

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

19th December 2007

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee have met twice since the last County Council. The committee continues to address a full work programme that reflects the priorities of the Council and the five key outcomes under Every Child Matters. I would like to highlight the main areas of the Committee's work and these are set out below:

In-depth Scrutiny Reviews

1. Scrutiny Review on Sports Provision - 'A Sporting Chance'

The draft Scrutiny Report of the Task Group was presented to Committee for their consideration. Several comments were made and these have been included into the draft final version of our report.

The two scrutiny reviews 'A Sporting Chance' (*increasing opportunities and participation of young people in physical activities*) and 'Learning in the Wet and Mud' (*review of NY Outdoor Education Service*) are now finished. As they are closely linked to one another, both reports will be presented to Executive early in the New Year.

2. Next In-depth Scrutiny Review - Review of the School Meals Service

This topic was raised as a potential scrutiny project following a call-in of the decision to recommend an increase in the school meal price from £1.62 to £1.80 from September 2007. The proposed price increase was not as a result of poor performance but related to improvements in the quality and nutritionally content of food being served and in part the impact of job evaluation.

The aim of the review is to consider alternative methods of provision; what is happening to improve and promote the take-up of healthy school meals and to consult with other Authorities who have experience on addressing these issues.

There is a particularly tight timeframe for this piece of work to be finalised and the Task Group have already met on several occasions and developed a Work Plan which incorporates the areas to be thoroughly researched.

3. Overview Reports – 31st October 2007

Youth Offending Team

Members were pleased to learn of the progress and improved performance of the Youth Offending Team. There are a number of issues and targets to be developed, and an area which the YOT had struggled with is the targets set by North Yorkshire Police Authority that sought to increase the number of offences brought to justice. This target is in direct conflict with YOT's own target to reduce the number of first time entrants to the Service. The Committee will continue to monitor the performance and progress of the Youth Offending Team.

Transformation of Local Education Office Administrative Functions

The committee received the report of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service regarding the project to transform the work of local education offices and some related education administration at County Hall as part of the Directorate’s contribution to the Council’s Change and Improvement agenda.

Members expressed several areas of concern and requested they are kept fully informed on all aspects of the project.

4. Overview Reports – 30 November 2007

Health Related Behaviour Survey

Members were very interested to learn of the mapping exercise that had been undertaken to link the recommendations arising from this survey to the Children & Young Peoples Plan. There is a lot of information about young peoples lifestyles contained within this survey which is due to be repeated in 2008. We have requested that the results of the next Health Related Behaviour Survey are brought to the committee’s attention as soon as possible.

Anti Bullying Measures

We know from recent press coverage that bullying can have a profound affect on a young person’s life right through into adulthood. Members were very interested to learn of the awareness raising that had been going on to bring this matter high on everyone’s list of priorities. Cyber bullying is a new area creating a lot of concern currently and we were keen to learn of the support and guidance being offered to schools and parents.

Many of our committee members are school governors and we were given a clear message to take back to our schools - raise the profile, encourage a whole school approach and remember to include the less structures times.

5. Forward Work Programme

The Committee continue to work towards developing an annual work programme for in-depth scrutiny reviews and overview reports which has the flexibility to include topics and issues to be brought to Committee as and when they arise.

**County Councillor Heather Garnett,
Chairman Young People Overview &Scrutiny Committee**

11th December 2007