

## **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 27 October 2016 at 10.00 am**

#### **Present:**

**Councillor C Potts (Chairman)**

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

Councillors J Armstrong, D Bell, K Corrigan and D Hall

#### **Co-opted Members:**

Mr D Kinch

#### **Apologies:**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors O Gunn, C Hampson, J Hart, D Hicks, K Hopper, P Lawton, S Morrison, M Nicholls, M Simmons, H Smith and Mrs A Swift (Faith Rep)

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#### **2 Substitute Members**

There were no substitute Members in attendance.

#### **3 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest

#### **4 Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties**

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

#### **5 Childhood Obesity in County Durham**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships and the Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services which provided an introduction to workshop activity on Childhood Obesity in County Durham.

A joint presentation was given with contribution from Public Health, Culture and Sport, 0-19 Services, Harrogate and District Foundation Trust, Tech and Learn Assessment Secondary and East Durham AAP.

The Interim Director of Public Health commenced a joint presentation on Childhood Obesity which provided Members with a typical case study of a day in the life of a typical family (for copy see file of minutes).

The Interim Director of Public Health confirmed a number of presumptions made by the general public with regards to Childhood Obesity were untrue and although it was presumed to be as a result of overeating, malnutrition and the type of food that children were accessing was also an issue.

Parents were unable to notice when their child was overweight as it had become such a common issue and therefore appeared normal in comparison to other children of the same age. The costs incurred by the NHS were at a cost to society obesity also had an impact on employers due to sickness absence in the workplace.

The Government had issued a Childhood Obesity Plan which had highlighted the importance of the public sector and detailed of the introduction of a sugar tax levy to be implemented.

In December 2015 Durham had been given the opportunity to be one of four Local Authorities to work with Leeds Beckett University in a national pilot, identifying a whole systems approach to tackle Obesity.

The Public Health Portfolio Lead described a typical morning breakfast time with a typical supermarket product range aimed at children and heavily promoted sugar products, with many price promoted products, which was known to equate to 60% of a typical shopping basket.

In response to a question from Councillor Armstrong the Interim Director of Public Health confirmed that a Council in the North West had launched a campaign showing how many sugar cubes were in individual drinks and there was pressure for this to be included on food labelling. Councillor Armstrong queried the rate of sickness absence in the workplace due to obesity and the Interim Director of Public Health confirmed that national evidence indicated an extra four days per year. The Public Health Portfolio Lead confirmed that the financial implications equated to £125k per 1000 employees.

The 0-19 Services Harrogate & District Foundation Trust confirmed that BMI would be measured at a child's two year check with Health Visitors and there were plans to reduce the number of contacts for weights and measures to avoid the impression that weight gain in infants was always positive. After a baby is born, an increase in weight was expected and parents were attending weekly clinics and associating weight gain as a positive process in growth, therefore it was difficult to send out a different message as a child grew older. Weighing at 5 weeks, 10 weeks and 14 weeks would be carried out on all babies', then a Health Visitor Contact would be between 6-8 weeks and then 6 months and 12 months. The next important weight would be measured at a 2 year contact, where BMI became relevant and would therefore also be recorded.

In response to a question from Councillor Potts the Public Health Portfolio Lead confirmed that there were certain areas within County Durham with significant weight problems and although the data was three years old, deprivation was a relatable factor. The two areas which were most at risk were Sedgefield and Easington and in response to a question from Mr Kinch, the Public Health Portfolio Lead confirmed that there was not currently any data with regards to obesity and children who received free school meals.

There were a significant number of missed appointments with regards to Specialist Services in County Durham. Missed appointments would trigger an alert for the consideration of safeguarding issues such as neglect, however cancelled or rescheduled appointments would not trigger an alert.

The Service Manager, Culture and Sport referred to the Change4Life programme which encouraged children of pre-school age and school age do 180 minutes and 60 minutes of activity bursts daily. The Council was promoting walking to school and a walking school bus was used in some schools throughout the County, however this was parent led and therefore relied on volunteers to ensure its longevity. School crossing patrols ensured safe walking routes and Bikeability was by schools to encourage and promote safe cycling to school.

It was highlighted that Secondary School children were more focused on attainment and time for activities was reduced – lunch times were sometimes reduced to combat behavioural challenges and school days were being reduced further with some finishing at 3pm.

With regards to School Meals, the Health and Wellbeing Lead confirmed that some schools were restricting sugar products from being taken into school. Following the campaign by Jamie Oliver, the Dfe had commissioned the School Food Plan in 2013 which had recommended 17 actions for School Governors and Head Teachers to consider. In response to Councillor Armstrong who had not had sight of the plan, the Health and Wellbeing Lead confirmed that she would request the Lead Governance Manager recirculate the information.

In response to a comment from Councillor Armstrong regarding Head Teachers' responsibility for their own policies within School, the Health and Wellbeing Lead confirmed that food contained within packed lunches could be restricted if necessary, and suggested that Members make a recommendation for all Schools to consider implementing policies.

The Principle Community Development Officer, East Durham AAP, confirmed that Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) had developed and funded a number of after school activities or holiday activity programmes which included:

The 4 Together Partnerships offered a programme for all members of the community - The Healthy Changes Project included sessions with regards to healthy eating on a budget. The 3 Towns AAP offered a Physical Activity Partnership Outreach Project which focused on physical activity and wellbeing for early years children. Councillor Armstrong advised that AAP's prioritised children in their action plans and any potential projects or programmes could be considered at coordinated meetings.

East Durham AAP had been running a successful programme to assist in addressing holiday hunger, which had provided 5056 meals in total with 3189 children benefitting from the scheme. Peterlee one point had also served 670 meals.

There was a huge issue with sugary drinks as some contained a third of the recommended daily intake for young people and with regards to advertising, there was hope that vending machines containing high sugar produce could hide brands in a similar way to how cigarettes had been hidden in shops. Energy drinks were something that had become popular amongst school children and had almost treble the amount of sugar in than high performance sports drinks. In response to a comment from Mr Kinch, the Principle Community Development Officer confirmed that there could be a link to antisocial behaviour and some schools had complained of behavioural issues in school as a result of children drinking them. There was also a worry that they could contribute to the early consumption of alcohol. With regards to a typical high street, Takeaways had almost taken over and children could easily access them on an evening.

The Service Manager, Culture and Sport confirmed that County Durham had quality play areas which were accessible and section 106 agreements could be used to ensure that outdoor play was provided or maintained. Outdoor play was also encouraged and in some areas, cars could be prohibited between specific times to allow children designated play time. The Council had also reduced the speed limit outside of some schools to 20mph to ensure child safety.

Councillor Potts advised that the format of the presentation was both interesting and engaging and thanked Officers for taking the time to put it together.

Councillor Armstrong reiterated the importance of Partnerships and of ensuring good working practices continued in future notwithstanding the budget savings of £65m over the coming years.

## **6 Next Steps**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 9 November 2016 at Wellfield School, Wingate.