
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) **Service Planning** - We received reports on an introduction to the four service plans for which this Scrutiny Committee is responsible for providing challenge and a report on the 4th Quarter 2008/09 performance. Along with the service plans this Scrutiny Committee also has the responsibility of monitoring elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy : One Darlington : Perfectly Place and the Local Area Agreement to note overall performance and reasons for underperformance and to undertake Task and Finish Reviews into areas of service from time to time. Members noted that for the four service plans the overall aggregated target is being achieved, and the 127 indicators are either above or on target however 28 are showing below target performance and there are 15 indicators for which there is no data available.
 - (b) **Childhood Obesity** – Members received an update on the actions being taken to tackle childhood obesity in Darlington and to consider the draft strategy ‘Preventing Obesity, Promoting Physical Activity in Children and Young People in Darlington (2009-2012). The draft strategy used the learning from an initial stakeholder event held in November 2008 which identified priority areas specific to Darlington. This has informed what needs to be done locally to prevent obesity and develop services treat obesity.
 - (c) **Childcare Sufficiency Review 2008/09** – We received a report which set out the actions being undertaken during 2008/09 by the Early Years Partnerships Team to assist this authority in ‘shaping’ the local childcare market and achieving childcare sufficiency for families in Darlington. Childcare Sufficiency Plans for 2009/10 include the provision of support and guidance to settings around providing a good quality, inclusive and sustainable childcare service to parents. Parents will also be provided with up to date information about financial assistance towards childcare costs, including tax credits.
 - (d) **Alcohol/Substance Misuse Related Education for Children and Young People** – Members of this Scrutiny Committee gave consideration to the existing provision and planned developments for educating children and young people in Darlington about alcohol and drug misuse. The report also summarised the key developments relating to the prevention and treatment of associated problems. There has been a lot of work with schools to improve education about alcohol and drug misuse linked in with the Health School status. This work will be supported by the appointment of a Drug and Alcohol Education post based in the School Improvement Team later this year.
 - (e) **The Protection of Children in England Action Plan** – We received an update report following the report to Cabinet on 28th April, 2009, regarding the Laming Report, Government response and the implications for safeguarding in Darlington.

- (f) **Outdoor Play Areas** – We received a report on the improvements carried out in the last three years at a number of play areas and the further improvements planned over the next two years. Funding from these improvements has come from mainly Local Area Agreement funding and has been supplemented by other external funding and Section 106 monies. Funding has also been secured from a successful application to Playbuilders which will be allocated over two years with eleven sites per year being developed.
- (g) **Work Programme 2009/10** - The Committee considered the Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2009/2010, and examined Cabinet’s Forward Plan, in order to identify areas of particular interest or concern or potential areas for Review.
- (h) **Review Groups** – The Members received progress reports from the Review Group investigating the provision and use of Multi Use Games Areas within the borough and the Task and Finish Review on Youth Offending which looked at specific issues relating to youth offending for which this Scrutiny Committee have responsibility.

Councillor Cyndi Hughes
Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

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

- Monitoring and Co-ordination Meeting.
- Carmel College Musical.
- Young People’s singing event at Hurworth Grange.
- The Children’s Trust (Aspire Theme Group).
- Retirement celebration for Mr. Jim O’Neil (Carmel College).
- Briefings with officers.