

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

19th May 2010

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

1. The Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee has met once since the last County Council when it held its scheduled meeting on the 26th March 2010.

2. **Committee Meeting – 26th March 2010**

Overview Reports:

- 2.1 **Children & Young Peoples Service – Revenue Budget 2010/11**

Members of the committee requested a briefing from the Corporate Director on the impact of the 2010/11 Revenue Budget on the Children and Young People's Service.

The briefing described the combination of grants and resources that finance the Children and Young People's Service. Our attention was drawn to two particular budget pressures - Children's Social Care which has experienced a steep rise in the number of referrals as a result of recent high profile cases such as Baby Peter; and the rising costs of providing transport.

- 2.2 **North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children's Board**

We were pleased to welcome Nancy Palmer, Independent Chair of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children's Board. The presentation described the role, governance arrangements and membership of the local Safeguarding Board and progress being made towards achieving the targets set out in their Business Plan 2009/2012.

Members have rigorously monitored actions related to safeguarding and mentioned their concerns regarding the reduction in health visitor numbers in North Yorkshire over the last five years to the Independent Chairman. The local Safeguarding Board Chairman assured the committee that they were fully aware of the situation and that this matter will be considered again at their Board Meeting in June 2010 which is attended by a representative of the PCT.

- 2.3 **Post-Inspection Action Plan**

Members of the Committee have continued to monitor the progress and implementation of the Post Inspection Action Plan drawn up by the County Council in response to an Ofsted inspection of Safeguarding arrangements and services for looked after children in North Yorkshire.

Committee Members acknowledged the progress being achieved and asked the Corporate Director to explain the options being considered to overcome recruitment problems to assessment and safeguarding posts.

The matter of staff retention and workload was raised and Members were reassured that plans were underway to stabilise workloads and that families entering the social care system would continue to have their needs met.

As Members of the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee it is important that we do not view the post inspection action plan in isolation but as part of the ongoing work of the Directorate to provide safe and good quality services for young people.

4. In-depth Scrutiny Review – Young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

At the meeting of the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee held in September 2009 it was decided to establish a Task Group to examine the levels of young people in North Yorkshire who are not in education, employment or training and the range of services offered to meet their needs.

Young People not in education, employment or training, or the term more commonly known as 'NEET' refers to young people aged 16-18. Young people NEET come from broad and diverse backgrounds and evidence suggests that spending time not in education, employment or training is a major predictor of later unemployment, low income, teenage motherhood, depression and poor physical health.

At our last meeting the chairman of the Task Group provided the committee with an Interim Report which set out the evidence they had gathered so far. The Working Group continues to consult with relevant stakeholders and anticipate finalising their report in June.

5. Corporate Parent Standing Group (CPSG) – 11^h March 2010

The Corporate Parent Standing Group (CPSG) meet to review and monitor the outcomes of young people in our care and ensure that we continue to provide the best possible care and protection as we would if the child were our own. Recently Elected Members of the County Council will have received an email letter from the Chairman of the CPSG Cllr Melva Steckles which provided a small, but appropriate amount of information in relation to our responsibilities as a corporate parent.

At their last meeting the Corporate Parent Standing Group received reports and briefings on:

- The number of Looked after Children in care.
- The role and responsibility of school governing bodies for Looked after Children
- National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) provided a detailed briefing on the work and support NYAS provide across the County to young people. They ensure that young people's voice, views and feelings are heard and considered. They help young people explore their options and support young people if they wish to appeal against exclusion.
- Youth Peoples Council (YPC) – feedback by the Children's Rights Officer on the refreshed membership of the YPC; the development of a YPC newsletter by May 2010; and Total Respect Training for Corporate Parents

- Presentation on NI 62 – a national measure that counts the number of placements children in care experience.
- Update on the Care Matters: Ministerial Stocktake Report 2009 and a position statement on where North Yorkshire is on implementing the Care Matters agenda.

Work of the Committee

Over the past year the Committee has welcomed regular updates from the Children and Young Peoples Service on issues that reflect Every Child Matters five key outcomes with particular emphasis on safeguarding. Our works as a committee will continue to overview the priorities of young people in all localities, monitor the service and support available and evaluate the outcomes for young people living in North Yorkshire.

County Councillor Paul Richardson
Chairman
Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

May 11th 2010