

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

20th July 2011

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

1.0 Since the last meeting of the County Council the Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee met for its scheduled meeting on the 10th June 2011.

2.0 At the 10th June 2011 – Committee Meeting the following agenda issues were overviewed and discussed:

2.1 Children & Young Peoples Service: Savings and Transformation Strategy

The Committee continue to overview the financial challenges of the Children & Young Peoples Service (CYPS) and received a further update from the Corporate Director. This briefing reassured the Members present that the Service is on track to deliver their part in the County Councils savings and that the combined measures from the identified project areas are a major part of the transformational work being undertaken.

2.2 Executive Members Update

Prior to the Committee Meeting the Executive Members were asked for their views and comments on three pre-set questions relating to the Transport Grant and Early Intervention Grant; the Draft Codes for School Admissions and School Appeals and the Self Improvement role in Children's Services. Their responses were:

(i)..... even though the Transport Grant and Early Intervention Grant were both higher than expected and the final grant settlements create a net additional resource they are relatively small sums which will go into the savings required of the service.

(ii).....the time scale to respond to the consultation on the newly published Department for Education draft codes for school admissions and admission appeals is three months and Officers are in the process of carefully considering these two documents.

(iii)..... in relation to the Self Improvement Role in Children's Services - CYPS is wholly committed to self-improvement and good performance but faced with the current priorities needs to maintain a focus on the major change agenda. However, it is likely they will consider their contribution and participation in the scheme at some point in the future.

2.3 Youth Support Service

Members of the Committee were provided with a presentation and briefing outlining the reduced management structure (Project 4 of the CYPS Savings and Transformation Strategy) following the integration of the Youth Service and the Integrated Youth Support Service.

Included in this briefing were two other matters which related to: (i) Young People not in education, employment or training (NEET) and (ii) Teenage Pregnancy rates and Substance Misuse by young people.

Officers explained to the Committee that NEET figures in North Yorkshire have been relatively low but that there are several policy changes that will impact on this area of work such as the raising of the participation age which requires all young people to remain in learning until age 18 by 2015 and presents North Yorkshire with particular challenges.

Members made reference to their previous Scrutiny Review on 'Supporting Young People into Education, Employment and Training' and suggested that this would be a good time to re-visit the key recommendations set out in their report and requested a progress report/briefing.

The Committee were advised that the latest data highlights the continued reduction in teenage pregnancies in North Yorkshire. However, there are still variations across the County with some areas showing teenage pregnancy rates higher than the national average. Officers confirmed that there continues to be a focus of resources available in these areas.

Members were also made aware that alcohol and cannabis remain the most widely used drugs by young people in all areas of North Yorkshire. Class A and opiate use is low in this area but the demand for services continues to be higher in the Coast and Moors where resources have been prioritised.

2.4 Safeguarding

The Committee received a presentation from the Assistant Director - Childrens Social Care on Safeguarding, which covered a number of areas. The timeliness of completed Initial and Core Assessments had been of concern to Members in the past but the performance information provided at the meeting reassured Members that improvement was continuous and impressive despite the increasing demand on the service and the problems that had been associated with the ICS computer system.

In relation to performance monitoring the Assistant Director advised the committee of the outcome of the recent Unannounced Inspection; the Adoption Agency Inspection (May 2011) with an overall judgement of Outstanding (previously 'good') and Woodleigh Children's Home – winner of Strategic RISK European Award for the Best Risk Management Approach in the Public Sector (May 2011).

2.5 0-19 Universal Services Review

Representatives from NHS North Yorkshire & York were invited to attend committee to advise us of the outcome of the 0-19 Review of Universal Health Services. Their briefing summarised the processes and consultations undertaken and they explained that this Review had been delayed as a result of the changing political and financial climates. The PCT Commissioners went on to explain that the recent publication of the 'Health Visitor Implementation Plan – A Call to Action 2011-15' is likely to have an impact on the final outcome of the 0-19 Review and Commissioning Milestones.

Members' questions reflected some of the concerns they had around School Nursing capacity and asked whether there is likely to be a national development programme to recruit more school nurses.

3.0 In-depth Scrutiny Review - Health Visitor & School Nursing Service

The Task Groups final report on 'Health Visiting and School Nursing Service' is to be shared with the Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive of Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust shortly. Any comments or feedback will be included in our submission to the Executive in September.

County Councillor Keith Barnes

Chairman

Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

5th July 2011