

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

13th October 2010

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

- 1.0** The Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee met for their scheduled meeting on the 10th September 2010. I have also attended, as an observer, the Schools Forum and the Children's Trust Board.

Members of the Committee were already aware that North Yorkshire County Council has begun a wide-ranging review of services provided for children and young people in the wake of reductions in Government grants for the current year, and anticipated spending cuts in future years.

The Committee expressed a particular interest in the savings targets for the Children and Young Peoples Service and as the main topic on our agenda, requested a detailed briefing from the Executive Members and the Corporate Director on the strategy for delivering these savings targets.

2.0 Committee Meeting – 10 September 2010**2.1** Savings & transformation Strategy – Children & young Peoples Service

In introducing the Strategy the Corporate Director stressed that wherever possible front-line services would be protected and that some of the changes or further improvements being pursued had positive features that would result in better practices and improved services. However the scale of savings to be made (£14m over three years, possibly rising to £18m over four or five years) is very challenging and difficult decisions will have to be made. The Committee was informed that over the course of the next couple of months further detail will emerge of savings in the eighteen project areas identified in the Strategy.

Members mentioned their concerns regarding specific services that could be affected and asked for reassurance that these services would be given protection. In response the Corporate Director said that if, following the Government announcements in October, the savings required were increased then she was unable to give any guarantees about specific parts of the Service being exempt from cuts. The approach being adopted was based on service priorities.

2.2 Legislative Changes and Emergent Policies - Headline Briefings:

Following the formation of the Coalition Government in May 2010, a series of legislative changes and policy developments have emerged that affect services for children and young people. The purpose of the headline briefings was to inform Members of the Committee of possible changes or policy developments and provide them with the opportunity to ask questions.

- **2.2.1** Decommissioning of ContactPoint - Members noted that all the actions needed to decommission ContactPoint at a local level were now

complete. The government wants to develop alternatives to help protect vulnerable children.

- 2.2.2 Reform of Children's Trust - It is anticipated the government will remove the statutory requirement to have a Children's Trust. However, the duty on partner organisations to co-operate will be retained but it is expected that the range of agencies to which this requirement applies will be revised. This may also mean that the statutory requirement to produce a Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) is also likely to be repealed.
- 2.2.3 Changes to 16-19 Funding Arrangements – Members learned that changes to the funding arrangements have little impact on the local authority commissioning role. The new Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) will make payments directly to FE colleges, sixth form colleges and other training providers. School 6th forms will continue to be paid by councils.
- 2.2.4 Academies and Free Schools – No school in North Yorkshire has applied to become an academy. However, work is underway within the Council to look at the implications of schools becoming Academies.
- 2.2.5 Review of Child Protection – The Committee was reminded that the government has commissioned Professor Eileen Munro to lead a review of the child protection system, which builds on the work of Lord Laming.

3.0 Children & Young Peoples Plan (CYPP) – Annual Review

The Annual Review of the CYPP provided Members with an overview of the progress made against the CYPP 2009/10 which was submitted to Ofsted as part of the evidence for the annual rating of North Yorkshire's Children's Services. Members noted that it is likely to be no longer be a requirement to produce a Children & Young People's Plan.

4.0 Work Programme

The Committee's Work Programme contains a number of topics and reflects a rapidly moving picture of developments and changes for children, young people and their families, improved services, and responds to reductions in budgets and Area Based Grants.

Safeguarding remains a focus for the committee and at our next meeting we will consider the progress achieved against the Ofsted Post Inspection Action Plan 2009/10.

Our next in-depth scrutiny project will look at the School Nursing and Health Visitor Service and the future plans for this service. This piece of work will be undertaken by a Task and Finish Group of 4 members.

In the spirit of making better use of the technology available and reducing business mileage we propose holding our Mid-Cycle Briefings and Task Group Meetings where appropriate via Video Conferencing

County Councillor Keith Barnes
Chairman
Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

3rd October 2010