

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9th March, 2009

PRESENT – Councillor Hughes (in the Chair); Councillors Armstrong, Davies, Francis, Lawton, Long and Richmond. (7)

APOLOGIES – Councillors Burton, Galletley and Lister, and Mr. R. Egan. (4)

STATUTORY CO-OPTEES – Mr. M. Frank. (1)

NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTEES – Mr. C. J. Taylor, Mr. D. Moyes and Mr. T. R. Fisher. (3)

ABSENT – Councillor Thistlethwaite, Canon S. Bamber, Mrs. V. Mitchell, Mr. N. Rees and Ms. S. Robinson. (5)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Murray Rose, Director of Children’s Services, George McQueen, Assistant Director (Planning and Resources) and Rita Taylor, Head of Service, Darlington Youth Offending Service, within the Children’s Services Department.

CYP51. MINUTES – Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 12th January, 2009.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

CYP52. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

CYP53. YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE – PLAN, PERFORMANCE AND PRIORITIES – Rita Taylor, Head of Service, Darlington Youth Offending Service gave a presentation to Members of this Scrutiny Committee on the Darlington Youth Offending Service with particular emphasis on the services and initiatives aimed at reducing offending and re-offending by young persons.

The presentation included background information on the Youth Offending Service, the Youth Offending Justice Plan 2008-2009 which sets out how Darlington Youth Offending Service will deliver youth justice services and the Criminal Justice Act 1998; the partners the Youth Offending Service work closely with i.e. the Police, Probation, Drug Alcohol Action Team, Health and Children’s Services; and the three main elements of the Youth Offending Service being Pre-Court, Post-Court and Performance and Quality.

With regard to the Youth Offending Justice Plan, Rita highlighted the key areas of the Plan being the national and local context of youth justice, strategic priorities for Darlington Youth Justice Services, key objectives for 2008-2009 which include priorities for locality working, parenting strategy and restorative justice principles; use of resources and value for money; capacity and capability; business change and innovation; and workforce development and approval.

The Head of Service referred to Her Majesty's Inspectorate Inspection which was carried out in February, 2008 and the judgements of the Inspectorate on this authority's Youth Offending Service in relation to work in the courts, work with children and young people in the community, work with children and young people subject to custodial sentences, victims and restorative justice and management and leadership. Overall this authority's Youth Offending Services scored well with some areas of improvement being highlighted.

The presentation also provided statistical information which highlighted offending analysis between 2007 and 2008; figures in relation to first time entrants which showed a reduction in the number of first time entrants since 2004 and the breakdown of offences by category and locality for 2007/08.

Discussion ensued amongst Members of this Scrutiny Committee on the possible link between the influence of alcohol on first time offending; work with the Drug Action Team and the Crime Reduction Partnership; Members attendance at locality meetings; children in the Community and Street Safe; and general issues around underage drinking and the prevention of re-offenders.

Following Members discussions it was agreed that there were certain areas that they wished to pursue further and it was proposed to undertake a Task and Finish Review to look at developments of the Parenting Strategy; the Safer Schools Partnership; the Clarevaux Trust and Police liaison in relation to substance misuse. Members agreed to invite representatives from each of the partners to attend a meeting of the Task and Finish Review Group to discuss various issues with the Members and an opportunity to ask questions and share information by all parties. It was also proposed that Members of the Health and Well Being and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Committees be invited to attend the Task and Finish Review meeting.

RESOLVED – That the thanks of this Scrutiny Committee be extended to Rita Taylor, Head of Service, Youth Offending Service for her interesting and informative presentation.

CYP54. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09 – The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that further consideration be given to this Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme and Review topics for the Municipal Year 2008/09.

With regard to the Task and Finish Review on the provision of Language Learning, Councillor Long advised Members of this Scrutiny that an initial scoping meeting had been arranged for Thursday, 19th March, 2009 to be held at Corporation Road School.

Following discussion on the work programme it was agreed to include for future meetings reports on Teenage Pregnancy in relation to the training provided to primary and secondary schools on the delivery of sex education as part of the Personal Social Health Education curriculum; Early Years Funding; and how Members of this Scrutiny Committee can receive, in future, Ofsted reports and how best to monitor them.

RESOLVED - (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That Teenage Pregnancy, Early Years Funding and Ofsted Reports be included in the Work Programme.

CYP55. POLICY REVIEW - (1) Review of Progress on Policy Review Items –
There were no reports to consider.

(2) Review Items Final Report Back – Use of Multi Use Games Areas Task and Finish Review Group – The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report to present the final report of the Use of Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA's) Task and Finish Review Group and to present their conclusions and to request that this Members continue their investigations by way of a full review.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be received.

(b) That a Review Group be established to continue investigations into the use of Multi Use Games Areas.

(3) Responses of the Executive to Reports of this Scrutiny Committee – There were no responses to consider.

CYP56. EXECUTIVE CALL-IN - (1) Call-In Items Relating to Key Decisions of the Executive - There were no call-in items.

(2) Other Call-In Items - There were no call-in items.