

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9th January, 2012

PRESENT – Councillor Lister (in the Chair); Councillors Crudass, Curry, Galletley, Hutchinson, J.M. Lyonette, E.A. Richmond, C. Taylor and Wright. (9)

APOLOGIES – Councillors L. Hughes and J. Vasey; and Mr. T. Fisher. (3)

NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTees – Mr. R. Egan and Mr. D. Moyes. (2)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor C. Hughes, Cabinet Member with Children and Young People Portfolio.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Jenni Cooke, Assistant Director, Children, Families and Learning and David Mason, Acting Head of Family Support.

CYP8. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

CYP9. MINUTES – Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 31st October, 2011.

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

CYP10. WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2011/12 – Pursuant to Minute CYP8/Sep/11, the Director of Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) to give consideration to the work programme items scheduled by this Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2011/12 and to advise Members of proposals in relation to the scrutiny of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

It was also emphasised that the work programme was a rolling programme and any Member of this Scrutiny could request an item to be included provided that a Quad of Aims had been submitted to the Scrutiny Committee prior to ensure that it contributed to the strategic aims of the Council.

The Assistant Director, Children, Families and Learning advised Members of the Safeguarding Inspection carried out recently by Ofsted and the outcomes and recommendations from the inspection which in a number of areas had seen the service move from satisfactory to good. She advised the Scrutiny Committee that she will give a presentation to Members which will include details of the Action Plan which will be developed as a result of the recommendations made by Ofsted. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee will have a role in monitoring the performance against the targets contained within the Action Plan.

RESOLVED – (a) That the work programme be noted.

(b) That the Safeguarding Inspection and subsequent Action Plan be included within the Work Programme.

CYP11. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION – The Acting Head of Family Support gave a presentation to Members of this Scrutiny Committee to familiarise Members with Children and Families Early Intervention Services by way of an introduction to enable Members to scrutinise early intervention processes in place and to recommend any changes if required, taking into consideration the Darlington Health Profile 2011 indicators, to monitor performance against the indicators relating to early intervention. Terms of reference for this review had previously been approved by this Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 31st October, 2011 (previously circulated).

The presentation provided definitions of Early Intervention; outlined the national context and reports commissioned by national Government including national pressures; outlined the local context and the pressures to achieve substantial savings for the Council and improve the quality of life for Children, Young People and their families; and informing Members of the ‘Troubled Families Team’ national initiative aimed at turning the lives around of 120,000 families by 2015.

RESOLVED – (a) That the presentation be noted.

(b) That Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee commence a review of the Children and Families Early Intervention services.

CYP12. ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF DARLINGTON CHILDREN’S SERVICES – The Director of Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) to give consideration to a referral from Cabinet in relation to the Annual Assessment of Darlington Children’s Services.

Members examined the Annual Assessment of Darlington Children’s Services which gave an overall judgement of performing well and the Ofsted summary of inspection judgements paying particular attention to some areas which required further improvement.

Following discussion it was agreed that the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee will include within their work programme a future monitoring role of performance in the areas requiring further improvement. These areas being the proportion of good childminding provision; the overall quality of secondary school provision to include the effect of the number of Academies and the closure of the Pupil Referral Unit; and the issues with the screening of referrals from the police and assessing the risks to children in cases of domestic abuse and the association problems with the IT systems and processes.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That the monitoring of performance against the areas for further improvement be included in the Work Programme for this Scrutiny Committee.

CYP13. POLICY REVIEW – REVIEW OF PROGRESS OF POLICY REVIEW ITEMS - (1) Medium Term Financial Plan – Submitted – The note of the meeting of the Medium Term Financial Plan Task and Finish Review Group held on 28th November, 2011 (previously circulated), established to scrutinise those savings proposals contained with the Medium Term Financial Plan which were under the remit of this Scrutiny Committee; and the

draft Final report of the Task and Finish Review Group (circulated at the meeting) which contained the conclusion and recommendations of the Group.

RESOLVED – That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee endorse the conclusions and following recommendations of the Medium Term Financial Plan Review Group:

- (a) That the Officers be thanked for their attendance at the meeting of the Task and Finish Review Group.
- (b) That the concerns of this Scrutiny Committee be noted regarding any reductions in the Early Years and Childcare Development service, however, Members were confident that the reduction of hours will not affect the current level of expertise in the service.
- (c) That the concerns of this Scrutiny committee be noted with regard to the proposal to reduce the training element of the Parenting budget as it did not allow for the replacement of trained practitioners who may leave the service in the future.
- (d) That this Scrutiny Committee continue to monitor the impact on the services affected by the budget proposals and receive overview reports when requested.
- (e) That the thanks of this Scrutiny Committee be extended to those members of staff within the Early Years Foundation and Childcare Setting Advisory Service who had agreed a reduction in hours rather than lose a post through redundancy.
- (f) That the recommendations of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee be forwarded to the Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

(2) ATTENDANCE AT KEY STAGE 1 AND RECEPTION REVIEW GROUP – PROGRESS REPORT – Submitted – The note of the meeting of the Attendance at Key Stage 1 and Reception Review Group held on 6th December, 2011 (previously circulated).

RESOLVED – That the progress of the Review Group be noted.