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**OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has undertaken :-

- (a) **Corporate Parenting Panel** – We received a report to provide Members with information regarding the Corporate Parenting Panel to ensure that the corporate responsibilities relating to ‘looked after’ children are being effectively implemented and for us to consider areas of focus for 2012/13 to improve the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

The Peer Review 2011 made some recommendations in relation to the Corporate Parenting Panel and Members agreed to undertake a Task and Finish Review to examine further the role of the Corporate Parenting Panel; its interaction with the young people; current membership; and reporting processes.

- (b) **Announced Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Services** – We received full details of the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection of ‘Safeguarding Services and Provision for Looked After Children’ and the key strengths which were identified during the inspection including the areas for improvement. Overall the inspectors judged us to be adequate, and out of the 18 outcomes, nine were graded good and nine were graded adequate.

We also approved the Action Plan which has been implemented to address the areas for improvement requiring action. We will be monitoring this action plan closely and it will inform our work programme.

The inspection did identify key areas of good partnership working and especially good outcomes for the children and young people in Darlington and the next area of priority is the implementation of the action plan to further strengthen the provisions for children and young people and their families.

- (c) **Children and Families Early Intervention and Prevention Review** – The first meeting of this Review Group was held on 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2012 and Members discussed why early intervention and prevention services were a priority for Darlington; the number of young people looked after by the Local Authority and those subject to Child Protection Plans; and the costs involved with Looked After Children.

Members also undertook a group exercise using genuine case examples to examine where they felt that interventions could have been put in place at an earlier stage and to consider what a localised response could offer.

For a future meeting, the Group intend to examine in more detail Multi-agency working and the integration of services.

- (d) **Attendance at Key Stage 1 and Reception Review Group** – Members of the Review Group presented their findings and recommendations which have been approved by Scrutiny Members. The Local Authority can give support and encouragement to parents for school attendance however, ultimately, this is the responsibility of the schools and parents to ensure good attendance, therefore we are recommending a series of school/parent education and publicity to raise awareness of the importance of school attendance at Reception and Key Stage 1. We feel that this will provide a relatively low cost effective help to the present situation of low attendance at this age.
- (e) **Work Programme 2011/12** – We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2011/12 and taking into account the ambitious programme of change across the Council and the key role of Scrutiny in ensuring that the programme is able to deliver the service improvements and the budget savings necessary.

We have now included the monitoring of the recommendations from the recent Safeguarding Children's Inspection into our work programme.

**Councillor Eleanor Lister**  
**Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**