
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) **Strategy for Young People's Services** – We received a report on the Strategy for Young People's Services which aims to provide services, based on existing good practice, and improve the outcomes of young people aged 11-19 in Darlington. The Strategy will deliver, along side its partners, integrated services to improve early intervention, prevention and targeted support for young people. Emily Christer, the Member of Youth Parliament attended the meeting and gave her views on the Strategy and services that are available to young people in Darlington.
 - (b) **Primary Capital Programme** - I am very pleased to report that Darlington Borough Council has been selected as one of the only 41 Authorities to have its Primary Strategy for Change approved for the next two years, which means that expansion can be carried out at some schools, in addition to general refurbishment and improvement to the facilities available. Members received information on the full list of schools projects to be undertaken in the next two years and with the funds received, it will ensure that well over half of the school buildings in the Borough will have been brought up to standard by the close of 2010/11.
 - (c) **Annual Report of the Local Admission Forum** – We received a very interesting report of the work of the Local Admission Forum and received their annual report. The Local Admission Forum plays a valuable part in ensuring that all publicly funded schools co-operate and subscribe to the co-ordinated admissions scheme administered by this authority. I am also pleased to report that 87 per cent of secondary applications received their first preference, which compares favourably with the national average of 82 per cent of families getting first preference.
 - (d) **Secondary Schools Buildings Schools for the Future** – An Expression of Interest has been submitted to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and Partnerships for schools, seeking to have Darlington included in the next wave of funding available under the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Programme. This Scrutiny will be monitoring progress on the Expression of Interest very closely and if approved, could see the release of funding to commence works to refurbish three secondary schools and improve the use of ICT as a learning medium in all secondary schools.
 - (e) **Darlington Safeguarding – Position Statement** – We received information regarding the child protection process within Darlington which included the policy, procedure and practice of the child protection system. The monitoring, quality assurance processes, including the Local Safeguarding Children Board were also identified. A training

session for Members of this Council and Co-opted Members of our Scrutiny Committee has been arranged for Safeguarding Children on 4th February, 2009 and Safeguarding Adults on 25th February, 2009 both commencing at 3.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. at the Town

- (f) **Work Programme 2008/09** - The Committee considered the Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2008/2009, and examined Cabinet's Forward Plan, in order to identify areas of particular interest or concern.

The Scrutiny Committee have agreed to continue the work of the Task and Finish Review Groups on Language Learning and the Use of Multi Use Games Areas by way of full Reviews; hold a Special Meeting to consider the Juvenile Justice System in Darlington and the Youth Offending Service Plan and invite relevant outside agencies to attend and feedback.

Councillor Cyndi Hughes
Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

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

- Carmel College Mentoring Day
- Meeting with Jeni Cook, Assistant Director of Children's Services to discuss safeguarding procedures
- Launched the European Youth Parliament North East competition held in the chamber at Darlington Borough Council
- Met with the Director of Children's Services
- Monitoring and Coordination Group
- "Football in the Community" meeting at Darlington Football Stadium