

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

14th December 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 11th November 2011. Other commitments included the Mid-Cycle Briefing on the 2nd December held by three-way video-conferencing; attendance at a presentation evening by looked after children (who highlighted the problems of the child to adult transition) and a visit to Children's Residential Homes and Resources Centres across the County with Members of the Looked after Children Members Group.

2.0 Tour of Children's Residential Homes

In my previous Chairman's Statement I mentioned that a group of County Councillors as representatives of the Young Peoples Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Looked after Children Members' Group were visiting all the children's residential homes and resources centres across the County. The purpose being to commit to our role as Corporate Parents and to view the resources and provision for looked after children and those with special needs.

The final tour of the Children's Residential Home and Resource Centres in Scarborough completes our visits, which not only clarified the different types of resources and provision available but also highlighted the commitment and dedication of the team of staff working in this field.

3.0 11th November 2011 – Committee Meeting

We were delighted to welcome two young people who joined our meeting as part of the 'Take Over Day' by North Yorkshire Youth Council and the Young People's Council. The meeting was briefly adjourned to allow members to attend the Service of Remembrance in the grounds of County Hall. The following agenda issues were overviewed and discussed:

3.1 Executive Members Update

The Executive Members in their briefing statement provided the Committee with updates on the following issues:

- The Savings & Transformation Strategy, which is ahead of target and is expected to continue this trend through Quarter 2. It was confirmed that no cuts to frontline Youth Services are planned until 2014-15 at the earliest.
- An overview and summary of North Yorkshire County Councils response to the Government School Funding Consultation. There is concern lest any new funding formula fails to recognise NYCC's unique challenges.
- Members of the Committee had asked if there was any knowledge on cuts in College Courses. Although these services are outside NYCC's remit the Executive Member provided the Committee with a position statement for Askham Bryham College, Craven College, Harrogate College and Selby, all of which showed course numbers holding up.
- The Committee were advised of North Yorkshire's performance data for the timeliness of adoptions covering a three-year period from 2008 to 2010,

which showed that 87% of adoptions in North Yorkshire were completed within the required 12 month timescale and places North Yorkshire in 18th position amongst the 152 local authority adoption services. Current performance during 2010/11 shows 94% of adoptions completed within 12 months.

During the meeting the committee was also briefed on the Annual Children's Services Assessment from Ofsted, in which NYCC was deemed to be 'performing well', or a score of 3 on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being the best.

3.2 Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014

Members of the Committee requested a succinct introduction to the Children & Young Peoples Plan 2011-2014 as this complex document represents the partnership work involved in delivering services for children and young people. It was also acknowledged how this Plan might be used to influence the Young Peoples Overview & Scrutiny Committees Work Programme for 2012.

The Committee agreed that it would be appropriate for a Task and Finish Group to look at refreshing the Work Programme for 2012 and present their findings to the full Committee at the next meeting.

3.3 Children's Social Care Restructure

A presentation was provided on the restructure of Children's Social Care (Project 8 of the CYPS Savings and Transformation Strategy), which put into context the national and local pressures facing the service and gave reassurance that safeguarding and protection was a priority when developing new services.

Members of the Committee welcomed the increase in frontline services and were pleased to note the early and intensive interventions being developed to provide children, young people and their families with support and services when they needed them.

3.4 Draft Strategy For Special Educational Needs And Disability (SEND)

Members were advised that 12 out of a total of 15 consultation events on the draft SEND Strategy had taken place. Two Consultation events had been held in each area – morning and evening - to provide every opportunity for young people, their parents and/or carers to attend.

The briefing covered some of the feedback received from parents, carers and young people attending these events, which will be included in the revised document when it goes to full Council in February. One common theme was concern about reduction in support when a young person moves from childhood to adulthood.

4.0 In-depth Scrutiny Review - Youth Participation

Members of the Task Group held their first meeting and nominated Cllr John Batt as Chairman of the Task Group. Officers provided background detail on Youth Participation and agreement was reached on how to take this review forward. The next meeting will hopefully include a meeting with the North Yorkshire Youth Council to consult and debate the scope and framework of this particular scrutiny review.