

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10th January, 2011

PRESENT – Councillor Lister (in the Chair); Councillors Armstrong, Cossins, Curry, Davies, Francis, Galletley, Long, J.M. Lyonette and Richmond. (10)

APOLOGIES – Councillor Burton; Mr. Moyes and Ms. Lund. (3)

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

NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTEES – Mr. Egan, Mr. Fisher and Mr. Rees . (3)

ABSENT –, The Ven. S. Bain, Mrs. Mitchell and Mr. Grant. (3)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor C. Hughes. (1)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Murray Rose, Director of People, George McQueen, Assistant Director, Planning and Resources Children's Services, Jenni Cooke, Assistant Director Children, Families and Learning, Catherine Shaw, Sex and Relationship Education Officer and David Goodchild, Policy Advisor.

CYP40. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS – Councillor Davies declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in Item CYP34 below as she has been seconded to the Young People's Learning Agency and took no part in the discussion thereon.

CYP41. MINUTES – Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 8th November, 2010.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be approved as a correct record with the addition of Mr. Egan to the attendance.

CYP42. GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER – THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING – The Director of People submitted a report (previously circulated) to advise Members of the White Paper which outlines the Government's policy for schools and education. The submitted report outlined the main clauses in the White Paper and the likely effects in Darlington.

The White Paper is divided into an introduction and seven sections covering Teaching and Leadership; Behaviour: Curriculum, Assessment and Qualifications; New Schools System; Accountability; School Improvement and School Funding.

Particular reference was in relation to the removal of the requirement to complete the standardised Self Evaluation Form (SEF); teachers being allowed powers to physically restrain pupils and search and confiscate; the emphasis on schools' responsibilities for excluded pupils and the possibility of Pupil Referral Units being granted Academy status.

Members questions were in connection with Pupil Referral Unit becoming an academy and its admission criteria; the introduction of the English Baccalaureate and Performance tables aimed at encouraging schools to drive the take up of individual science subjects, humanities and especially foreign languages; the legislation to allow smaller governing bodies and the implications of such; and the removal of the contextual value added (CVA) measure.

Members also discussed the removal of regulation, particularly for Free Schools and Academies and how this would impact on the local authority if more schools became Free Schools and applied for academy status and proposed that this be an item for the Work Programme to discuss further at a future meeting.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and that this Scrutiny receive further updates on the implications of the White Paper at future meetings.

CYP43. PERFORMANCE REPORT 2ND QUARTER 2010/11 – The Director of People submitted a report (previously circulated) for Members to scrutinise the four service plans for which we are responsible for and also those elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy for which this Scrutiny have responsibility.

It was reported that the overall aggregated target for the four service plans was being achieved, with the Children and Families plan showing below target performance. Data was available for 84 out of 141 indicators at quarter 2 with 18 performing above target, 44 on target and 22 below target. Using the latest data there were 141 indicators in the four service plans, 28 (20%) were performing above target, 79 (56%) on target and 30 (21%) are showing below target performance. Data was unavailable for four indicators.

Discussion ensued on the indicators below target in relation to looked after children and the Assistant Director, Children and Families and Learners advised the Committee that the number of looked after children had risen which has had an impact on the figures and also the difficulties of finding external placements. It was proposed that the potential review of children's residential services include looked after children.

RESOLVED – (a) Members noted the performance against the service plans against the Sustainable Community Strategy for those indicators which the Committee is responsible for scrutinising and noted the overall performance, with reasons for under performance.

(b) Considered the establishment of a Review Group to look at children's residential services to include looked after children.

CYP44. YOUNG CARERS – The Director of People submitted a report (previously circulated) to inform Members of the history and future of services for young carers, defined in the Darlington Young Carers Action Plan 2008-2011 as a young person under the age of 18 who provide care to a parent, grandparent, brother or sister or other relative who needs support because of a health problem or disability.

The Young Carers service is currently commissioned by the Children's Trust with resources from Darlington Borough Council and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) to deliver a service to currently 98 Young Carers, provided by the Tees Valley YMCA.

The report also highlighted the applications for funding for young carers which are currently awaiting approval. Members of this Scrutiny will be informed of the outcome in due course.

Members agreed that this was a valuable service but a question was raised on what is being done in addition to help children through the education system and where advised of the work of the

School Liaison Officer who works in schools on attendance records and behaviour to assess if outside pressures are being placed on young carers.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CYP45. TEENAGE PREGNANCY, CONCEPTION RATES AND HEALTH EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS – The Director of People submitted a report (previously circulated) to update Members on the progress with teenage pregnancy, conception rates and health education related in schools and other settings.

At the meeting of this Scrutiny held on 28th June, 2010 Members approved recommendations on teenage pregnancy and conception rates and health education in schools as part of the joint scrutiny work on the Director of Public Health's Annual Report 2008/09 'Healthier Lives for Children and Young People in County Durham and Darlington'. These recommendations were subsequently submitted to the Special Health and Well Being Scrutiny Meeting on 6th July, 2010 and subsequently submitted to the Director of Public Health in response.

Members noted the outcomes of the health based issues survey carried out within the majority of the secondary schools which is being used to develop a scheme of work and also alternative work to progress sex and relationship education. Following the decision not to progress the 'clinic in a box' option within schools the Substance Misuse Service for Young People (SWITCH) have agreed to 'pilot' a Saturday service for young people and this will be reviewed after three months. Primary schools continue to make progress with the training and delivery of 'Lucinda and Godfrey' which has been well received.

RESOLVED – (a) Members note and support the work currently being undertaken within schools to ensure quality sexual relationship education programmes are provided.

(b) Members note and support the work with young people, parents and carers and practitioners to ensure awareness and knowledge of the sexual relationship issues.

CYP46. ADMISSIONS TO SCHOOLS : SEPTEMBER, 2010 – The Director of People submitted a report (previously circulated) to inform Members about the placement of pupils in Reception Classes and Secondary Schools for the 2010-11 school year.

It was reported that analysis from the preferences stated at the time of allocation gave 92% of families a place at one of the secondary schools of their choice and at primary it was 94%.

Members questions were in relation to pupil place planning and how the local authority keeps a close watch on demand for primary places and it was reported that four schools had already been identified for capital spending to increase the provision of primary places.

RESOLVED – That the report be received.

CYP47. SCHOOL CLOSURES DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER – The Director of People submitted a report (previously circulated) to update Members of this Scrutiny Committee on school closures during the recent period of bad weather.

It was reported that due to unusually severe weather conditions recently many of Darlington schools were closed for a day or more during the week commencing 30th November, 2010. The

submitted report gave details of the closures and considerations head teachers were obliged to make before calling an emergency closure.

General discussions ensued on the advantages and disadvantages of schools closing during periods of inclement weather and the overall impact of closures on families and options for providing 'learning portals' for those pupils who wish to continue their studies at home.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CYP48. WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11 – Pursuant to Minute CYP76/Apr/10, 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 2010/11.

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.

RESOLVED – That the Work Programme 2010/11 be noted.

CYP49. POLICY REVIEW - (1) Review of Progress on Policy Review Items – There was no progress to report.

(2) Review Items Final Report Back — There were no final reports.

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

CYP50. 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.