

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29 October 2018

PRESENT – Councillor C Taylor (in the Chair); Councillors Curry, Crudass, Mrs Culley, L. Hughes, Lister, Mills and Storr. (8)

APOLOGIES – Councillor KE Kelly and Mills; G Harrison, N Lindsay and J Armitage.

ABSENT – Councillor Wright. (1)

STATUTORY CO-OPTEEES – None. (0)

NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTEEES – None. (0)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Jane Kochanowski, Assistant Director Children’s Services; Christine Shields, Assistant Director Commissioning Performance and Transformation; Paul Richardson Head of 16/19 Learning and Skills; Ken Ross, Public Health Principal; Eleanor Marshall, School Forum Monitoring and Support Officer; Rosie Banks, Programme Manager; Melanie Dickinson, School Admissions and Transport Manager; and Allison Hill, Democratic Officer.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor C Hughes, Cabinet Member with the Children and Young People Portfolio; and M Watson, member of the public.

CYP17. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

CYP18. MINUTES – Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 10 September 2018.

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

CYP19. APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBER – The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) to advise Members of an appointment of a co-opted representative for the Primary School Forum, following the resignation of the current representative; and to appoint a deputy representative.

RESOLVED – (a) That John Armitage, Head of Rydal Academy be appointed as a Non-Voting Co-opted Member of this Scrutiny Committee to represent the Primary School Forum.

(b) That Helen Tarokh, Head of Heathfield Primary School be appointed to act as his deputy.

CYP20. DARLINGTON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18 – The Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) for Scrutiny Members to comment on the Annual Report of the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) for the period 2017/18.

It was reported that Local Safeguarding Children Boards are required to produce an Annual Report to account for the Board's activities and make an assessment of the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements within the local area.

The Annual report for 2017/18 was based on the DSCB's three strategic priorities to ensure effective arrangements are in place that enable children, young people and their families to access appropriate Early Help support when first identified and this support is well coordinated; to ensure effective arrangements are in place to protect children from neglect, abuse and child sexual abuse; 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.

Councillor Crudass reiterated the offer previously given to the Independent Chair for Members of this Scrutiny Committee to help in any Board work that would be suitable or for a Member to sit on the Board, as he felt that it would be beneficial.

RESOLVED – That the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report for 2017/18 be noted.

CYP21. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2017/22 – PROGRESS REPORT – The Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide an update on the progress to date against the delivery of the Children and Young People Plan 2017/22.

The Plan is one of the identified delivery plans within the Sustainable Community Strategy and identifies what key actions will be taken to deliver the agreed Sustainable Community Strategy priority of the best start in life for every child which was adopted by Council on 29 September 2017.

It was reported that a Multi-agency Steering Group, Chaired by the Assistant Director for Commissioning had been established to bring together key partners to ensure effective monitoring and delivery of the Plan and to encourage and strengthen links between the Plan and professional bodies.

It was also reported that a scorecard had been developed which contained a number of key performance indicators to measure delivery of the priority actions in the Plan and the summary of performance against each indicator within the scorecard, also previously circulated, showed that overall when comparing performance against the last available data 18 indicators had improved from the previous recorded data, three had remained the same and 20 had seen a reduction in performance. For eight of the indicators 2017/18 data is the only data available therefore comparison with previous years is not possible and these will be monitored over the five year period of the plan.

Members discussed and agreed the year two priorities to reduce the number of children and young people living in poverty and to improve the mental health and emotional wellbeing of all children and young people.

Members questions related to the child poverty area 'hotspots' and suggested that Ward Councillors be invited to attend the Community Groups; the increasing number of takeaways within their wards and how the authority can regulate these although it was confirmed by the Public Health Principal that the authority has very limited powers in the licensing of takeaways; and Members expressed their concern at the levels of educational attainment and the number of young people claiming unemployment benefits.

The Head of 16-19 Learning and Skills reassured Members that Key Stage results at 16-18 year were good with a high level of participation, however there had been a drop in numbers post 18 years remaining in education and that there was an issue around behaviour and attitude to work of young people which he assured Members was being closely monitored.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CYP22. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS STRATEGY AND FUNDING – The Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with a summary of 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 application of the High Needs Block in relation to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

It was reported that Darlington's Special Educational Needs Strategy 2017-2020 was approved by Cabinet on 5 December 2017 and this updated version builds on progress to date, identifying what has been achieved and the priorities for action up to 2022.

The vision for the strategy is to promote inclusion, maximizes young people's opportunities to be independent and enables young people with special educational needs and disabilities to be recognized as fully integrated citizens with the ability to contribute to their local community; and the strategy has been written to respond to the key priorities set out in the SEND code of practice, and highlights local strategic aims associated with each priority area for implementation.

It was also reported that consultation on the revised SEND strategy and the proposed new funding arrangements was currently being undertaken and will conclude on 28 November 2018.

Members discussed the consultation process and agreed that it would be beneficial for Members of this Scrutiny to attend the various events arranged and to meet

thereafter to discuss a Scrutiny response to the proposed Strategy and funding arrangements.

Members also discussed the increased demand for special educational provision and the move from statements to Educational Health Care Plans and the impact on the authority and the schools budgets

The Cabinet Member with the Children and Young People portfolio reiterated that there was still a lot of work to be done and there were challenges for every local authority as a consequence of the changes and the increasing number of young people with special educational needs. She also confirmed that a lot of work had already been undertaken to gauge the views of schools and families and the discussions with schools that had been undertaken had been very positive.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That the consultation on the revised SEND Strategy and the proposed amended funding arrangements be noted.

(c) That Members of this Scrutiny respond to the proposals outlined in the consultation.

CYP23. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT –

The Director of Children and Adult Services submitted a report (previously circulated) on plans to consult on the introduction of a SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Travel Assistance Policy.

The submitted report advised that the Travel Assistance Policy would 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 for the children and young people an opportunity to develop independent travel skills.

It was reported that the Council has a statutory responsibility to assist eligible children and young people of statutory school age to travel to school. Transport assistance is currently allocated at the point a pupil become in receipt of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The mode of travel assistance is commonly in the form of door to door minibus or taxi.

The consultation on the proposed changes was currently being undertaken and will conclude on 28 November 2018.

Members agreed that they would endeavour to attend the consultation events arranged and to meet thereafter to discuss a Scrutiny response to the proposed Travel Assistance Policy.

RESOLVED – That the report and consultation on the Travel Assistance Policy be noted.

CYP24. WORK PROGRAMME – The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide an update on the current work programme for this Scrutiny Committee.

The work programme has been reviewed and revised for the Municipal Year 2018/19 and has been linked to performance indicators from the Performance Management Framework to provide robust and accurate data for Members to use when considering topics and the work they wish to undertake.

Members agreed that they wanted to receive a presentation from CAMHS as part of their Joint Review of Child Healthy Weight and Oral Health and links to mental health issues; and that the items Recording Practices for Child Protection and Stability of Places for Looked After Children be removed from the work programme as this is reported in the quarterly performance reports to Scrutiny.

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