
OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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) **Darlington's Children and Young People Plan 2011-2014** – We have given our views on the draft Children and Young People's Plan for 2011-2014 as part of the overall consultation process. The Plan is a single overarching plan for all services which directly affect children and young people in Darlington and demonstrates how the local authority and relevant partners will integrate provision to improve well-being across all five Every Child Matters outcomes.

An extensive consultation process has been undertaken to seek the views of parents and children and young people and to date 411 young people have been involved in focus group work to consider the proposed priorities. The young people also set up a steering group and developed a fan page on facebook 'The Blueprint', they produced a young person friendly flyer and also a short film, which we viewed, to publicise the excellent work the young people have undertaken over the past 6 months.

The consultation process has also taken into account the views of many stakeholders including the Council's Children's Services, the LSP Executive Group, Durham Police Authority, General Practitioners, Youth Offending Services, Darlington Association of Governors, Job Centre Plus and schools.

Following this extensive consultative process of the past months a strategic action plan has been prepared based on the five key priority areas being to promote positive health and wellbeing; ensure the safety of children and young people; enable children and young people to have fun and maximise their full potential through learning; enable children and young people to contribute to their communities; and ensure children and young people are prepared for adult life.

The work programme for our Scrutiny complements the priorities of the Children and Young People Plan and any outcomes or recommendations from the work we undertake will be fed into the Plan via the Children's Trust. We will also continually monitor the outcomes of the action plan of the Plan for 2011-14.

- (b) **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 approved the terms of reference for each of the areas of work agreed at our last meeting which include Looked After Children and the role of the Corporate Parenting Panel; Behaviour Strategy for Key Stage 1 and 2 and Key Stage 3 and 4; Child Poverty and Vulnerable Children; Early Intervention and Children and Families Service; Attendance at Key Stage 1 and Reception; and Extending Participation in Education and Training to 18 years. We will also be involved with the Scrutiny of the Medium Term Financial Plan along with the other Scrutiny Committees and continually consider Cabinet's Forward Plan to determine any further items to include in our Work Programme.

- (c) **Attendance at Key Stage 1 and Reception Review Group** – We have begun our Review into attendance at Key Stage 1 and Reception and as part of that Review received a presentation from the Head of Education Services on current legislation relating to school attendance; the importance of attendance; and how Darlington is doing generally compared to regional neighbours and the national average. The Lead Officer for Early Years also provided us with some background on the Early Years Foundation Stage covering the period from birth to end of Reception and the various settings a child may be in which included maintained nursery places and private, voluntary and independent nursery places. We also undertook a mapping exercise to determine what effect we felt different factors had on school attendance which was very interesting when we sat down to analyse our individual priorities.

The date of the next meeting is to be arranged and again all Members of the Scrutiny Committee will be invited to attend. Future actions will include meeting with the Traveller Education Service, examining good practise in neighbouring authorities, speaking with the Schools Forum, examining case studies and literature reviews and liaising with Head Teachers.

Councillor Eleanor Lister
Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee