

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14th January, 2008

PRESENT – Councillor Hughes (in the Chair); Councillors Armstrong, Davies, Francis, Galletley, Lawton, Lister, Long, Richmond, A. J. Scott and Walker. (11)

STATUTORY CO-OPTees – Canon Sheila Bamber. (1)

NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTees – Mr. R. Egan, Mr. T. Fisher, Mr. D. Moyes and Mr. N. Rees. (4)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Murray Rose - Director of Children's Services, George McQueen, Assistant Director - Planning and Resources, Children's Services, Gill Walker, Assistant Director - Inclusion and School Improvement Service, Ruth Bernstein - Head of Libraries & Community Learning Service, Mervyn Bell – Head of Youth Service, Joanne King – Youth Offer Co-ordinator, Andy Whittam – Participation Officer, Youth Service, Rose Gallagher, Lifewise Learning Project Co-ordinator and Linda Hughes, Regional Development Worker, UnionLearn, TUC.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor McEwan, Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Children and Young People.

APOLOGIES – Mr. M. Frank. (1)

ABSENT – Ms. S. Robinson and Mrs. H. Ellis. (2)

CYP25. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

CYP26. MINUTES – Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meetings of this Scrutiny Committee held on 5th November 2007.

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

CYP27. ESTABLISHING THE ETHOS OF EASTBOURNE CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY – The Director of Education, Diocese of Durham, submitted a report (previously circulated) outlining the basic expression of the ethos of the Academy, the aims of the Academy Development Plan, and the six key objectives contained within the Academy Development Plan.

The submitted report highlighted the importance of the engagement of the Academy with the Safer Schools Partnership in establishing the ethos of respect and care, and in assisting students in the use of their unstructured time in a constructive manner. The work of the Chaplain was summarised, and improvements in attendance and behaviour were noted.

Discussion ensued on acceptance by the Academy of a number of students with statements of special educational needs and the resources available for such provision, the potential inclusion of a vocational element within the Academy's ethos, the phraseology in terms of religious direction, and the approach of the Academy toward non-religious students.

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

(b) That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee receive a report on the arrangements for meeting the needs of children with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools in Darlington.

CYP28. LIBRARIES AND COMMUNITY LEARNING SERVICE – The Head of Libraries and Community Learning Service submitted a report (previously circulated) to update members on the activities within the Libraries and Community Service. The submitted report outlined the activities that had taken place during the period April 2007 to November 2007, and highlighted the proposed activities up to March 2008.

The submitted report outlined the recent restructure of the service, the growth in the number of people accessing the services offered, the Work-based Learning opportunities, and the ongoing development work that is being undertaken with stakeholders to ensure provision of English Language classes for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

Members entered into discussion on the library facilities that will be available at the relocated Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and the community use thereof, the work conducted by the Libraries and Community Learning Service in engaging with disadvantaged communities, and the recent extension to the weekend opening times at Cockerton Library.

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

(b) That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee receive the OfSTED report following the most recent inspection of the Libraries and Community Learning Service.

CYP29. DARLINGTON'S PARENTING STRATEGY – The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to inform members of the development of a comprehensive parenting strategy for Darlington.

The submitted report highlighted that the promotion of good parenting was one of the key priorities of this Council's 'Children and Young People's Plan'. The report stated that an underpinning principle of the strategy was that all children, young people and families were entitled to access services on the basis of need, and identified the four broad areas of need.

The submitted report concluded by outlining the process of the development of Darlington's Parenting Strategy, and a draft copy of the strategy was appended to the submitted report.

Discussion ensued on parental co-operation and intervention, proactive and reactive parental support, generic or targeted provision of Children's Centres, the intervention and parental support required in situations where only one child amongst a number of siblings presents unacceptable behaviour, the parental support available for families with children with Special Educational Needs, signposting and the promotion of other appropriate services, parental support for those who speak different languages, the support available for single male parents, and pre-parenting support.

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

(b) That the draft Parenting Strategy be endorsed for future development.

CYP30. DEVELOPMENT OF POSITIVE ACTIVITIES ('YOUTH OFFER') IN DARLINGTON – The Director of Children's Services submitted a report (previously

circulated) that provided the key elements of the new statutory duty placed on the Council to secure access for young people to a sufficient local offer of positive activities and to outline the plans and proposals in place to meet this duty, including design, branding and integration of providers across all sectors.

Members entered into discussion on the cost of the provision of activities and opportunities, and the role of the T3 Group.

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

(b) That further reports be received by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, at appropriate intervals, outlining the progress of the development work on the ‘Youth Offer’.

CYP31. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL – The Director of Children’s Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to inform Members of the recent Annual Performance Assessment (APA) of the Children’s Services Department and to highlight areas for development in the coming year.

The submitted report outlined the nature of the assessment, the grading scale on which the assessment was based, and the areas for improvement. A full copy of the Annual Performance Assessment letter was appended to the submitted report.

Discussion ensued on the correlation between early years ‘take up’ and outcomes in later years, the quality of early years provision, the introduction of the three vocational diplomas, and the areas for improvement highlighted by OfSTED.

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

(b) That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee continue to monitor those areas for improvement highlighted by OfSTED.

CYP32. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME 2007/08 – 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 2007/08 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED – That the Work Programme be updated accordingly.

CYP33. 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.

CYP34. 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.

CYP35. BEST VALUE - MONITORING OF PROGRESS ON BEST VALUE REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLANS - There was no progress to be reported back to this meeting.

CYP36. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM – LIFEWISE LEARNING PROJECT – The Lifewise Learning Project Co-ordinator submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide information to Members on the Lifewise Learning Project.

The submitted report stated that the Lifewise Learning Project is an initiative that aims to help employees of Darlington Borough Council who would like to return to learning, however find themselves in the ‘hard to reach’ category due to the nature of their employment. The report outlined that the Project is a partnership between UnionLearn and the Darlington Partnership, and is funded through the Learning for All Fund, which is funding administered and managed by the UnionLearn Northern TUC on behalf of the regional Learning and Skills Council and One North East.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted.

(NOTE: Minute CYP36 above, was taken at the meeting prior to Minute CYP27)