

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27th April, 2009

PRESENT – Councillor Hughes (in the Chair); Councillors Armstrong, Burton, Davies, Francis, Galletley, Long and Richmond. (8)

APOLOGIES – Councillors Lawton; and Mr. C. Taylor, Mr. T. Fisher, Ms. S. Robinson; and Murray Rose. (4)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor C. McEwan.

STATUTORY CO-OPTTEES – Canon S. Bamber. (1)

NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTTEES – Mr. R. Egan, Mr. D. Moyes and Mr. N. Rees. (3)

ABSENT – Councillors Lister and Thistlethwaite; Mrs. V. Mitchell and Mr. M. Frank. (4)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – George McQueen, Assistant Director (Planning and Resources), Andy Dunn, Assistant Director (School Effectiveness), Rob Thompson, School Development Officer – Secondary Strategy, Heather Long, School Development Officer – Primary Strategy within Children’s Services Department; David Goodchild, Policy Advisor within the Chief Executive’s Department, Melanie Brown, LSP Lead Officer and Ken Ross, Head of Health Improvement, County Durham and Darlington Public Health Team (PCT).

CYP57. MINUTES – Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 9th March, 2009.

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

CYP58. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

CYP59. SCHOOL STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE – The Director of Children’s Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with information regarding the cumulative standards of attainment and achievement recorded by schools in Darlington in 2008.

The submitted report gave information on standards in 2008 for Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4; and outlined how the authority intended to continue to improve standards in schools in Darlington. This included ongoing work on transitions between primary and secondary schools; schools@onedarlington which is organising a borough wide training day on 12th February, 2010; the launch of Darlington’s Virtual Leadership College catering for the professional development needs of all Darlington teachers; and the LA’s Governing Body Self Review Programme.

Members questions/comments were in relation to the Key Stage 3 figures for Foreign Languages and ICT which were above the national average; the discontinuation of scores at Key Stage 3

from SAT tests; and comparative Key Stage 4 exam results at Hurworth, Hummersknott and Branksome Schools.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CYP60. ASPIRING DARLINGTON PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

QUARTER 3 2008 – The Director of Children’s Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to inform Members of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Aspiring Delivery Plan 2008-2011 and to the progress to date on the overall performance against targets and actions within the Delivery Plan.

The submitted report highlighted the 3 tier approach to monitoring performance at Sustainable Community Strategy, Local Area Agreement and National Indicator level and also the actions to be implemented by the Children’s Trust to delivery the Sustainable Community Strategy work strands. It was also reported that the Chair of this Scrutiny, Councillor C. Hughes was now a Board Member of the Children’s Trust and would attend meetings of the Children’s Trust and feedback to Members of this Scrutiny Committee.

With regard to the short to medium term work strands, Melanie Brown, the LSP Lead Officer for the Aspiring Theme, gave the background to how the 8 work strands had been developed and how it is intended to deliver the key actions.

The Chair highlighted to Members that it was the role of this Scrutiny Committee to monitor the Local Strategic Partnership and be involved in scrutinising and challenging the actions contained within the Aspiring Delivery Plan and undertake Task and Finish Reviews for areas of concern as and when necessary.

Members questions related to the statistics for Children in care; the provision of new or substantially refurbished secondary schools throughout the Borough by 2012; further education; and clarification on figures in relation to NI 117 (the percentage of 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEET)).

RESOLVED – That the report be received.

CYP61. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

PERFORMANCE REPORT 3RD QUARTER 2008/09 – The Interim Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report (previously circulated) to give Members an opportunity to scrutinise the four service plans for which they are responsible for monitoring i.e. Children and Families, Partnerships, Planning and Resources and School Improvement; and to scrutinise those elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy, One Darlington : Perfectly Placed and Local Area Agreement for which this Scrutiny Committee also have responsibility for.

The submitted report highlighted the 29 indicators showing those that were below target performance, six measuring Key Stage 3 performance which have now been deleted by Government and gave full details of the specific indicators and the reasons for those areas of underperformance.

With regard to the data presented for this Scrutiny responsibility as regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy, it was reported that data was only available for two of the four indicators and with regard to the Local Area Agreement, out of the 22 applicable indicators, only 18 had available data.

Members questions were in relation to the lack of data in certain areas, in particular with regard to NI 112 Under 18 conception rate, and requested the reasons behind the lack of data.

Ken Ross, the Head of Health Improvement, County Durham and Darlington Public Health Team advised the Members that the lack of data with regard to Under 18 conception rates was due to a number of factors in particular that the data produced by the Teenage Pregnancy Unit on a national basis is drawn from data which is two years behind (latest available data being from 2007). He also advised that there is a confidentiality issues in recording local data.

Following further discussion on the need to be able to monitor the indicator, it was suggested that the Scrutiny Members receive the Annual Report of the Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator as a mechanism to monitor trends.

Overall, performance was on target for the four service plans although there is no data reported for 36% of the indicators.

RESOLVED – That the performance against the service plans, Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement, for those areas which this Scrutiny Committee have responsibility and the reasons for under performance be noted.

CYP62. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS 2009/2010 – The Director of Children’s Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to update Members on the current 2009 intake for school admissions for both primary and secondary schools across Darlington.

The submitted report summarised the admission process for the 2009/10 intake including a breakdown of the applications received, the number of successful applications and the number of appeals requested.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CYP63. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2008/09 – The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to give consideration to the draft Annual Report, outlining the work undertaken by this Scrutiny Committee during the Municipal Year 2008/09, prior to its submission to Council on 14th May, 2009.

RESOLVED – That the draft Annual Report be approved for submission to Council on 14th May, 2009.

CYP64. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10 - The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to this Scrutiny Committee’s Work Programme and Review topics for the Municipal Year 2009/10.

Consideration was given to the inclusion of an item on Children’s Centres and Childcare grants and Teenage Pregnancies.

RESOLVED – That the Draft Work Programme for 2009/10 be noted.

CYP65. POLICY REVIEW - (1) Review of Progress on Policy Review Items – Language Learning Task and Finish Review Group – The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with an update on the progress of the Language Learning Task and Finish Review Group.

RESOLVED – That the progress report be noted.

(2) Review Items Final Report Back – There were no reports to consider.

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

CYP66. 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.

CYP67. ESTABLISHMENT OF TASK AND FINISH REVIEW – With the prior approval of the Chair to the matter being treated as urgent to give consideration at the earliest date, the Director of Corporate Services submitted a report to consider the establishment of a Task and Finish Review Group, comprising all Members of this Scrutiny Committee, to examine the arrangements in place to minimise youth offending, looking specifically at the areas of responsibility of this Scrutiny for monitoring performance indicators.

RESOLVED – (a) That approval be given for the establishment of a Task and Finish Review Group to examine arrangements in place to minimise youth offending.

(b) That a meeting of this Task and Finish Review Group be arranged for Wednesday, 7th May, 2009, to which all Members of this Scrutiny Committee, Health and Well Being Scrutiny and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny and various representative organisations be invited to attend.