

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18th June, 2012

PRESENT – Councillor Lister (in the Chair); Councillors Crudass, Kelley, Taylor and E.A. Richmond. (6)

APOLOGIES – Councillors Galletley, L. Hughes Hutchinson, Lister, J. M. Lyonette, J. Vasey and Wright; Mr. T. Fisher and Mr. M. Frank. (9)

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; a Sarah Hackett, Tees Valley YMCA; and Val Foster, Head Teacher Borough Road Nursery School.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Jenni Cooke, Assistant Director, Children, Families and Learning.

CYP1. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

CYP2. TIMES OF MEETINGS – RESOLVED – That for the remainder of this Municipal Year the timings of meetings of this Scrutiny Committee be held at 4.00 p.m.

CYP3. MINUTES – Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd April, 2012.

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

CYP4. WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2011/12 –The Director of Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) to give consideration to the work programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee and to consider any additional areas which Members suggest should be added to the previously approved work programme; and to approve terms of reference for an additional piece of work on Ethnic Groups Interaction with Children and Young People Services.

At a meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 31st October, 2011 discussion was held and agreement reached on areas which this Scrutiny Committee would like to focus its work on and this work has been and is currently being undertaken, however, 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.

It was also agreed that the item on the work programme to monitor the Annual Assessment of Darlington Children’s Services be removed as there is now no requirement to do so.

The Chair also advised Members of this Scrutiny Committee that Monitoring and Co-ordination at the meeting scheduled for 2nd July, will receive Quad of Aims for work to be included in the work programme on the School Organisation Plan and the Darlington Safeguarding Children’s Board.

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

(b) That the Terms of Reference for the work on Ethnic Groups Interaction with Children and Young People Services be approved.

CYP5. POLICY REVIEW – REVIEW OF PROGRESS OF POLICY REVIEW ITEMS – Year One and Reception Attendance - Actions – Submitted – A report from the Director of People (previously circulated) to provide Members with details of key actions planned to address the Reception and Year One low attendance issue.

Following the Review Group which was undertaken by this Scrutiny Committee and the recommendations made therefrom, an action plan was devised to address the issues of low attendance at primary and reception and the submitted report outlined the progress to date.

The report outlined that attendance of year one pupils is consistently lower than the overall primary attendance in Darlington and overall primary school attendance has been similar to the national average for the past four years, however Year One attendance data illustrates a decline in attendance.

It is the responsibility of the school to apply intervention strategies in order to bring about an improvement in school attendance however Family Support Officers work with schools where there is an issue with low attendance. Officers have also agreed a number of actions following the recommendations made by the Review Group to address the ‘casual attitude’ to attendance at maintained nursery provision which continues into reception and year one of primary school.

It was reported that a letter has been written to be distributed prior to the Early Years Transition meeting to the providers from all schools and settings to raise awareness of the facts and seeks support for a focus towards improving attendance; and officers are in discussions with Communications for a campaign to run over the summer as a message for parents and also publications in children’s centres. It was also reported that officers were looking at working jointly with doctors and dentists to emphasise the importance of timings of dentist/doctor appointments and to return to school as soon as possible thereafter.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report action taken to date be noted.

(b) That Members receive a further report to review the 2012-2013 Reception and Year One attendance data in Autumn 2013 in order to measure the impact of the actions to address attendance.