about the Impact of Smoking on Children and Young People (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Public Health Portfolio Lead for Tobacco Control gave a detailed presentation highlighting the following key points:-

- How Smoking Affects County Durham
- Smoking prevalence amongst young people – Nationally and in County Durham
- Exposure to second hand smoke in County Durham
- Smokefree Families Initiative

- Smoking in Pregnancy – in the UK and in County Durham
- Early data from 'Baby Clear' pathway
- e-cigarette use amongst young people in County Durham and evidence update
- County Durham Tobacco Control Alliance Action Plan
- County Durham's Vision
- Delivering County Durham's Action Plan implementing the World Health Organisation six key strands

The Chairman thanked the Public Health portfolio lead for an informative presentation, especially the new information about e-cigarettes.

Councillor O Gunn expressed concerns that cigarettes were being sold from ice-cream vans and as they attract children and young people, she asked for the views from public health on how to combat this. The Public Health portfolio lead advised that trading standards colleagues were working on this issue but relied on local intelligence to gather evidence and be able to take people to court. She stated that unfortunately as fines were so low, the vendors were willing to take the risks associated with selling the cigarettes in the first place. She also added that there was a new Tobacco National Plan and public health would lobby for the sale of cigarettes to be licensed so that provision could be restricted.

Councillor D Hicks was also aware of the sale of cigarettes from ice-cream vendors and said that it had been found to happen in the more deprived areas. He had found the information about e-cigarettes very interesting.

Referring to links between hospitals and maternity wards regarding smoking in pregnancy, Councillor D Hall said that information was displayed in waiting rooms about miscarriages but not enough data was given about the overall impact. The Public Health portfolio lead said that the babyclear pathway had introduced checks from the first midwife appointment. Mothers were asked to blow into a carbon monoxide monitor and if the levels were of concern the midwife would refer to a specialist stop smoking service. Contact would then be made with the mother within 24 hours and if no response contact would be made a further 4 times. As some women ignore letters and appointments this would be picked up again by the midwife at the 20 week scan. An image is then shown of a baby and the effects of smoking whilst pregnant. Evidence suggests that this is an effective way for the mother to stop smoking.

Councillor Hall also mentioned second hand smoke and the particles on clothing being harmful. The Public Health portfolio lead said that both parents can be referred to the stop smoking service and confirmed that particles had been found to be harmful but add that people could not be forced to stop smoking. Councillor Hall went on to ask if the seven steps campaign was still harmful and was advised that it had been found that when people smoking at doors and windows the smoke would be in the house. With the seven steps campaign people were encouraged to take seven steps outside to alleviate some of the risk.

Councillor T Smith expressed concern at the number of students within new College campus who were smoking and asked if there had been any consultation about making it a smoke free zone. The Public Health portfolio lead informed her that a pack was produced

for colleagues at the College and training was given to make the site smoke free and the offer of the stop smoking service was available. The difficulty was trying to enforce this.

Councillor Hall asked for views on making smoking around children illegal and was advised that we could not legislate in people's homes. As children were exposed to second hand smoke in the home it was important to change the adult's way of thinking. The Public Health portfolio lead added that it was encouraging that smoking had now been banned in work places, public places and in cars when travelling with young children.

Councillor P Stradling suggested that it was also important to remember the dangers of exposure to exhaust fumes, hairsprays and perfumes and that it was important to also reduce these health risks. The Public Health portfolio lead agreed that this was also an issue however, did say that the evidence around smoking was unquestionable around deaths and health related issues.

The Chairman asked if there was any evidence around harmful vapours from e-cigarettes and was advised that evidence suggested that there was no harm. The vapours did contain tiny particles but was not harmful to another person standing next to or nearby the 'smoker'.

Resolved:

That the report and presentation be received.

5 Update on 0-5 (Health Visitor and Family Nurse Partnership) and 5-19 (School Nursing) Update

The Consultant in Public Health gave an update about the 0 - 5 (Health Visitor and Family Nurse Partnership) and 5-19 (School Nursing) Update Contract. She advised that there had been a robust evaluation process with a new contract awarded on 7 December 2015 to Harrogate and District Foundation Trust. They had met the brief and a significant transition period and immobilisation board was in place to support staff and their working with children and young families. The Cabinet portfolio holders had been briefed. The new provider had started a recruitment process with a focus on school nurse transition. Practical issues such as estates and IT were being progressed and laptops had been purchased to roll out mobile working. A community bus for those who live in more rural areas without good transport links had been organised and would be more visible from the end of summer term.

Councillor Armstrong asked that statistics are provided to look at the change during and after the transition period to ensure the service is working.

Resolved:

- (i) That the update be noted.
- (ii) That progress was monitored during and after the transition period.

6 Update on Wellbeing for Life

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Adult Services that gave an update on Wellbeing for Life and a brief update on childhood obesity (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Consultant in Public Health updated Members in relation to the four strands of 'Wellbeing for Life':-

In relation to Community Parenting a presentation was played to the Committee (for copy see file of Minutes) showing the programme and how it worked. The Consultant in Public Health advised that the programme offered training packages and focused on health aspects within the Newton Aycliffe, Ferryhill and Stanley areas. Members were advised that once enough interest was shown in a particular area the programme would be rolled out as needed the volunteers in order for it to work.

Sarah was introduced to the Committee and she informed the Committee how she had become involved in the programme through her interest in becoming a social worker. She had shared experiences and learned additional skills and then became a volunteer. Through this work she has shadowed a Family Support Worker and would eventually be able to carry out this family support role herself. By wanting to give to the community through this programme Sarah has been able to start an Open University course with the aspiration to becoming a social worker in the future. Sarah added that the staff involved with the programme had been very encouraging and supportive.

The Chairman thanked Sarah for coming to speak to the Committee and share her experiences. She said that it was apparent that she had great satisfaction from the role carried out. Councillor M Nicholls said that it was encouraging to see that by participating in this programme had given Sarah the confidence to share her story.

The Consultant in Public Health said that this was a dual benefit programme and was about helping the community help themselves and supporting people who needed extra support. She also added that the programme was not just designed for mothers but encompassed parents, carers and grandparents.

The Consultant in Public Health updated Members in relation to:-

- Resilience Building Parenting Programmes
- Whole school approach to resilience
- Family Initiative Supporting Health (FISCH) childhood obesity programme

Members were advised that the Director of Public Health's Annual Report for 2015 would be on obesity and would be presented at a future meeting.

Councillor Armstrong said that he was disappointed that the new contract had been awarded to Harrogate as would have preferred for the contract to remain local. Referring to the volunteers for the Community Programme he said that this was a great idea. He said that the new review group would be looking at holiday hunger and the take up of free school meals and the Consultant in Public Health commented that there had been a lot of discussions recently about holiday hunger. She stated that people often made the assumption that this would result in weight loss however the association had been made between food poverty and weight gain as parents would buy unhealthy cheaper options. There were restrictions on when children could be measured and the national recommendations for the child measurement programme were at reception age and in

year 6. Parents were offered support about income support, better provisions and the food bank.

Councillor Gunn was very impressed with the presentation and found the Community Parenting programme ideal for selling the idea to other volunteers. She asked how areas were selected as suggested that this would be good in any area. She also referred to the resilience in schools programme and was concerned that there were only a few schools included in it. She suggested that it would be helpful for the Committee to hear from staff and pupils from schools involved in the programme and the impact it has had on them. The Consultant in Public Health said that the intention was to roll out the Community Parenting programme throughout the County and work through Children's Centres to identify potential volunteers. Members were advised that as soon as there were enough numbers in a certain area a pilot programme could commence. Councillor Nicholls said that this was about opening the door and building up the programme gradually.

Mrs G Harrison congratulated the service on the schools resilience programme and said that her school had just started it. She said that it was the best model to use as offered as the service come into school to work with us and offer guidance. She added that Dr Tom Robinson from Wolsingham would be giving resilience training to the Durham heads shortly. She asked how schools were chosen for the programme and was advised that the first time it was based around free school meals and attendance data but the second time was an open offer. A lot was learnt from that as some schools were not prepared to start the journey. 20 schools were offered the programme during the year. Mrs Harrison commented that she was pleased her school was involved but did emphasise that there was a lot of work to undertake. She suggested that as a lot of schools had not heard about the programme, it may be an option for schools involved to cascade this information and share their experiences at the celebration event.

Further to a question from Councillor Gunn the Consultant in Public Health advised that this was a bespoke service and unique in terms of its sustainability.

The Chairman congratulated the Consultant in Public Health on an excellent report and wished Sarah the very best of luck with her university degree and the option open to her for a new career.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That further reports and progress on the programmes be brought to a future meeting.

7 Scoping Report - Take up of Free School Meals and Holiday Hunger

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which provided Members with an outline for the proposed scrutiny review of the take up of free school meals and holiday hunger in County Durham (for copy see file of minutes).

Members were advised that further to discussions at their June meeting around child poverty a review group would be set up to tackle the take up of free school meals and holiday hunger. This would not duplicate any of the ongoing work carried out by the Child Poverty Action Group, chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive, but intended to

compliment it. The Committee was informed that the review would focus on the level of free school meal take up in County Durham and would look to encourage schools to increase take up of the offer. Part of the review would look at holiday hunger by offering help to families during school holidays. Councillor Armstrong asked that information from school nurses be included in relation to children attending school hungry.

The Committee were advised that the membership would be a maximum of 12 members, including the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised that Mr D Kinch had expressed an interest in being involved.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer added that information on school welfare and universal credit would not be added as this would be picked up by the Poverty Action Group, and that she would be liaising with them throughout the review.

Resolved:

- (i) That the draft terms of reference for the review be agreed.
- (ii) That requests to be included in the membership of the group be sent to the Overview and Scrutiny Officer.
- (iii) That the project plan be agreed.
- (iv) That the Committee receive periodic verbal updates as the review progresses, be agreed.