

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

23rd July 2008

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee has met on two occasions 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:

1. In-depth Scrutiny Review – Young People affected by domestic violence

The Task Group continues to gather evidence and research information for this complex in-depth scrutiny review. A number of Witness Panel Meetings held with partner agencies have been extremely useful in informing task group members and have been welcomed by agencies who have been very willing to share information, feedback and statistics.

Arrangements are being made to consult with other local authorities on what provision is made for children as victims of domestic violence in their areas. It is anticipated that a visit will be arranged sometime in August.

2. Overview Reports – 20 June 2008

2.1 School Admissions Appeals Process

Members of the Committee were becoming increasingly aware that there had been a marked increase in the number of School Admission Appeals. The briefing highlighted the new Code of Practice and the main affect of these changes.

Committee members were concerned whether adequate support was available to parents engaging in this complicated and litigious process. They were pleased to learn that support is available in many forms and that satisfaction levels over the last four years has been very high at 90%.

2.2 Delivering Information, Advice And Guidance To Schools And Colleges In North Yorkshire

The Principal Officer of the Integrated Youth Support together with a representative from Igen provided the committee with a presentation and briefing on what the new service for delivering careers information, advice and guidance to schools and colleges in North Yorkshire looks like. Members were pleased to note that performance monitoring arrangements are in place and look forward to receiving a progress report when the new service has become fully established.

2.3 14 – 19 Education Reforms

Members gained a very useful insight into another complex area. The presentation highlighted the enormity of the task ahead of the Education Service, schools and other educational establishments and it confirmed that by 2013, every young person aged 14-19 has the right to choose from 17 different diplomas at 3 different levels. In addition, they must also have the

opportunity to embark on an apprenticeship at the age of 16. No single school or Further Education College can provide the full entitlement outlined above, to do so require neighbouring schools, colleges and employers to collaborate closely.

The role out of this program has highlighted a number of especial challenges to North Yorkshire. In particular, the issue of School to School Transport has been raised. A joint task group comprising members of the Young People and the Transport & Telecommunication Overview & Scrutiny Committees has been set up to look into these issues and it will feed into the Cross Directorate Officers Working Group which is also considering the matter.

Nominations have been received from both Committees and we look forward to working with members from the Transport and Telecommunications O&S Committee.

3. Overview Reports – 11th July 2008

3.1 Young People's Substances Misuse

The Committee was briefed on the guidance, information and services available to young people regarding substance misuse. Members of the committee requested statistics on the prevalence of substance misuse across the County but were advised that data collection nationally and locally has been problematic. However this is being addressed and more data should be available next year.

The spiralling increase in young people with alcohol issues was of concern and Members were pleased to note that methods of dealing with this are receiving a great deal of attention.

3.2 Draft Library Strategy

Members welcomed the introduction to the "New Look, No Shush" Library Service and were asked as Community Leaders to spread the word on the updated and modernised libraries. They were also interested to hear about the modernising of the school library service and asked that an update on the improved service be provided in due course. Members were pleased to hear of the success of the Book Festivals being held across the County and were delighted to read comments written by young people and their parents on their library experience.

4. Forward Work Programme

The Committee continues to work towards developing an annual work programme which has the flexibility to include topics and issues as and when they arise.

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

15th July 2008