

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on 21 June 2010.

#### **PRESENT:-**

County Councillor Brian Simpson in the Chair.

County Councillors Bernard Bateman (substitute for Stephen Shaw) David Blades, Tony Hall (substitute for David Jeffels) John McCartney and Heather Moorhouse.

Officers in attendance: Seamus Breen & Stephen Harrison (Adult Services), Ray Busby (Scrutiny Support), and Jane Wilkinson (Legal and Democratic Services).

Others in attendance: Bill Cross (Rural Action Yorkshire), Bridget Hardy & Nigel Staton (Scarborough & Whitby DAG) and Craig Shaw (North Yorkshire Police).

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of County Councillors Philip Barrett, David Jeffels and Stephen Shaw.

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#### **COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK**

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#### **33. MINUTES**

##### **RESOLVED –**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2010, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### **34. PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS**

The Committee was advised that no notice had been received of any public questions or statements to be made at the meeting.

#### **35. SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY: CENTRES FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING**

##### **CONSIDERED –**

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Corporate Performance. The report described the work of the Member Task Group into issues surrounding the community support available to people with a disability and progress in North Yorkshire towards establishing a Centre for Independent Living (CIL).

The Committee was advised that Members of the Task Group had held discussions with relevant stakeholders, full details of which were contained in the report. Members noted that the policy context for CILs could be about to change as result of the change in government following the parliamentary elections held in May 2010.

The Committee noted that the two biggest challenges facing establishing a CIL in North Yorkshire were the rural nature of the county (access to services) and finding a sustainable model. Stephen Harrison commented that whilst Officers from Adult

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Services would continue to support the North Yorkshire CIL in order for it to be successful in the future its members would need to work with other agencies/bodies. One suggestion that had been put forward was for the CIL to offer the use of an accreditation scheme similar to a kite mark to endorse either a product or service. Applicants would pay commission for an audit of their product to be carried out, thus maintaining the sustainability of the CIL. In order for the scheme to work Stephen Harrison said that it would need to be consistently available.

Members asked Bridget Hardy and Nigel Staton how elected Members could support and enhance their work and how they could get further involved. Bridget Hardy and Nigel Staton replied that it would be helpful if Members of the Committee could forge better links with the CIL and local user led groups. As it was probably that a CIL would need to establish premises within the next two years any help Members were able to provide in this regard would also be much appreciated.

In response to questions from Members it was acknowledged that funding was critical and that the North Yorkshire CIL was constantly looking at ways to generate its own income. It was recognised that more needed to be done to promote the notion of a NYCIL amongst user groups and the wider community as currently they were lots of small groups operating independently of each other.

Members agreed that the establishment of the North Yorkshire CIL was still work in progress and requested an updated report in due course.

Bridget Hardy and Nigel Staton thanked the County Council for its on-going support and offered their assistance to the County Council if needed.

The Scrutiny Support Officer suggested that perhaps under the new scrutiny committee arrangements continuing Member focus of the progress of a NYCIL could be maintained through scrutiny or equalities and diversity issues.

## **RESOLVED –**

That the Corporate & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee be recommended to include in its Work Programme the establishment of a North Yorkshire CIL.

## **36. PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING PROJECT**

### **CONSIDERED –**

The briefing report of the Head of Scrutiny & Corporate Performance providing background information on the work being carried out by Rural Action Yorkshire with Parish Councils in North Yorkshire on participatory budgeting.

The Committee received a presentation from Bill Cross, Chief Executive of Rural Action Yorkshire. He described in detail the work undertaken to date by Rural Action Yorkshire and the response of parish councils.

Members noted that Rural Action Yorkshire had written to all parish councils in North Yorkshire inviting them to attend a locally held event on participatory budgeting. From those who had attended five Parish Councils had been selected to take part in a pilot project delivering participatory budgeting in their areas. As an incentive each of the five parish councils taking part in the project would receive £2,000 to award to successful applicants. The five parish councils could if they chose to, commit monies from their own budgets to the project. It was explained that the award of £2,000 was a one off payment as the aim of the project was to provide a practical demonstration of the benefits of participatory budgeting. In the future parish councils would be expected to use their precept to fund and sustain participatory budgeting. The five

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parish councils chosen to take part in the scheme were Wombledon, West Witton, Killinghall, Coneythorpe and Arkengarthdale. The project would run until September 2010 when the final decisions on how the monies would be spent would be made. A video diary recording the highs and lows of the process would be made. Following the conclusion of the project a toolkit would be put together designed for use by other parish councils interested in doing participatory budgeting. It was not anticipated that parish councils would use participatory budgeting annually rather than they would perhaps use it for example once every five years.

In response to questions from Members the Committee was advised that the reaction of parish councils to participatory budgeting had been mixed and the response level was in line with what was anticipated. Most parish councils attending the local events were positive about the benefits it offered but it was acknowledged that others were sceptical and could not see how they would be able to deliver participatory budgeting even if they wanted to. In particular small parish councils struggled with the concept.

Bill Cross advised the Committee that participatory budgeting did present parish councils with some practical legal constraints that needed to be overcome. Research into this was currently underway. Namely the powers conferred upon parish councils under the Local Government Act meant that they are directly responsible for making all decisions about how parish council budgets are spent and that they keep a written record of all such decisions. This is in direct conflict with how participatory budgeting works.

It was suggested that Parish Councils could choose to cluster together as a means of overcoming some of the barriers presented by participatory budgeting. Members acknowledged that participatory budgeting could be used as a mechanism for increasing public engagement and localism. Some Members of the Committee commented that prior to the meeting they had no knowledge of participatory budgeting and suggested that the scheme would benefit from being promoted at meetings of the County Council's area committees.

Members agreed to await the outcome of the RIEP pilot in September before deciding how to take forward further work on participatory budgeting. The Scrutiny Support Officer agreed to liaise with Bill Cross.

Members thanked Bill Cross for his attendance and looked forward with interest to receiving the results of the pilot with the five parish councils.

## **RESOLVED –**

That a report on the results of the RIEP pilot on participatory budgeting be referred to the Corporate Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee in due course.

### **37. POLICING PLEDGE: POLICE PERFORMANCE – FOURTH QUARTILE**

#### **CONSIDERED –**

The report of the Head of Scrutiny & Corporate Performance presenting performance information from North Yorkshire Police Authority on the North Yorkshire Police Policing Pledge local (Force Wide) performance indicators.

#### **RESOLVED –**

That the content of the performance monitoring report received from the North Yorkshire Police Authority be noted.

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## **38. DRUGS AND ALCOHOL ACTION TEAM: COMMUNITY SAFETY**

CONSIDERED –

Covering report and background information from the Head of Scrutiny and Corporate Performance on the work of the North Yorkshire Drugs and Alcohol Action Team.

The Committee received a presentation from Seamus Breen, Chair of the Drugs and Alcohol Team (DAT). A copy of the presentation slides is in the Minute Book.

The presentation outlined the findings of the Strategic review of the DAT and its new structure and the reasons for the new approach. The contribution made by the DAT to community safety and its work to address substance misuse was described. The Committee was advised that substance misuse was an increasing problem in the County which was at odds with public perception of the problem.

In response to questions from Members the Committee was advised that historically drugs and alcohol had always been a high resource priority within Adult & Community Services. The work on substance misuse by the Primary Care Trust tended to focus on provision of acute services. Seamus Breen said he was keen to see more emphasis given to work on early intervention and prevention.

County Councillor Tony Hall, Chairman of the Care & Independence Overview & Scrutiny Committee commented that the findings of the strategic review demonstrated the need for joined up working. The approach his Committee was adopting was to monitor:-

- Whether the DAT was operating effectively.
- Total Place – to see if organisations outside of the DAT were making an effective contribution.
- Whether the balance is right between commissioning alcohol and drug treatment and support.

Members expressed their support for the approach being taken by the Care & Independence Committee and proposed this work should be undertaken on a joint basis with the new Corporate and Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

**RESOLVED –**

That the new Corporate and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee engage in joint working with the Care & Independence Overview & Scrutiny Committee to take forward the contribution made by the DAT to the community safety agenda.

## **39. WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN**

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Corporate Performance presenting the Committee's forward programme of work and inviting Members to comment.

Members agreed with the suggestions made by the Chairman as set out in paragraph 4.3 of the report regarding those elements of its current work programme to be recommended to the new Committee for inclusion in its work programme.

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The Scrutiny Support Officer confirmed that the outcome of the meeting of the Joint Member Task Group on 30 June 2010 on flooding would be reported to the new Committee in due course.

Members noted the attendance of Jeremy Holderness, North Yorkshire Police Authority at the meeting of the Committee on 2 October to discuss the contribution made by North Yorkshire Police to the Community Safety Agenda.

## **RESOLVED –**

That the content of the report, decisions taken in respect of earlier agenda items, business scheduled for future meetings and information provided at the meeting is noted and approved.

MD/ALJ