

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

21st July 2010

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

1. The Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee have met once since the last County Council when it held its scheduled meeting on the 11 June 2010.

2. **Committee Meeting – 11 June 2010**

2.1 **Positive Activities for Young People**

At our meeting on the 11th June we asked the 4Youth Service what is being done to engage all groups of young people in positive activities in North Yorkshire and how does this improve outcomes for young people and local communities.

Members of the Committee were provided with a colourful but detailed presentation on the 'Positive Activities' agenda which commenced with an outline of the policy background to Positive Activities before focusing on the activities provided by the County Council. Images of actual events organised by the 4Youth Service were shown and the benefits they provided to local communities and young people were described. The Committee watched a short promotional video on the 'Culture Shock' event which took place in Northallerton over the weekend commencing 3 July 2010 (which incidentally was a highly successful event). The presentation concluded with information on the ways the 4Youth Service engage with young people and the future challenges they will be facing.

Members congratulated the 4Youth Service on the quality and breadth of the work they provided which given the available resources was impressive.

County Councillor Tim Swales in his capacity as young people's champion mentioned he had attended many events and activities organised by the 4Youth Service in the past and encouraged other elected Members to show their support by attending future activities.

2.2 **Progress Report of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Behavioural Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) Review**

The Committee has previously received several briefings since North Yorkshire County Council consulted in the summer of 2006 on the future of specialist provision for children and young people with SEN and BESD.

The presentation started with a brief overview of provision prior to the SEN/BESD Review and how provision had varied across the County. But as a result of the review children and young people with special needs now progress through both mainstream and specialist settings with a flexible extended network of specialist outreach support.

In response to questions from Members on behaviour issues, the committee were advised that it was still possible for schools to access informal advice on how to deal with behavioural problems without going through the referral process.

Finally, Members were informed that the public consultation on the proposal to close Netherside Hall Special School from 31 August 2012 was about to commence.

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

The Chairman of the Task Group presented the draft scrutiny final report and talked about the reports findings and some of the issues facing a proportion of North Yorkshire young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). As we all know, in the current economic climate, this matter continues to cause concern at both a national and local area.

Members of the Committee welcomed the Scrutiny Report and congratulated the Task Group on this piece of in-depth scrutiny and the subsequent detailed report. Members were encouraged to add comments to add further detail to the Report and these have been included into the Final Report.

The report was well received and Members agreed to support the conclusions and recommendations listed, subject to the additional comments being added. The final report was then presented to the Executive on the 29th June 2011.

3. Corporate Parent Standing Group (CPSG) – 20 May 2010

The Corporate Parent Standing Group (CPSG) met 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.

At the last meeting the Lead Member briefed the group on the new arrangements for the Corporate Parent Standing Group which were approved at the previous County Council. In brief these establish the corporate parenting group as a delegated Executive Function and will therefore no longer sit as a Standing Group under the Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The newly formed group will be known as the ***Looked After Children – Members Group***.

At their last meeting the group considered:

- The current number of Looked after Children in North Yorkshire stands at 469 which equates to 38 per 10,000, compared with the last published national rate of 55:10,000. The high rate of care proceedings is showing no signs of reducing and continues to put increased pressure on resources.
- Six monthly update on the number of Missing Looked after Children which included - question on whether there are any trends developing; the explanations recorded why young people go missing; the support made available to the young people and the families and carers.
- An overview of the Fostering Service with a particular focus on safeguarding and training.

- Feedback from the Young Peoples Council (YPC) and the issues they are currently involved with – Foster Carer Training; Information pack when a young person is placed in Foster Care, first draft of the YPC newsletter; leaving care.
- Outcome of Member involvement with Regulation 33 Inspections of Children's Residential Homes

Work of the Committee

The Committee over the course of a year has maintained a focus on Safeguarding and the implementation of the Post Inspection Action Plan. We consider that whilst the Committee should continue to have oversight of these priority areas and monitor performance it should now be in a more mainstream way.

Our Work Programme continues to overview the priorities of young people in all localities; monitor the service and support available; evaluate the outcomes for young people living in North Yorkshire.

County Councillor Paul Richardson
Chairman
Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

July 10th 2010