

North Yorkshire County Council

16 May 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 two mid-cycle briefings and also met for its scheduled meeting on the 16th March 2012. The mid-cycle briefings included Pupil Referral Services, demand for primary school places, updates on School Sports Partnerships, the outcome of the pilot scheme regarding initial contacts and referrals to the Children & Young People's Service and an overview of the latest government consultation responses.

2.0 In-depth Scrutiny Review on Youth Participation

Included in this scrutiny project was a visit to 'The Street' site at Scarborough to learn about how young people were actively involved in the initial stages of planning and development and how the project continues to involve and include young people's views. The scrutiny task group met with a small group of young people who provided a lively overview and presentation on their involvement throughout all stages of the development and then happily answered a number of Member's questions. Project Managers from Seachange Community Trust and Integrated Youth Support Officers provided background information and answered questions on who will use 'The Street' building and the plans for sustainability.

The Task Group has completed its research and consultations with young people and will be drawing together their findings into a draft report. The report will be presented to the Committee for their comments and feedback in June before going to the Executive.

3.0 11 March 2012 – Committee Meeting – Items included on the agenda:-

3.1 Executive Member's Update

The Executive Member, County Councillor Carl Les, provided the Committee with updates in relation to three key areas:-

New Ofsted inspection arrangements - Members were advised that the new Ofsted inspections of 'local authority arrangements for the protection of children' commence in May 2012. They will be unannounced and each will last for two weeks. The inspection scope is much wider than Children's Social Care and starts at the point when a child is identified, by any service that works with children and young people, as being potentially at risk of harm

Paediatrics Services, Friarage Hospital, Northallerton - the Executive Member explained that the County Council (including the Children and Young People's Service) will be a stakeholder for consultation purposes, as will the Children's Trust and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. The Committee was also made aware of a Workshop to be held on the 27 March, and the timetable of public engagement meetings to be held across the County.

Careers Advice - the Committee, aware that the statutory requirement to provide careers education (years 7-11) will be removed in September 2012, asked whether the Local Authority (LA) has any duty to ensure careers advice happens? Executive Member Cllr Les explained that the LA does not have any responsibility to ensure careers advice happens in schools. However, whilst the Local Authority will lose its responsibility to commission career services for young people, it does retain the duty to support and provide access to specialist advice for vulnerable young people.

3.2 Post 16 Transitions for Young People Aged 16-25 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Members had raised questions regarding the transition arrangements for young people with SEND into adulthood. Officers from both the Children & Young People's Service (CYPS) and Health & Adult Services (HAS) assured members that they are aware of the challenges that young people face as they make this transition and that there are good mechanisms in place to involve young people and their families. They mentioned the involvement of the Flying High Group, a group of disabled young adults who are currently making their way or who have recently been through the transition process and who provide an excellent sounding board for the Local Authority's work in this area. One of the members of the group has produced a helpful paper which sets out some of the challenges facing disabled young people through the transition period.

One of the key issues facing the LA on the transitions agenda are the high costs attached to Independent Specialist Providers - independent residential colleges which currently provide for significant numbers of North Yorkshire young people with SEND. However, Members were informed that joint planning between the Children & Young People's Service and Health & Adult Services is ensuring better prediction of future costs for the Local Authority together with managing the expectations of young people and their families.

3.3 North Yorkshire's Children's Centres

A detailed update was provided on developments to make greater use of Children's Centres. Members learned of a number of initiatives which have contributed to ensuring that North Yorkshire Children's Centres are recognised as a key resource within local communities. Of particular interest to Members of the Committee was the enhanced working agreement with midwives and health visitors through the Healthy Child Programme to identify and jointly support all new parents – particularly the most vulnerable, ensuring that more families in greatest need receive timely and well co-ordinated provision.

3.4 Building Engagement, Building Futures: 16-24 year olds in Education, Training and Work

Members were provided with an overview of the government's strategy 'Building Engagement, Building Futures' from a local perspective, and a brief run through the five key strategic priorities. The Committee were advised of the current levels of youth unemployment in North Yorkshire which is showing a slight increase.

Questions from Members of the Committee focussed around several areas and in particular the County Council's ability to track participation as the role and responsibilities have changed; the type of support offered and provided to employers; the support available for pre 16 families; and whether the Local Authority has any responsibility to look for/find more apprenticeships.

3.5 Youth Justice Service

The Committee welcomed the update provided which covered three areas - Youth Justice Service (YJS) funding allocation 2012/13; developments in respect of young people in custody and proposals aimed at reducing numbers; and Performance against key outcome measures.

Members were advised that the Youth Justice Board (YJB) grant of £1,122,303, announced on the 1st March, represents a 5.6% reduction (£62,849); that funding from Partner Organisations has still to be confirmed for 2012/13 but indications are that this will be at the same level as last year; that 13% of the YJB grant which comes from the Home Office from 2013/14 will go directly to the Police and Crime Commissioners. For North Yorkshire this has meant that £61,490 has transferred across to the Police Authority, representing 5.5% of the overall of the YJS grant.

4.0 And Finally. I would like to pay tribute to the work and dedication of Cllr Melva Steckles during her time as Chair of the Looked After Children Members' Group.