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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 the main areas of work undertaken under the Children and Young People Portfolio.

**Young Carers Review Group**

2. The Council considered and supported the final findings and recommendations of the Young Carers Review Group which was undertaken by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to examine the Darlington Young Carers Action Plan and the progress made towards the actions in the Plan by the new service providers.

**Children's Services Capital Programme for Primary Schools**

3. The Council was advised of the outcome of feasibility projects undertaken to provide additional school places on the eastern side of the Borough and approved the release of capital funding to support these projects.
4. Projects included £3,168,081.50 of capital funding to be released for the provision of additional accommodation at Heathfield Academy School; to retain the existing Red Hall Primary School on its current site and develop detailed design proposals to expand the school as required to meet the needs of the Eastern Urban Fringe development; to release £260,000 basic need funding to support the remodelling of the entrance at Red Hall primary school to address safeguarding issues; and to release £50,000 basic need funding to support advanced feasibility and design fees should these be required to consider options for any other school place planning requirements in line with developing and revising the School Organisation Plan.

**Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education**

5. Approval has been given to a revised Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Darlington enabling schools to implement the new syllabus within the statutory framework.
6. For the purpose of preparing an Agreed Syllabus for religious education the local authority must convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference and the role of the Agreed Syllabus Conference is to produce and recommend an Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education which meets fully the present legislative requirements and is educationally sound.

7. Meetings of the Agreed Syllabus Conference were held on 17 March 2014 to consult on the revised Syllabus; and further meetings were held on 22 April 2014 and 26 February, 2015 when the Syllabus was unanimously agreed by the four groups represented at the Agreed Syllabus Conference.
8. The representatives committees of the Agreed Syllabus Conference are Other Religious Faiths; the Church of England; Teachers' Associations; and Representative of the Local Authority.
9. As part of the consultation process Primary and Secondary Schools in Darlington were sent a questionnaire during November 2013 and consultation meetings were arranged at the Town Hall on 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2013 for Primary and Special Schools and on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2013 for Secondary Schools.

### **2016/17 Admission Arrangements**

10. Approval has been given to adopt the Authority's admission arrangements for the 2016/2017 academic year, for all seven maintained schools in the Borough and the Co-ordinated Admission Schemes for both primary and secondary applications for the 2016//17 Academic Year.
11. The Authority is under a statutory duty to determine admission arrangements for primary schools for which it is the admission authority for the academic year 2016/2017.
12. If the scheme is not approved and returned to the DfE by the 15 April 2015 the Secretary of State may impose a scheme on the Authority.

### **Corporate Parenting Panel**

13. Corporate Parenting Panel took place on 31 March 2015, when the theme was 'Looked After Children Moving into Adulthood'. The Panel wanted to examine the issues young people face when they leave a care placement and what advice and support is available to them. The Panel received reports from Officers on 'staying put' arrangements in foster care; supported living; 'taster flats' and different support schemes available. Employment and apprenticeship opportunities were also discussed.
14. The Panel also received quality assurance information (performance data and residential homes Ofsted reports).
15. The young people from Darlo Crew attended the full meeting and contributed from their experience.

### **Local Safeguarding Children Board**

16. The Board held a Development Day on 18 March 2015 to review the past year and agree priorities for the forthcoming year. The event was well attended by multi-

agency partners. Further work is taking place to ensure the priorities have clear objectives and actions.

## **School Forum**

17. The Forum met on 10 March 2015. The meeting agreed the budget for 2015/16, and received two detailed reports on two 'resource bases' – speech and language service (Northwood Primary) and low incidence needs service (Hurworth Primary). These reports are part of a process ensuring the Forum is fully aware of the service detail and cost. This allows for adjustment and prioritisation as required.

## **Education**

18. It has been extremely disappointing that Darlington College has received an Ofsted judgement of Inadequate. However, much improvement work has already started and the Council is supporting the College wherever possible.
19. Kids First Daycare and George Dent Nursery School were both inspected and retained their Outstanding grade.
20. St Bede's RC Primary School was inspected and maintained the grade of Good.
21. St Mark's Pre-School was re-inspected and have gained a Good grade following the Requires Improvement grade 10 months ago.
22. Longfield Academy of Sport has received the recent Ofsted Inspection judgement of Good. We are awaiting the formal outcome of Inspections at Northwood and West Park Schools.
23. The Darlington Borough Council Learning and Skills Centre at Tubwell Row was officially opened on 16 March 2015. The centre is supporting some of our most vulnerable 16-18 year olds to achieve the qualifications and skills they need to progress into further education, training or employment.
24. The December 2014 Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) data is available and our 16 and 17 year old participation rate is now at 92.7 per cent, compared with a North-East average of 91.5 per cent and an England average of 90.2 per cent. We are now 28<sup>th</sup> out of the 151 local authority areas. Not knowns stood at 0.8 per cent, second lowest in the North-East and well below the England average of 4.8 per cent.
25. Welcome to Mike Butler, who is the new Chief Executive at the Education Village, taking the post up formally after the Easter break.

## **Child Protection/Looked After Children Statistics**

26. In February 2015, 107 children had a Child Protection Plan. This related to 41 families. 64 per cent of children on a Child Protection Plan were as a result of

Neglect, 32 per cent as a result of Emotional harm and 4 per cent due to Physical abuse.

27. There has been an increase in unborn babies being made subject to a Plan and this is 4 per cent of all Child Protection Plans. Children aged under 5 years old (excluding unborn babies) account for 27 per cent of plans, 42 per cent are aged 5-10 years, 21 per cent are between 10-15 years, 6 per cent 16 years old and older.
28. Work is currently ongoing with NYAS (Advocacy Services) to obtain further feedback from children and young people on the services they receive whilst being subject to child protection plans. This will be collated and presented through the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB).
29. On 23 March 2015, there were 202 children Looked After by Darlington Borough Council. This is a decrease of 15 children since 31 January 2015. Within the total number 14 children were in pre-adoptive placements; 29 children were placed with family and friends – deemed Looked After; 63 children were aged 5 years and under; 19 young people were aged 17 years.

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