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**OVERVIEW OF LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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1. Since the last ordinary meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work that have been undertaken by the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee:-
  - (a) **Transformation of Secondary Education in Darlington – Academy Update** – The Committee continued to receive its regular update from the Director of Children’s Services as to the ongoing progress of the proposed Academy School for Darlington and the Expression of Interest presented to the Special Cabinet on the 13th June 2006. The Committee were informed that on the 29th September 2006, the Local Authority received confirmation from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) that ministerial approval had been gained for the Expression of Interest, and that the proposal will now move into the ‘Feasibility Stage’.
  - (b) **Musical Learning Opportunities – The Sage, Gateshead** – The Committee had the pleasure of welcoming Katherine Zeserson, the Director of the Learning Participation Team from the Sage in Gateshead, who provided the Committee with an overview of the outreach programme and musical learning opportunities, facilitated by the Sage, that are available within Darlington. The Committee were pleased to note the learning opportunities, such as the ‘Pure Drumming’ project being conducted with Skerne Park Primary School, and the partnership that has developed with Hummersknott School and Language College to provide joint music making activities, and it was extremely heartening to hear that such projects are attracting children from different areas of the town.
  - (c) **Managing Health and Safety in Schools** – The Committee received a report outlining the Health and Safety Management System for Schools and the steps being made to ensure compliance with the required legislation and recommended practice. The Committee were extremely interested in the Health and Safety Review, or ‘Health Check’, proposed for each school, which is intended to identify strengths and weaknesses and formulate a plan of action specific to each school, addressing their individual needs. The Committee have also agreed to conduct a Task and Finish Review on Health and Safety in Schools, and the Task and Finish Review Group will meet in the near future to determine their terms of reference.
  - (d) **The Language for Learning Service** - A report was submitted to the latest meeting of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee informing Members of the work of the Language for Learning Service. It was disappointing to learn that, although the number of languages, other than English, being spoken by pupils in Schools in Darlington is increasing, the funding for the service is sharply decreasing.
  - (e) **Behaviour Support Task and Finish Review Group** – The Behaviour Support Task and Finish Review Group presented their findings and recommendations to the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee. The report was well received by the

Committee and the recommendations made by the Task and Finish Review Group were accepted. The report will now be submitted to Cabinet accordingly.

- (f) **Special Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee Meeting (Local Democracy Week) – 17th October 2006** - A Special Meeting of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 17th October, 2006 as part of Darlington Borough Council's commitment to Local Democracy Week (16th-22nd October 2006). Two school children from each of the Primary Schools in the Borough were invited to attend the meeting, and 24 children attended in total. The children enjoyed a healthy Buffet Reception prior to the meeting, where they were able to meet the Deputy Mayor, the Chief Executive, Members of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee and other Senior Members and Officers of the Council. At the Meeting, the children received an overview of the Committee structure and meeting protocols, before receiving presentations from Officers on School Attendance, School Transport issues and Healthy Schools. The children and Committee Members then participated in discussion and workshops on these issues and it was very pleasing to see the enthusiasm of all involved.
- (g) **Work Programme 2006/2007** – The Committee considered the Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2006/2007 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.

**Councillor Cyndi Hughes**  
**Chair of Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee**

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

- Members of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee and I attended Longfield School to celebrate European Day of Languages
- Attended a meeting of the Union Learning Representatives Sub-Group at the Town Hall
- Attended a meeting on Youth Provision with the Director of Community Services
- Attended a briefing with the Director of Children's Services and Cabinet Member with portfolio for Children's Services for an update
- Met with the Head Mistress of Polam Hall School to discuss school transport and pupil safety issues
- Attended an LEA Governor's Appointments Panel
- Attended and chaired a meeting of the Health & Safety in Schools Task and Finish Group
- Attended an Islamic Awareness Course at the Mosque in Middlesbrough
- Attended a meeting at the Neighbourhood Nursery to discuss nursery provision at the Coleridge Centre, Skerne Park