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**OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

1. Since the last meeting of Council the following are main areas of work and under the Children and Young People Portfolio :-

**Proposed Land Transfer to Heathfield Academy Trust** – We have approved the transfer of land, known as the ‘Well-being Centre’ to Heathfield Primary School (converted to Academy Status on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012).

**Mowden Schools Expansion – Project Update** – We received a progress update of the feasibility work undertaken on the expansion of Mowden Infant and Junior School and gave approval to release basic need capital grant to progress the expansion of Mowden schools. The expansion will provide additional primary places to help meet the Authority’s statutory requirement to provide a school place for all children of school age in its area and enable parents to express a choice of a local school.

**Corporate Parenting Panel**

2. The Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) met on 10 August. The focus of the meeting was Children’s services annual reports and performance. All services have seen a significant increase in demand and workload, whilst maintaining good overall levels of performance. The Panel thanked the staff for their commitment to the service and young people.
3. The Panel received a verbal update on the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny review of the CPP. The outcome of the review will be reported to Scrutiny at it’s next meeting.

**Children Centre Inspections**

4. Skerne Park Children Centre was inspected on 5 and 6 July and was described as good with outstanding features. The report highlighted the high regard users and partners have for the centre. The inspectors noted the seamless package of targeted support and services the Centre provides for all young people aged 0-19, the excellent outreach services and stated that the whole service offers good value for money.
5. This was supported with outstanding features in safe guarding children, the quality of care, guidance and support offered to families and its partnerships with other services.

## **Schools and Academies**

6. The end of the summer term saw the departure of two long standing Headteachers who have been a part of Darlington's education system for many years. Nell Morgan from Harrowgate Hill Primary School and Sheila Williams from Whinfield Primary School both retired on the 19th July. I wish them both well for the future.
7. Two new Headteachers have also joined Darlington. Kate Chisholm is the new Headteacher for Skerne Park Primary School and Shirley Welsh is the new Headteacher for Whinfield Primary School. I welcome both Headteachers to Darlington and look forward to their input to education for the children, families and staff at each of their respective schools.
8. On 1 July Gurney Pease Primary School converted to an Academy and St Bede's RC Primary School converted to an Academy on 1 August.
9. The Secretary of State for Education has now formally confirmed agreement for Skerne Park Primary School to become an Academy sponsored by Hummersknott Academy Trust and for Dodmire to become an Academy sponsored by Longfield Academy Trust. It is envisaged that the schools will aim to convert in November 2012 and January 2013 respectively.

## **Ofsted Inspections**

10. Mowden Infant School and Mowden Junior School were inspected in June and their Ofsted reports were published on 19 July. Both Schools were judged to be Good overall with Outstanding features for 'Behaviour and Safety of Pupils'. The report commented that 'the recent federation of the infant and junior schools has had a very positive impact on school development'.
11. George Dent Nursery School was inspected in June and the Ofsted report was published on 13 July. The Nursery was judged to be Outstanding in all areas and the report included the following positive comments:
  - (a) Achievement is outstanding.
  - (b) Progress in personal, social and emotional development is particularly strong.
  - (c) The headteacher's outstanding leadership is at the heart of the school's success.

## **Children Looked After**

12. At the end of July 2012, there were 210 children Looked After by the Local Authority. This is an increase of 7 children since the end of May 2012.
13. Ofsted Key Inspections for 2012 have now been completed for internal Children's Homes, resulting in ratings of 'good with outstanding areas' for the mainstream Homes and a rating of 'outstanding' for the Short Break Centre for disabled children.

## **Child Protection**

14. At the end of June 2012, 99 children, representing 53 families were subject to child protection plans. 74 per cent under the category of Neglect, 14 per cent under the category of Emotional Abuse, and 12 per cent under the category of Physical Abuse. Over the last three quarter periods, no children have been made subject to a plan as a result of sexual abuse.
15. Domestic abuse continues to be a significant risk factor, and over the last quarter, accounts for the registration of 65 per cent of all children made subject to a plan over that period. However, substance misuse and parental mental health continue to be significant risk factors for children in Darlington.

## **Darlington Children and Young People Collective Update**

16. The group, which I Chair as operational lead, met for the first time in June 2012. The group will meet monthly and more information will be available in my next Council report.
17. The Children and Young People's Collective will have a launch event on 2 October 2012 which will include partners and young people.

## **Meetings**

18. Some of my activities since the last meeting of Council are:--
  - (a) Taken part in the Annual Production at Carmel College
  - (b) Attended meetings of the Shadow Health and Well-Being Board
  - (c) Attended and addressed meetings of the Darlington Partnership Board
  - (d) Attended briefings with the Director of People and the Assistant Director of Children, Young People and Families;
  - (e) Attended the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
  - (f) Attended an NHS consultation event focused on paediatric services for County Durham and Darlington

**Councillor Cyndi Hughes**  
**Children and Young People Portfolio**

Councillor Hughes