

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 APRIL 2012

DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To approve the Scrutiny Committee report as part of the overall scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12 that is to be presented to Council.
- 1.2 In the first instance, the report will be submitted to the Management Scrutiny Committee on 19 April 2012. The report will then be incorporated into an Annual Scrutiny Report which includes the work of each Scrutiny Committee.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This will be the third year that the Annual Report will be a single combined report of all seven Scrutiny Committees. The annual report will outline the development in the scrutiny function and provide snapshots of the outcomes achieved during the last 12 months.
- 2.2 In June 2011, Members of the Scrutiny Committee agreed the annual work programme for the municipal year 2011/12. The Work Programme brought together the issues raised by Members as the major priorities and challenges facing the city for the year ahead.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 The draft content of the annual report of the Committee is set out in Appendix 1.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Committee has delivered a busy work programme in 2011/12, which is reflected in the annual report. The Scrutiny Committee has worked with Council Directorates, partner organisations and residents of the city to deliver the work programme and has tackled a number of key issues making suggestions for improvements to services delivered across the city.

5. RECOMENDATION

- 5.1 Members are asked to consider and comment on the draft end of year report of the Committee.
- 5.2 The report, together with the comments of members, will be submitted to the Management Scrutiny Committee on 19 April 2012.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee Agendas 2011/12
- Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2011/12

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APPENDIX 1

Chair: Cllr Paul Stewart Vice-Chair: Cllr Anthony Morrissey

Committee Members: Cllr Richard Bell, Cllr Stephen Bonallie, Cllr Doris MacKnight, Cllr Tom Martin, Cllr Robert Oliver, Cllr Dennis Richardson, Cllr Lynda Scanlon, Cllr Derrick Smith and Cllr Linda Williams.

It has hard to believe that another year has passed for the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee, and again we have delivered on a work programme that has proved to be varied and challenging for all the Members of the Committee.

The major policy review into Early Intervention and Locality Based Services was an important piece of work for the committee to undertake. Early intervention for many young people and families can be a decisive factor in improving their quality of life and providing them with better outcomes than previously. The weight of importance can be highlighted by the volume of publications, report and policy documents that have been produced over the last few years.

The committee gathered a wide range of views and opinions through a diversity of means. The techniques used by the committee vary greatly and are heavily influenced by using the best means possible to gather the information required. We have used focus groups, interviews, site visits and expert jury days all with the intention of gathering a wide range of opinions that can best provide a balanced view of the issue under investigation. The recommendations arising from this review are focused on removing barriers to the CAF assessment process and ensuring that potential assessors have access to dedicated support should they need it at the pre-assessment stage. The review also recommends comprehensive training is made available around CAF thresholds and how locality teams can increase their engagement with local partners. I feel sure these recommendations will help contribute towards the directorates continued development and progress around early intervention.

The committee has also looked at the teenage pregnancy rates in Sunderland and it was acknowledged that there was a lot of good work being undertaken in this area, from the C-Card through to the new offer to schools in relation to sex education. Members also visited the Bumps to Babies project in Hendon and spoke with number of teenage mums. The Committee recognised that the local authority was conducting a lot of good work and had initiated a number of schemes and support but ultimately acknowledged that teenage pregnancy rates were extremely difficult to either influence or predict.

Looked after children have been a strong theme throughout the year and Members have discussed a number of issues including Looked After Children's attainment, the leaving care service and the role of the council as a corporate parent. Again the committee, following initial concerns, has been extremely satisfied by what it has found and was reassured that in relation to looked after children we do look to ensure we provide the best possible outcomes for these young people.

The committee's work programme has seen Members look at a wide range of issues covering school performance, exam results, the library plan and youth commissioned contracts to name but a select few. This year also saw myself and the Vice-Chair travel to London to talk with Department for Education around the some of the issues from the previous policy review around apprenticeships and work based learning. I think it is important that we can put our case forward and speak with key government officers about issues that are relevant for people living in Sunderland, it can only strengthen the work we undertake.

Again the committee has had another active and meaningful year covering a wide array of subjects and priorities that reflect key principles from the Children and Young People's Plan that underpins the committee's work programme. There are many challenges ahead for local government and I feel sure that the committee can rise to the challenge and provide a valuable contribution to this local authority. It only leaves me to thank my fellow councillors

and co-opted members on the committee for their continued hard work, support and dedication throughout the year.

Cllr Paul Stewart
Chair of the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee