

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15th September, 2008

PRESENT – Councillor Hughes (in the Chair); Councillors Armstrong, Burton, Davies, Francis, Galletley, Lawton, Lister, and Richmond. (9)

STATUTORY CO-OPTEES – Canon S. Bamber and Mr. M. Frank. (2)

NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTEES – Mr. R. Egan, Mr. D. Moyes, Mr. C. J. Taylor and Mr. N. Rees. (4)

APOLOGIES – Councillor Long and Mr. T. Fisher. (2)

ABSENT – Councillor Thistlethwaite, Mrs. V. Mitchell and Ms. S. Robinson. (3)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – George McQueen, Assistant Director (Planning and Resources), Children’s Services, Andrew Dunn, Assistant Director (School Improvement and Development), Children’s Services, Jenni Cooke, Assistant Director (Children and Families), Children’s Services, and Odette Sanderson, Darlington Safeguarding Children Board Manager.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor McEwan, Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Children and Young People, and Anita Blackburn, Vice Principal, Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College.

CYP20. MINUTES – Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd June 2008.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

CYP21. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS – Councillors Lister declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in Minute CYP23 below, as a Governor at the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College.

CYP22. FOUNDATION STAGE, KEY STAGE 1, 2, 3, GCSE AND A LEVEL RESULTS IN 2008 – The Director of Children’s Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to inform Members as regard the cumulative performance of Darlington schools in national tests in 2008.

The submitted report concentrated on the headline figures for provisional test results in Darlington schools for 2008, and Members were informed that the provisional results demonstrated some significant improvements and consolidated existing good performance.

The submitted report outlined the provisional results at the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, combined with comparisons with the results for 2007, provided a breakdown of GCSE attainment based on 5 A* to C grades, and 5 A* to C grades which included English and Mathematics, and performance at A Level. The submitted report also noted the improved attendance and exclusion figures.

Members entered into discussion on the differential between points and percentage, the training available to Governors on data analysis, the issues surrounding the marking of Key Stage 2 test papers, the abstraction of Eastbourne Church of England Academy from the provisional results, the inclusion of NVQ results, the provision of further information in terms of performance and Contextual Added Value, the identification of differences in performance based on gender, the performance of Looked After Children, the improved performance in terms of Fixed Term Exclusions, the five Primary Schools that will be involved in the 'Darlington Challenge', the actual number of pupils that sat GCSEs, the reduction in targets in the Foundation Stage, the shift from more established academic subjects to new subjects within the curriculum, and the need to compare performance with wider trends.

RESOLVED – (a) That a further report be submitted to this Committee once the validated results, following re-marks, borderline checks and appeals, was available.

(b) That the future report also contain Contextual Added Value performance information for each school in Darlington.

CYP23. DEVELOPMENT OF 14-19 CURRICULUM OFFER AND NEW DIPLOMAS

- The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to inform Members of the development of the 14 to 19 Curriculum Offer in Darlington, and made particular reference to the new Diplomas.

The submitted report outlined the work of Darlington 14-19 Trust, the development of the 14-19 Strategy, the work of the various sub-groups that support the 14-19 Trust, and the development of the a new range of qualifications for the 14-19 phase designed to bridge the gap between vocational and academic education. It was reported that Darlington will deliver four Diplomas (IT, Creative and Media, Engineering and Hospitality and Catering) from September 2009, with one further Diploma (Construction and the Built Environment) being offered from September 2010. The report also highlighted the development of an electronic area wide 14-19 Prospectus, and the work being conducted to develop a Tees Valley Multi Area Agreement to collaborate. The 14-19 Development Plan was appended to the submitted report.

Members entered into discussion on the timescale for delivery of the Diplomas, the potential financial implications to schools, the development of a national funding formula by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), and the investigation that was being conducted in relation to the development of a Skills Centre.

RESOLVED – That the content of the submitted report be noted.

CYP24. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – ROLE OF THE LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD - The Director of Children’s Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to update Members of this Committee on the roles and responsibilities of the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB).

The submitted report highlighted that the DSCB was the key statutory mechanism for agreeing and monitoring how relevant organisations in Darlington co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and that the Board ensure that this is done effectively. The report noted the legislative requirements for a local Safeguarding Children Board, and outlined the scope of, and the representatives on, the DSCB.

The submitted report provided information on the objectives of the DSCB, the DSCB’s relationship with the Children’s Trust, the DSCB’s Sub-Groups, and the Board’s work priorities and new responsibilities since April 2008.

Discussion ensued on Child Death Reviews, the benefits of a multi-agency approach, the number of allegations and the timescales involved in relation to the investigation of such allegations.

RESOLVED – That a report to further advise Members of the role of this Scrutiny Committee in scrutinising the work of the DSCB and relevant Officers, be submitted to this Committee at a future date.

CYP25. SPECIALISMS IN SCHOOLS – The Director of Children’s Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to inform Members how a school may become a ‘specialist school’, and to update Members as to the position with regard to current specialist status in Darlington’s schools.

The submitted report outlined the purpose of the Specialist School Programme (SSP), the responsibilities of Specialist Schools, the number of Specialist Schools, the funding arrangements to support Specialist Schools, and the designated time periods applied to Specialist Schools. The report provided an overview of the specialisms currently in schools in Darlington.

Members entered into discussion on access to Specialist schools and the admissions process, the best way to maximise the use of specialisms, the sharing of expertise and knowledge, and targets set within individual specialisms.

RESOLVED – (a) That the content of the report be noted.

(b) That the number of School Admission Applications that cited a specialism as a reason for preference, be reported to Members of this Scrutiny Committee.

CYP26. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09 – The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that further consideration be given to this Scrutiny Committee’s Work Programme and Review topics for the Municipal Year 2008/09.

RESOLVED – (a) That a report to provide an update on the Children and Young People’s Plan be added to this Committee’s Work Programme.

(b) That Members receive further information on the progress of the Phoenix Centre.

(c) That a report detailing the current position in relation to Looked After Children be added to this Committee’s Work Programme.

CYP27. POLICY REVIEW - (1) Review of Progress on Policy Review Items –

There were no reports to consider.

(2) Review Items Final Report Back – There were no reports to consider.

(3) Responses of the Executive to Reports of this Scrutiny Committee – There were no responses to consider.

CYP28. EXECUTIVE CALL-IN - (1) Call-In Items Relating to Key Decisions of the Executive - There were no call-in items.

(2) Other Call-In Items - There were no call-in items.