

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

15th February 2012

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 has held a mid-cycle briefing and also met for its scheduled meeting on the 20th January 2012. The mid-cycle briefing included Ofsted inspections of children's centres and the County Council's parenting support strategy.

2.0 **In-depth Scrutiny Review on Youth Participation**

The Task Group attended the North Yorkshire Youth Council on the 21st December in York to explain the aims and purpose of the Committee's in-depth scrutiny review of Youth Participation with a particular focus on Youth Councils. It also provided a good opportunity to consult with the young representatives present and ask for their thoughts on the aims of the review. The consultation with the young people proved to be a really positive and insightful meeting into what local Youth Councils have meant to them and provided a useful discussion based on the big issues that are important to young people, in particular bus fares, healthy eating and first aid training. All the information gathered so far was included in the Interim Report presented by the Task Group Chairman, County Councillor John Batt, at our last meeting.

3.0 **20th January 2012 – Committee Meeting**

The following agenda issues were overviewed and discussed:

3.1 **Executive Member's Update**

Members of the Committee asked the Executive Member, Cllr Carl Les and Corporate Director, Cynthia Welbourn, for further detail in relation to the incident that had happened at Eppleby Forcett Primary School, where small children were left without a teacher for some time. Members were advised that this is a matter that North Yorkshire County Council is taking very seriously and were reassured by the actions taken so far by the Children & Young Peoples Service and were given further assurances that a full review is underway.

Cllr Les was also asked to comment on an email individually addressed to County Councillors from Barnado's encouraging sign up to their campaign – *Cutting them free: How is the UK progressing in protecting its children from sexual exploitation*. Cllr Les said that the Executive Members and the Corporate Director are due to have an in-depth discussion in relation to what the County Council's position should be and in due course Members of the County Council will receive a position statement.

Members also received responses to a number of questions submitted prior to the meeting which were as follows:

(a) *Does the County Council have any influence to discourage Sixth Form pupils who drive to school by car, with the associated congestion problems?* Cllr Les responded by saying that the County Council does not have any powers to enforce the use of alternatives to cars and that every school has a School Travel Plan which aims to encourage young people to take a healthier option to getting to school either by walking or in some cases cycling or getting the bus.

(b) *Does North Yorkshire County Council have any role in encouraging and supporting gifted and talented children?* The County Council has supported this group of young people as much as possible through all phases of their education for the past ten years. However, special funding is no longer available but the Children and Young Peoples Services has allocated the Quality and Improvement Service resource, and asked schools to contribute in order to maintain this work.

(c) *Will North Yorkshire County Council need to compete more pro-actively in selling services to Academies and even maintained schools and can NYCC sell services outside its geographical area?* Cynthia Welbourn explained that traded services have been operating in a competitive environment for many years, including facing competition from some schools (which do not need to be Academies to offer services to other schools, inside or outside the county). The eight Academies in North Yorkshire represent 2% of the 384 schools in the county and the Council continues to offer traded services to Academies in most cases. Schools in other local authorities have shown an interest in purchasing from North Yorkshire County Council, and this will be looked into provided it makes sense and does not damage what is provided to North Yorkshire Schools.

3.2 Children and Young Peoples Service – Key Performance Indicators

The Committee was provided with a detailed report and briefing on the ten Key Performance Indicators reported to the Executive on a quarterly basis. Members asked a number of questions on each of the ten indicators and received full responses from both the Executive Member and the Corporate Director.

In addition Members were advised that the wider set of success measures which are incorporated into the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014 have been developed, and a report will be brought to the next meeting of this Committee.

3.3 School Funding Briefing

The briefing provided Members with an update to the previous report presented at Committee in September 2011. In addition they also received an update on the Pupil Premium and the on going discussions regarding the Academy top slice.

Members were reminded of the three key issues included in North Yorkshire's response to the National Consultations on School Funding. These are: additions to the education budget in previous years, beyond a national formula; the method of allocating funds to individual schools; and local, not national funding mechanisms. The Committee was also made aware of a report by the Institute of Fiscal Studies in which it modelled some of the proposals in the school funding consultation and that the content of the report appears to confirm some of the concerns expressed in the County Council's response to the consultation.

In relation to Pupil Premium the Committee was advised that in 2012/13 the Pupil Premium will increase from £488 to £600 per pupil on Free School Meals or for children who are looked after and from £200 to £250 for service children. The total paid to schools will be based on numbers from the January pupil count and is not allocated in proportion to the overall budget of each school.

The Committee was advised of the on-going discussions regarding the Academy top slice and that North Yorkshire's response to the first consultation made it clear that any top-slicing should reflect actual numbers (not future predictions) and on current, rather than historic budgets. These points have now been accepted by government. However North Yorkshire's response to the December consultation (second consultation) makes clear that a number of concerns remain.