

**COUNCIL**  
**26 MARCH 2020 (This meeting is cancelled)**

---

**OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

---

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

**Work Programme**

2. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2019/20 and possible review topics. The work programme is a rolling programme and items can be added as necessary.
3. Members gave consideration to a request received from Councillor Mills that an item in relation to Autism provision be added to our Work Programme and Members agreed to nominate Councillors Barch and Renton to represent this Scrutiny Committee on this Joint Review Group.

**Childhood Healthy Weight Plan**

4. Members received an overview on the progress of the Darlington Childhood Healthy Weight Plan, aimed at ensuring that more children leave primary school with a healthy weight. The plan sets out a whole system approach to tackling obesity and recognises the complex relationship between the social, economic and physical environment, along with individual factors that underpin obesity.
5. The meeting considered the overall objectives of the Healthy Weight Plan and the actions proposed in achieving a whole population approach to tackling the issue. It was acknowledged that childhood obesity in Darlington is above the national average at both reception and year 6 age groups. The percentage of year 6 children categorised as obese is 21.2 per cent.
6. Members noted the need for legislation to minimise the number of fast food outlets near schools, and discussed working with developers and planning officers to ensure that new housing developments incorporate green spaces and play areas to encourage healthier lifestyles.
7. Members are keen to promote the plan, to bring about some positive changes to the health of our children and young people and requested regular updates.

**Voluntary and Community Sector Funding: Update on Community Based Initiatives**

8. Members received an update on the seven pilot community based initiatives, from the Voluntary Sector Development Fund monies.
9. The pilot initiatives were agreed at a series of workshops comprising representatives from the Council, Police, Health, Education, Fire Brigade and a wide range of both small and large community and voluntary sector organisations.

10. The initiatives identified aims to reduce isolation and loneliness in adults, improve health and wellbeing, provide early intervention support to vulnerable families, support children and young people to remain in education and live at home.
11. £142,000 was initially allocated with an additional £21,000 made available from the Community Facilities Fund, ring fenced to benefit the Skerne Park area of the borough.
12. The methodology of engagement used during the consultation process in seeking the views of those not involved in Community Groups, and of young people was discussed. Agreement was given to utilise Members' Newsletters to maximise public awareness of the initiatives.
13. Members questioned how the success of the various initiatives will be collected and measured and were assured as to the development of methods to capture the outcomes.
14. Scrutiny will continue to receive briefings at a future date.

### **Home to School Transport**

15. Following the special meeting of Scrutiny in January, when Members considered the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2020-21 to 2023-24, we requested a further update on the current position with Home to School Transport.
16. The Head of Education attended the Scrutiny Meeting on 3 February and outlined the various challenges faced by the authority and secondary schools with the introduction of the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000 (PSVAR). The regulations came into force on 1 January 2020, requiring that all public service vehicles are accessible for everybody.
17. We were advised that the introduction of the regulations will impact on fares currently being charged on transport routes operated by schools leading to an increase from £3.00 per day to £4.00 per day, during the current academic year.
18. Members were also advised that there had been a reduction in the number of fare paying parents which had led to a shortfall in funding to operate those routes, however the authority will continue to purchase seats at the new fare price and have committed further funds to maintain routes to the end of the 2019/20 school year.
19. The Local Authority continues to work closely with schools on the arrangements for September 2020.

**Councillor Jamie Bartch**  
**Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**