

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4th March 2013

PRESENT – Councillor C. Taylor (in the Chair); Councillors Crudass, Galletley, L. Hughes, Hutchinson, Kelley, E.A. Richmond and L. Vasey. (8)

APOLOGIES – Councillors Lister, and J..M. Lyonette. (2)

ABSENT – Councillor Wright. (1)

NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTTEES – Mr. D. Moyes and Anita Blackburn (for Mr. T. Fisher). (2)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Mrs. J. Perry (Member of the Public); Councillors Landers and Long.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Jenni Cooke, Assistant Director, Children, Families and David Chambers, School Placement Planning Manager; Dr. Richard Holmes, County Durham PCT.

CYP25. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS – Councillor L. Hughes declared a pecuniary interest in item CYP32 due to her employment and left the meeting for discussion thereon.

CYP26. RESIGNATION OF NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTTEE – The Chair reported the resignation of Mr. Bob Egan, a Non-Statutory Co-optee of this Scrutiny Committee and advised Members that a replacement will be sought by way of advertisement in the May edition of the Darlington together magazine.

RESOLVED – That the resignation of Mr. Egan be noted.

CYP27. MINUTES – Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 7th January 2013 and the Special meeting held on 31st January 2013.

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

CYP28. WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2012/13 – 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.

Following discussion it was agreed to include in the Work Programme for the ordinary meeting scheduled for 24th June 2013 an update on Children and Families Early Intervention and a report on the Statutory Duties in relation to budget requirements. It was also proposed to include in the work programme a report on the Young Carers Action Plan and that a Quad of Aims but submitted to the Monitoring and Co-ordination Group for approval.

RESOLVED –That the current status of the work programme be noted and the reports agreed to be included therein.

CYP29. ORAL HEALTH – Dr. Richard Holmes, Department of Public Health, NHS County Durham and Darlington gave a presentation to Members on Oral Health and Health Services in Darlington with the main focus on children’s oral health and access to dental services and how NHS initiatives were improving access for children 0-7 years.

It was highlighted that through the gathering of local and national data on oral health and undertaking regular surveys it was noted that children’s oral health in Darlington was slightly below average compared to the North East and the overall figure for England at 39 per cent decay experience in 5 year olds for 2007/08.

The percentage of children with decayed teeth at 12 years old for 2008/09 showed that Darlington was approximately at 45 per cent on average with local authorities in the North East except Hartlepool and Gateshead which showed a lower percentage which was because those areas have either natural or added fluoride in the water supply.

It was acknowledged that the key to reducing decayed teeth in children was to address the issue at a very early age and this was where the NHS were targeting their services. NHS dental services are free to all children, including orthodontic treatment and there are ten practices out of a total of 18 in Darlington accepting new NHS patients.

Dr. Holmes reported that the number of residents of Darlington who attended an NHS Dentist in the North East in 2010/11 was good at early years and it was stated that this could be contributed to a lot of health promotion pilots in the community to educate that even the very young with or without tooth growth needs to see a dentist or dental hygienist as it is important to build confidence in young children in accessing dental care.

It was also acknowledged that children’s fear of the dentist can also come from their parents fear and that parents need to be continually educated to ensure their children access dental care as early as possible.

Members were particularly interested to note that a chart showing the correlation between deprivation and access to dental care showed that the poorest dental access was in the most deprived areas of Darlington and therefore it is intended that Members will be monitoring this closer when the Review of child poverty is commenced.

It was also reported that under the new commissioning arrangements from 1st April 2013 local authorities will have a key role to play through their Health and Well Being Boards and this Scrutiny Committee will continue to monitor the situation regarding access to dental services for our children and young people.

RESOLVED – (a) That the thanks of this Scrutiny Committee be extended to Dr. Holmes for his interesting and informative presentation.

(b) That Members continue to monitor the statistics in relation to oral health in children.

CYP30. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (LSCB) – The Director of People submitted a report (previously circulated) to update Members on the role of the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board, the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Darlington and for ensuring that this is done effectively in line with the guidance set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (DCSF 2010).

The submitted report outlined the scope of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) which includes safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in three broad areas of activity: activity that affects all children and aims to identify and prevent maltreatment or impairment of health or development; proactive work to target particular vulnerable groups; and responsive work to protect children who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm including abuse and neglect.

The submitted report also what the LSCB is responsible for; it's accountability for operational work; the role of lay members and the Lead Member; the relationship between the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Children's Collective and also its relationship with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Health and Wellbeing Board; the priorities for 2012/13 which are Neglect, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Exploitation and the suggested priorities for 2013/14; and also the number of Sub Groups which contribute to the overall work of the Board.

It was report that over the coming year there were a number of challenges relating to the budget and resources, welfare reforms, collaboration and the NHS changes and also to ensure that there is appropriate linkages between the number of multi-agency bodies in Darlington to ensure that duplication of work does not occur.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CYP31. ETHNIC GROUPS INTERACTION WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICES – The Director of People submitted a report (previously circulated) following a request by Members of this Scrutiny for an overview of the interaction of children, young people and families from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities with a range of children/young people services.

The submitted report provided a snapshot analysis of interaction against core provision which showed evidence and examples of positive engagement by BME communities and many positive examples of individual and group activities and intervention and positive relationships with community leaders and demonstrable evidence of enabling positive outcomes for children, young people and families.

It was reported that using information from Darlington Local Information Service for the population as a whole, Darlington as a relatively small BME population. The submitted report also outlined a number of services provided for and being accessed by the BME communities in the borough and the work undertaken in conjunction with other services and provision to support the needs of BME clients.

Following analysis of the data and information provided in relation to children and young people services, Members were satisfied that no specific review work was required and

that there were no particular areas of concern presently, however agreed to continue to keep this under review to ensure services continue to meet specific cultural needs.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CYP32. ACADEMIES GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS AND THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY - The Director of People submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide an update on academies to date and the issues associated with academy status.

The submitted report gave some background to Academies and advised that under the Academies Act 2010 the majority of primary and secondary schools in the Borough have or are in the process of converting to academy status. The key driver for academy status being autonomy at school level however, local authorities still have a duty to intervene if a school begins to cause concern and the governance arrangements for academies remains essentially the same as for local authority schools.

A radically changing educational system does mean a change in relationship with schools and the local authority however in Darlington Members were reassured to learn that all schools have pledged to support the principles of schools@onedarlington, a model of all schools committing to supporting each other and running services for each other unique to Darlington. This has attracted national interest as ‘a good example of a structured approach to collaboration with a clear aim of improving standards’.

Following discussion Members expressed some concerns that although schools were working together well at present with each other and the local authority, this could change with a change of leadership at the school and that we were very much in ‘early days’ with academies. It was agreed that Scrutiny Members will continue to monitor developments with academies in Darlington very closely as the local authority still has the responsibility to ensure academies are providing a good standard to education to our children and young people.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.