

At a meeting of the CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in COMMITTEE ROOM NO. 1, CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on THURSDAY, 21st JULY, 2011 at 5.30 pm.

Present:-

Councillor Stewart in the Chair

Councillors Bell, MacKnight, T. Martin, Morrissey, Oliver, Scanlan and Williams together with Mrs. S. Duncan, Ms. R. Elliott and Ms. C. Hutchinson.

Also in Attendance:-

Councillor Tate - Chairman of Management Scrutiny Committee

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Bonallie and D. Richardson and on behalf of Mr. M. Frank.

Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 9th June, 2011

The Chairman referred to Resolution 2(ii) and advised that the first meetings of the Teenage Pregnancy and Corporate Parenting Task and Finish Groups would be held on 1st August 2011 at 4.00 pm and 5.15 pm respectively.

The Chairman referred to page 5, paragraph 2 and requested that if it was proposed to extend any of the two year youth work contracts, the matter was reported to this Committee in the first instance.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 9th June, 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:-

- (i) 'D. Snith' in the attendance be amended to read 'D. Smith', and
- (ii) the addition of Councillor T. Martin in the list of those Members who had submitted an apology for absence.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Reference from Cabinet – 22nd June, 2011 – Youth Justice Plan 2011-2012

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a report (copy circulated) which appended a report of the Executive Director of Children's Services on the Youth Justice Plan 2011-2012 which was approved by Cabinet at its meeting held on 22nd June, 2011.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Kelly Davison-Pullan, Lead Officer for Corporate Performance and Meg Boustead, Head of Safeguarding presented the report addressing questions and comments from Members.

Councillor Williams advised of a case where a woman had felt obliged to leave the parenting course she was attending because of the behaviour of others on the course. She believed that parents should be sent to the venue most appropriate for them in order to gain the parenting skills they required. Ms. Boustead advised that while there was a whole range of parenting courses available, Youth Offending Parenting Orders were very specific and were issued by the Courts.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Oliver, Ms. Davison-Pullan advised that perpetrators were encouraged to engage in restorative justice programmes.

In response to an enquiry from the Chair, with regard to families where there was a risk of youth offending, Ms. Davison-Pullan advised that where it came to the notice of the service, a comprehensive assessment would be undertaken looking at living and family arrangements. With regard to children under ten there was a whole range of support services that were flexible and could be applied on a needs basis dealing with issues such as lifestyle choices and relationship issues.

The Chairman recorded that it was yet another very good report, one of many from the service over the years. The consistently excellent figures would be difficult to improve upon.

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted and that Members comments be incorporated in the report to Cabinet.

Policy Review 2011/12: Draft Scoping Report

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) on proposals in relation to the Committee's forthcoming review into early intervention and locality services.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Nigel Cummings, Scrutiny Officer presented the report which outlined the proposed terms of reference for the review, potential sources of evidence, methods of enquiry together with a proposed timetable and approach to the review.

Mr. Cummings stated that the term early Intervention could mean different things to different people so a good starting point for the review would be to understand this in terms of Sunderland.

With regard to the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) he thought it would also be useful for the Committee to see exactly what the CAF process was, how it worked and how this triggered intervention and support.

To identify and understand the pathways, benefits, barriers to families or individuals accessing Early Intervention support, the Committee could look at the variety of pathways that are available, how people access support, what were the benefits, and most importantly what stopped people from looking for support.

The review would look to illustrate the impact support could have on families and individuals. It would also be important to determine how co-ordinated these approaches were – did they ensure multi-agency involvement and how did these approaches improve on the delivery of outcomes.

In conclusion, Mr. Cummings referred to the potential list of witnesses. The list was not exhaustive and if Members had any other suggestions he would be happy to take these on board.

3. RESOLVED that the approach and scope of the review be endorsed.

Termly Summary Report from Concerns, Shared Intelligence and Ofsted Inspections

The Executive Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which had been submitted following the presentation to the Committee in October 2009 on the Framework for the Inspection of Maintained Schools in England from September 2009, where it was agreed that Members would receive a termly summary report from the Head of Standards.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Mike Foster, BSF Project Director – Transformation, presented the report advising of the current position with regards to the Concerns Policy, Shared Intelligence and Ofsted Inspections. They advised that eight schools were identified with local authority designated concerns, of these seven were primary and one was a secondary school. There were six schools identified on the shared intelligence matrix under the red category and thirteen under amber. There had been ten Ofsted Inspections carried out since 10th December, 2010.

Mr. Foster having addressed questions and comments from Members on:-

- the position regarding the Head Teacher of the secondary school in special measures
- the potential to use federation to create capacity

It was:-

4. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report be received and noted,
- (ii) letters of congratulation be sent to the two schools deemed to be outstanding in the recent Ofsted Inspections, and
- (iii) the Head Teacher and Chairman of the Board of Academy 360 together with a representative from the Department for Education be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee.

Fulfilling the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011

The Executive Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) on measures taken to discharge the Council's duties under the Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 including the provision of a Short Breaks Statement.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Meg Boustead, Head of Safeguarding presented the report and addressed questions and comments from Members.

Councillor Williams stated that it was interesting to note that some families did not want to take up the offer of a break and asked what percentage of carers took up the opportunity. Ms. Boustead advised that she did not have the figures to hand but would circulate the information following the meeting.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Scanlan regarding provision for children who care for parents, Ms. Boustead advised that support was available through the Young Carers Project and that she would be happy to bring a report on the Project to a future meeting of the Committee.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Oliver regarding examples of which short breaks worked particularly well, Ms. Boustead replied this could range from a Skiing Trip for physically disabled children to attendance at Youth and After School Clubs.

The Chairman having thanked Ms. Boustead for her report, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted and that the draft 'Short Breaks Statement for Disabled Children' be endorsed.

Annual Work Programme 2011-12

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) appending an updated work programme for the Committee's information.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Nigel Cummings, Scrutiny Officer having presented the report, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be received and noted.

Forward Plan – Key Decisions for the Period 1st July, 2011 to 31st October, 2011

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members with an opportunity to consider the Executive's Forward Plan for the period 1st July – 31st October, 2011.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Nigel Cummings, Scrutiny Officer, having presented the report, it was:-

7. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be received and noted.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked Members and Officers for their attendance.

(Signed) P. STEWART,
Chairman.