

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

19 December 2007

SCRUTINY BOARD

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Scrutiny Board met on 4 December 2007.

Children and Young People's Service Priorities

County Councillors Caroline Patmore and John Watson, together with Cynthia Welbourn, the Corporate Director of the Children and Young People's Service, joined the Board to discuss the service's priorities for the next six months.

Issues covered in the discussion included:

- Reducing numbers of children looked after and more children supported in their own homes
- Attainment of looked after children above the national average but the need to do more
- Changes to the funding of 14-19 learning and skills and the challenges faced in the more rural areas of the county. The suggestion that scrutiny look at this and the potential for more engagement with Yorkshire Forward was welcomed.
- School surpluses
- Trust status

Local Area Agreement (LAA) and scrutiny of partnership working

Richard Flinton, Assistant Chief Executive (Policy, Partnerships and Performance) joined the Board to discuss the LAA and scrutiny of partnership working under the new powers in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act. There was general agreement that existing arrangements should be used as far as possible, so that for example each OSC could look at matters relevant to its own remit that were being delivered through partnership working. However there was felt to be merit in looking at whether one committee could take an overview of the LAA, possibly twice a year with an invitation to a Member from each District or Borough Council to join the meeting for that purpose.

The Board agreed to meet as a working group to explore this further.

Overview and Scrutiny Guidance

Feedback from the seven OSCs that had looked at the draft guidance was considered and subject to any further comments from the remaining two committees it was agreed that this would now be developed into a publication and agreed for issue by me on behalf of the Board.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act

The Board considered a summary of the measures in the Act that relate to Overview and Scrutiny Committees. These include:

- Councillor Call for Action
- Requiring the attendance of decision-makers
- Information from partner authorities
- Duties to respond to overview and scrutiny
- Joint committees
- District scrutiny of local improvement targets
- Amending the Police and Justice Act 2006 to align the Community Call for Action with the Councillor Call for Action.

Draft guidance is still awaited from the government and implementation is likely to be phased with some measures, such as the Councillor Call for Action, being introduced later than April 2008.

Preparing for a Local Involvement Network (LINK) for North Yorkshire

The Board was given an update on the encouraging progress being made. Seven expressions of interest in tendering to be the 'host' organisation to set up and support the LINK have been received. The County Council is on track to let the contract in March.

County Councillor Paul Richardson
Chairman of Scrutiny Board
10 December 2007