
OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last ordinary meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work that have been undertaken by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee:-
 - (a) **Establishing the Ethos of Eastbourne Church of England Academy** – Members of the Committee were pleased to receive a report from the Director of Education, Diocese of Durham, outlining the basic expression of the ethos of the Academy, the aims of the Academy Development Plan, and the six key objectives contained within the Academy Development Plan.
 - (b) **Libraries and Community Learning Service** – The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee received a report to update Members on the activities within the Libraries and Community Learning Service. Members were informed of the activities that had taken place during the period April 2007 to November 2007, and also received information on the proposed activities up to March 2008. It was great to hear about the many activities available for both children and adults, and to learn about the growth in the numbers of people accessing the learning services. Members of the Committee now look forward to receiving the Libraries and Community Learning OfSTED report, following its official release, which will be presented at the next Ordinary Meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on Monday, 3rd March 2008.
 - (c) **Darlington's Parenting Strategy** – A report was submitted to the Committee to inform Members of the development of a comprehensive Parenting Strategy for Darlington. The report highlighted one of the key priorities contained within Darlington's 'Children and Young People's Plan' – namely, to promote good parenting. The priority centres upon the concept of having a 'Champion for Every Child' and focuses on parents being responsible for bringing up their children and being supported in doing this. A draft copy of the Parenting Strategy was appended to the submitted report, and Members entered into discussion on a number of areas, including proactive and reactive support, early intervention, identifying vulnerable parents and pre-parenting support.
 - (d) **Development of Positive Activities ('Youth Offer') in Darlington** – Members received a report which provided the key elements of the new statutory duty placed on the Council to secure access for young people to a sufficient local offer of positive activities and to outline the plans and proposals in place to meet this duty, including design, branding and integration of providers across all sectors. Examples of current good practice were included in the report and were discussed by Committee and visitors.
 - (e) **Annual Performance Assessment of Services for Children and Young People in Darlington Borough Council** – The Director of Children's Services submitted a report to inform Members of the recent Annual Performance Assessment (APA) of the

Children's Services Department and to highlight areas for development in the coming year. The Committee were pleased to learn of the Grade 3 awarded to the Children's Services Department (with Grade 1 being 'Unsatisfactory' and Grade 4 being 'Very Good'), however acknowledged the areas for improvement highlighted in the Annual Performance Assessment process, and pledged to continually monitor these areas in order to ensure improved performance.

- (f) **Lifewise Learning Project** – Members received a report on the Lifewise Learning Project, which is an initiative that aims to help people working for Darlington Borough Council who would like to return to learning, but find themselves in the 'hard to reach' category due to the nature of their employment (i.e. working unsocial hours, working from temporary or mobile workplaces). The Project is a partnership between Unionlearn and the Darlington Partnership, and is funded through the Learning For All Fund, which is funding administered and managed by the Unionlearn Northern TUC on behalf of the regional Learning and Skills Council and One North East. Members were pleased to hear of the success of the Project, and fully support such Adult Learning opportunities.
 - (g) **Work Programme 2007/2008** – The Committee considered the Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2007/2008, and examined Cabinet's Forward Plan, in order to identify areas of particular interest or concern. The Chair extended an open invitation for the inclusion of additional items on the Committee's Work Programme.
 - (h) **Draft Sustainable Community Strategy** – The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held a Special Meeting on 28th January 2008, to consider the Draft Sustainable Community Strategy.
2. In keeping with the recent drive for increased community engagement, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held its Ordinary Meeting on Monday, 14th January 2008, at the Education Village, Salters Lane South, Darlington. The meeting was also attended by Dame Dela Smith, Head Teacher at the Education Village, and a number of pupils from the Education Village.
 3. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee will be holding a Special Meeting at 4pm on Thursday, 28th February 2008, at Longfield Comprehensive School in Darlington. The focus of the meeting will be Climate Change, and the work and projects that are being conducted in Darlington's schools to raise awareness of Climate Change amongst school children. Dr. Krista McKinzey, Climate Change Schools Project Officer from the Science Learning Centre North East, will be attending the meeting and an invitation will be made to all schools in Darlington to attend to share best practice on how we in Darlington are helping our children to face one of the most important challenges of modern society— climate change. It is hoped that this meeting will lead to the sharing of ideas and will help form the basis for a working document outlining the valuable work undertaken by schools in relation to Climate Change throughout the Borough. The Chair would like to extend an open invitation to all Members who may wish to attend this meeting.

Councillor Cyndi Hughes
Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Since the last meeting of Council, I have attended the following:-

Christmas Play at Skerne Park School;

Attended a young person's panto and seasonal prayer service at St. Columba's Church;

Briefing meeting with Assistant Director of Education;

Monitoring and Coordination Meeting;

Meeting with the Council's Climate Change Officer;

Corporate Governance Meeting;

Governors Appointments Panel;

Attended Cabinet and presented the recommendations of the Health and Safety Task and Finish Group;

Attended a pre-agenda briefing meeting with Policy Officer to prepare for the special Draft Sustainable Community Strategy meeting;

Attended "Education Sunday" service at St. Augustine's RC Church;

Met with Groundwork Trust worker to discuss outdoor environmental education;

Attended Holocaust Memorial Day remembrance at the Arts Centre.