

At a meeting of the CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in COMMITTEE ROOM 1 of the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on THURSDAY, 7th APRIL, 2011 at 5:30pm

Present:-

Councillor Stewart in the Chair

Councillors Bell, Bonallie, G. Hall, Oliver, D. Trueman and Williams together with Ms. R. Elliott and Ms. C. Hutchinson

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Francis, MacKnight, T. Martin and D. Richardson and on behalf of Ms. J. Bell, Mr. H. Brown, Ms. H. Harper, Mrs. M. Harrop and Mr. K. Morris

Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman advised Members of the Committee that Ms. Kath Butchert, Youth Development Group Manager, was retiring from the authority and thanked her on behalf of the Committee for the dedication and support she had shown to the youth services over her years with the Council and commented on how she would be a miss to the service and Council overall.

The Chairman also advised that it was with great sadness that Mr. Andy Neal, Youth Development Group Assistant Manager, had passed away recently. He had been committed to his work for the city in youth services provision and he would be sadly missed by colleagues and friends. A card had been sent to the family on behalf of the Committee.

Minutes of the last meeting of the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 14th March, 2011

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 14th March, 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

Policy Development and Review 2010/11 : Draft Final Report

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which set out the final draft review report on the findings of the Committee's policy review topic this year of Learning at Work : The Role of Work Based Learning and Apprenticeships in Tackling NEET's.

(for copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Hutchinson commended the report but felt that the recommendations did not reflect vigorously enough from the conclusions the Committee had come to as part of the evidence gathering and felt that the recommendations needed strengthening further.

The Chairman advised that the report was still in draft and that there was still time for the Scrutiny Officer to make further amendments if necessary. He asked that the Scrutiny Officer email all Members of the Committee inviting comments to be received by Friday, 15th April, 2011. Any amendments to particular recommendations would then be circulated for further views to be submitted by 22nd April, 2011. Then with the agreement of the Committee the Chairman and Vice Chairman would agree the final report in its entirety following this.

2. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) Any comments on the final draft report be fed directly to the Scrutiny Officer by 15th April, 2011 for circulation to the Committee for comment by 22nd April, 2011; and
- (ii) The final review report be agreed by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee following the receipt and consideration of comments.

Performance Report Quarter 3 (April-December 2010)

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members of the Committee with a performance update relating to the period April to December, 2010.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Mitchell, presented the report to the Committee giving an overview of performance and advised that this quarter the report included:-

- Progress in relation to the LAA targets and other national indicators; and
- Results of the annual budget consultation.

Ms. Mitchell also advised that the performance framework was being reviewed to reflect the requirements of the new government's self regulation and improvement agenda and the new framework would form the basis of performance report to

Members from July 2011. This was the last performance report that would focus on the LAA and national indicator performance.

She also commented that Members had raised the issue of the proportion of care leavers being in suitable accommodation and further detail was included at paragraph 4.2.5 of the report for Members information.

Councillor Hall referred to the section on Libraries and wondered if the use of the internet and e-books had had any impact on book issues and asked if information could be circulated on the numbers of book taken out by visitors.

Councillor Williams referred to page 60 of the report and the indicators regarding the percentage of initial assessments carried out within 7 days and the percentage of core assessments that were carried out within 35 days and asked if the service were setting the bar too high with targets and in doing so failing families. Ms. Mitchell advised that a lot of work had been undertaken with social care and there was a far more appropriate system in place now whereby a family could be escalated or not based on the findings of their assessments. She informed Members she would be happy to bring further information to the Committee or speak with Councillor Williams directly outside of the meeting to go over any individual issues she may want to discuss.

In relation to the provision of youth services, Councillor Stewart asked if a further report could be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on whether providers had delivered what had been set out in the initial bids they had submitted when they had been awarded the contract, as he did not feel that the Committee had seen evidence that the providers were delivering what they had initially agreed to. Ms. Mitchell advised that the providers were constantly monitored and provided outputs which were then related to performance targets that were set and that she would be happy to bring a report back to the Committee for consideration.

Councillor Stewart having thanked the Officers for their report, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the continued good progress made by the Council and the Sunderland Partnership and the areas that require further development to ensure performance is actively managed be received and noted.

Termly Summary Report from Concerns, Shared Intelligence and Ofsted Inspections

The Executive Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to 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 eleven schools were identified with local authority designated concerns, of these ten were primary and one was a secondary school. There were twelve schools identified on the shared intelligence matrix under the red category and twenty-six under amber and there had been ten Ofsted Inspections carried out since 10th December, 2010.

In addition to this two schools had recently entered the Special Measures category and one school had recently been given a Notice to Improve. It was expected that the schools in Special Measures would emerge no later than the autumn term of 2012 and the school with a Notice to Improve was expected to emerge within the required timescale towards the end of December, 2011.

In response to a query from Councillor Oliver regarding exclusions of pupils from school and whether there were issues around pupil behaviour or if the problems lay with the policies/procedures around exclusions, Mr. Foster advised that sometimes it was a mixture of both issues. The level of the quality of teaching and pastoral support within a school could be high and exclusions could still occur and there was more of an issue around the School Improvement Service identifying reasons as to why exclusions were occurring. The service needed to investigate what issues were impacting upon the quality of leadership and teaching within schools, and if there were underlying causes in schools where help could be given to help reduce exclusions.

Councillor Hall referred to the consultation on the new Ofsted inspection framework and Mr. Foster offered to return to a future meeting of the Committee with a presentation outlining the changes, if they would find it useful. Councillor Stewart commented that this would be beneficial and asked that it be added to the Work Programme.

Councillor Stewart went on to ask if staff sickness levels, in particular with regard to leadership roles within the schools, were found to be a contributor to those schools that were in vulnerable positions or were of concern following Ofsted inspections and Mr. Foster advised he would be able to provide more accurate information to Members directly.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Foster for his attendance at the Committee and it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the information in report be received and noted.

Work Programme 2010-2011

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) attaching the current work programme for the year 2010-2011.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

5. RESOLVED that the information contained in the work programme be received and noted and items as discussed previously in the meeting be added where appropriate.

Forward Plan – Key Decisions for the Period 1 April, 2011 – 31 July, 2011

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) providing Members with an opportunity to consider the relevant items of the Executive's Forward Plan for the period 1 April, 2011 – 31 July, 2011.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

6. RESOLVED that the Executive's Forward Plan for the current period be received and noted.

The Chairman then drew the meeting to a close having thanked Members and Officers for their attendance and contribution to the meeting.

(Signed) P. STEWART,
Chairman.