
OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Appointment of Co-Opted Member

2. Members have appointed John Armitage, Head of Rydal Academy, to represent the Primary Schools Forum as a Non-Voting Co-opted Member of this Scrutiny Committee and Helen Tarokh, Head of Heathfield Primary School, will act as his deputy.

Darlington Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017/18

3. Scrutiny Members were given the opportunity to comment on the Annual Report of the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) for the period 2017/18.
4. All Local Safeguarding Children Boards are required to produce an annual report to account for their activities; make an assessment of the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements within the local area; and to ensure partners work together to protect children from harm and ensure the voice of the child is evident in all multi-agency work.

Children and Young People's Plan 2017/22 – Progress Report

5. We received an update on progress to date on the delivery of the Children and Young People Plan 2017/22 adopted by Council on 29 September 2017. This Plan is a partnership plan which outlines how key partner organisations across the Borough will work together to ensure every child and young person is given the best start in life (a key priority of the local Sustainable Community Strategy: One Darlington Perfectly Placed).
6. A Multi-agency Steering Group has been established to ensure that delivery of the plan and effective monitoring is carried out, and to encourage and strengthen the links between key local partners.
7. A scorecard has also been developed containing a number of key performance indicators which measure delivery of the actions being taken to deliver the Plan.
8. We agreed that the year two (2019 – 2020) priorities would be to reduce the number of children and young people living in poverty; and to carry on working towards improving the mental health and emotional wellbeing of all children and young people (which was one of the year one 2018 - 2019 priorities). We expressed our concern at the levels of educational attainment and the number of

young people aged 18 – 25 claiming unemployment benefits and agreed that this issue (which was also one of the year one 2018 - 2019 priorities) would continue to be monitored through the Steering Group for the CYPP.

9. Members' discussions related to the child poverty area 'hotspots' and we suggested that Ward Councillors were invited to attend the Community Groups. We also expressed our concerns over the increasing number of takeaways within their wards and discussed how the authority can regulate these, although it was acknowledged that the authority has very limited powers in the licensing of takeaways.

Special Educational Needs Strategy and Funding

10. We received a report on the summary plans to consult on a strategic plan for delivering better outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and proposed amendments to the funding model for children with special educational needs to enable the 'money to follow the child'.
11. The updated Strategy will build on progress to date, identify what has been achieved and prioritise actions up to 2022. Consultation on the revised SEND Strategy was undertaken between 10 October and 28 November 2018 and Members of this Scrutiny committed to attending as many of the consultation events as possible and will meet again to formulate a response to the proposed Strategy and funding arrangements.

Special Educational Needs Home to School Transport

12. We also received a report on the introduction of a Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Travel Assistance Policy and the consultation that was undertaken between 10 October and 28 November 2018.
13. This Policy will provide an opportunity to offer a more flexible range of travel options to families of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and an opportunity for the children and young people to develop independent travel skills.
14. As with the Strategy, Members agreed to attend the consultation events and will meet to discuss a Scrutiny response to the proposed Travel Assistance Policy.

Meetings

15. Since the last meeting of Council, I have attended three of the public consultation meetings on the SEND Strategy.

Councillor Chris Taylor
Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee