

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29th June, 2009

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

APOLOGIES – Councillors Armstrong, Galletley and Lister; Councillor Chapman (Cabinet Member); Mr. T. Fisher, Mr. R. Egan, Canon S. Bamber.

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

NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTEES – Mr. D. Moyes, Mr. C. Taylor and Mr. N. Rees. (2)

ABSENT – Councillors Thistlethwaite; Mrs. V. Mitchell, Ms. S. Robinson (3)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – George McQueen, Assistant Director (Planning and Resources), Jenni Cooke, Assistant Director (Children and Families); Nicola Davies Early Years Projects Officer, Department of Children’s Services, David Goodchild, Policy Advisor within the Chief Executive’s Department, Sue Hoare-Leather, Joint Commissioner Child Health, Ken Ross, Head of Health Improvement, County Durham and Darlington Public Health Team (PCT), David Gardiner, Children and Young Peoples Manager, DAAT.

CYP4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

CYP5. MINUTES – Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meetings of this Scrutiny Committee held on 27th April and 21st May, 2009.

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

CYP6. TIMES OF MEETINGS – RESOLVED – That for the remainder of this Municipal Year the timings of meetings of this Scrutiny Committee be held at 4.00 p.m.

CYP7. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY SERVICE PLANNING – (1) Service Planning 2009-2013 – The Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report (previously circulated) to introduce the service plans for which the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is responsible for providing challenge. The four service plans for which the Committee is responsible are: Children and Families, Partnerships, Planning and Resources and School Improvement and Development.

The submitted report also advised Members that reports on performance against the targets in the service plans will be submitted to Scrutiny on a quarterly basis. The reports will show performance against the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and National Indicator Set (NIS). Scrutiny Committee Members requested additional figures and information in relation to Children and Families which was subsequently circulated.

RESOLVED – That the Service Plans and reporting arrangements be noted.

(2) Performance Report 4th Quarter 2008/09 – The Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report (previously circulated) to give Members of this Scrutiny Committee an opportunity to scrutinise the four service plans for which this Committee is responsible including those elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy ‘One Darlington : Perfectly Placed’ and the Local Area Agreement for which this Scrutiny have responsibility.

The submitted report outlined that for the four service plans the overall aggregated target was being achieved and 127 indicators were either above or on target, 28 showing below target performance and 15 indicators for which there is no data available.

Discussion ensued around the indicators performing below target and a Member raised a question in relation to a recent announcement that the Government have published ‘Building Britain’s Future’ which may affect some of the performance indicators and requested that a report be brought to the next meeting on how this will affect the authority. It was agreed that the Policy Advisor obtain further details on the Government paper and discuss with the Chair to determine if the report has an significant impact on the content of the quarterly performance reports and National Indicator Set.

Further discussion ensued on the performance indicators in relation to Under 18 conception rates and the ongoing work in schools with children who have experience bullying.

RESOLVED – (a) Members note the performance against the service plans.

(b) Set up task and finish review groups as necessary to scrutinise performance in identified services and/or for individual performance indicators as decided.

(c) Consider performance against the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement for those indicators which the Committee is responsible for scrutinising and note the overall performance, with reasons for under performance.

(d) Note the performance of all national indicators linked to all scrutiny committees where data is available.

CYP8. CHILDHOOD OBESITY – The Director of Children’s Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with an update on what has been done and what needs to be done to tackle childhood obesity in Darlington. Members also gave consideration to the draft strategy ‘Preventing Obesity, Promoting Physical Activity in Children and Young People in Darlington (2009-2012)’.

It was reported that the draft strategy has been compiled from an information obtained from an initial stakeholder event held in November 2008 which aimed to identify priority areas significant to Darlington. The draft strategy highlights the problem of obesity in children and young people and what needs to be done locally to prevent obesity and to develop services to treat obesity and the local action will provide the opportunity to deliver and monitor services to address childhood obesity in Darlington.

The priorities for action identified at the stakeholder event include maternal obesity interventions, work to tackle smoking in pregnancy, promotion of breastfeeding, support to

schools to meet healthy schools targets and wider participation to increase the opportunities for outdoor play linked to physical activity strategies and the update of sport and leisure opportunities.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report and work in progress to tackle childhood obesity be noted.

(b) That further progress reports on the action plan be welcomed by this Scrutiny.

CYP9. CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY REVIEW 2008/09 – The Director of Children’s Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to set out the actions which have been undertaken during 2008/09 by the Early Years Partnerships Team to assist this authority in ‘shaping’ the local childcare market and achieving childcare sufficiency for families in Darlington.

The submitted report also outlined the brokerage service that has been developed to ensure children with disabilities are matched with appropriate childcare placements and to include the provision of support and guidance to settings around providing a good quality, inclusive and sustainable childcare service to parents. It was also reported that parents will be provided with up-to-date information about financial assistance towards childcare costs, including tax credits.

The Chair noted that the childcare tax credit take-up in Darlington appeared to be low, although it compared with the national figures, and requested that up-to-date tax credit leaflets be circulated to Members for use at their ward surgeries.

RESOLVED – (a) That the submitted report and the progress towards Childcare Sufficiency during 2008/09 be noted.

(b) That the 2009/10 actions plan with the Childcare Sufficiency Review be approved.

CYP10. ALCOHOL/SUBSTANCE MISUSE RELATED EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – The Director of Children’s Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to outline to Members of this Scrutiny the existing provision and planned developments for educating children and young people in Darlington about alcohol and drug misuse and the key developments in relation to the prevention and treatment of associated problems,

The submitted report outlined the work in schools across the Borough with regard to the Healthy School status; the work with secondary schools to tackle inaccurate beliefs held by young people about local levels of alcohol and drug misuses by challenging peer pressure and undermining a sense that misuse is ‘normal; school based preventative intervention, particularly in Hummersknott School and Eastbourne CE Academy and the appointment of two specialist youth workers who will address alcohol and drug misuse; in partnership with the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership the delivery of Operation Stay Safe which targets young people drinking on weekends; the introduction of a new structure where the responsibility for addressing drug and alcohol issues is shared across the Children’s Trust workforce; and development of the SWITCH team through the Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT).

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CYP11. THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN ENGLAND ACTION PLAN – The Director of Children’s Services submitted a report to update Members of this Scrutiny on a

report which was presented to Cabinet on 28th April, 2009 regarding the Laming Report, the Secretary of State's response and detailed Action Plan and the implications for safeguarding in Darlington.

Particular references were made to the arrangements for chairing the Local Safeguarding Children's Board to ensure close links with the Children's Trust and other local authorities and other agencies; the Social Care Task Force; and the increasing pressures of the on-going increase in referrals and consequent assessment and interventions within children's social care.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That Members support regional work to address the Action Plan recommendations and improve the child protection system.

(c) Members support the prioritisation of child protection services.

CYP12. WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10 – Pursuant to Minute CYP64/Apr/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 remainder of the Municipal Year 2009/10.

The submitted report gave the background to the work programme and it was requested that Members give consideration to a schedule (also previously circulated) which had been compiled detailing the dates of meetings of this Scrutiny Committee together with those plans, strategies and reviews which could be considered at each of those meetings.

The changes to the Work Programme since the last meeting of this Committee were also highlighted together with the reasons for any additions or deletions.

Discussion ensued on additions to the Work Programme and it was proposed that reports on Pupil Transition, School Funding Formula, Integrated Working, Progress with the Primary Capital Programme and Extended Schools Activity be included in the work programme.

RESOLVED – (a) That the Work Programme 2009/10 be noted.

(b) That the Work Programme be updated to include the issues raised at this meeting.

CYP13. OUTDOOR PLAY AREAS – The Director of Community Services and the Director of Children's Services submitted a joint report (previously circulated) to update Members on recent play area improvements and further planned improvements over the next two years.

A number of play areas have seen improvements over the last three years, mainly from Local Area Agreement funding, external funding and Section 106 monies and further Section 106 monies will enable improvements to be carried out at Sadberge, Albert Hill, Green Park, South Park and Broken Scar. Funding has also been secured from a successful application to Playbuilders in the sum of £1,128,558 and this funding will be allocated over two years with eleven sites per year being developed.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CYP14. POLICY REVIEW - (1) Review of Progress on Policy Review Items – (i) Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAS) Review Group – The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with an update on the progress of the Multi Use Games Areas Review Group.

RESOLVED – That the progress report be noted.

(ii) Youth Offending Task and Finish Review Group – The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to update Members on the progress of the Youth Offending 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.

CYP15. 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.