

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

12th October 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 9th September 2011. There was also a Mid-Cycle Briefing, by video-conference; and the committee's Working Group on Health Visitors and School Nurses has presented its report to Harrogate NHS Foundation Trust and the NYCC Executive.

2.0 **The Draft Children's and Young Peoples Plan 2011-2014**

Due to the tight deadlines myself as Chairman, the Vice Chairman and Group Spokesperson will have received a briefing by the Corporate Director prior to the Plan being considered at County Council. However, the timing of the briefing will not permit me to include any comments in this statement.

3.0 **Tour of Children's Residential Homes**

A group of County Councillors as representatives of the Young Peoples Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Looked after Children Members' Group, together with the Lead Member for Children & Young Peoples Service took part in a whistle stop tour of children's residential homes in the west side of the county. The purpose was in part fulfilling our role as Corporate Parents and to view the resources and provision for looked after children and those with special needs. We were impressed with the resources and provision available and the commitment and dedication of the staff.

We hope to tour Children's Homes in the east of the County later this month.

4.0 At the **9th September 2011 – Committee Meeting** the following agenda issues were overviewed and discussed:

4.1 **Executive Members Update**

In advance of the committee meeting a number of questions were forwarded to the Executive Members and the Corporate Director, as follows:-

4.1.1 **Children & Young Peoples Service: Savings and Transformation Strategy**

The Committee was provided with a position statement in relation to the Children & Young Peoples Service: Savings and Transformation Strategy. In brief the service is on target to deliver its part in the County Council savings through the 18 identified project areas and it is anticipated that savings will be accelerated by up to £1m from later years. However, the overall 4-year target does not change.

4.1.2 **Progress towards a Health & Wellbeing Board**

Members of the Committee were made aware of the plans to have a shadow Health and Wellbeing board in place around October/November 2011. This is the forerunner to the creation of the full board in 2013. Members were directed towards the Health and Wellbeing web page and the consultation being undertaken.

4.1.3 **Governments reform of early learning and children's centres - Is NYCC involved with any of the pilots mentioned?**

Members were advised that NYCC is one of 15 local authorities that are involved with a pilot investigating how best to implement the new duty to have funded provision available for disadvantaged two year olds.

In addition the committee were made aware of a bid submitted with East Yorkshire for a "payments by results" pilot. This pilot will look at the problems associated with having children born in one local authority area and receiving their postnatal support in another local authority area.

4.2 **National Policy and Funding Changes: Headline Briefing**

The committee was briefed on a series of legislative changes and policy developments that have emerged and affect services for children and young people.

The briefing covered School Funding, Pupil Premium, Academies and the end of the Education Maintenance Allowance.

4.3 **Elective Home Education**

Members were provided with a briefing on Elective Home Education and were surprised to learn that the responsibility for a child's education rests with their parents. In England education is compulsory, but schooling is not and the responsibility and legal duty of a Local Authority (LA) is concerned only with children who appear not to be receiving a suitable education.

A concern of the committee was that the families who home educate are not required to maintain any contact with the Local Authority. Members were reassured that contact and visits are made by Education Social Workers (ESW) who support the families and help to establish any background issues or concerns there may be, including any child protection concerns.

Members felt strongly that the current national legislation around home education needs to be reviewed and requested that their thoughts are discussed with the Executive Members and the Corporate Director.

4.4 **Next Scrutiny Review**

Members of the Committee have decided to look at Youth Participation in North Yorkshire with the help and assistance of the North Yorkshire Youth Council and the Local Youth Councils and the first meeting of the Task Group will clarify the scope and aims of this next scrutiny review.

I recently met with the North Yorkshire Youth Council Chairman and Secretary and as a result have been invited to speak at their next meeting in York.

5.0 **Safeguarding** remains an important part of the committee's business and I made a point of meeting with the Independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Board, Nancy Palmer, to discuss the board's priorities and what the impact of the Munro Review had had on the Local Safeguarding Board. I also attended a meeting of the Board.