

**North Yorkshire County Council****19 February 2014****Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee****Chairman's Statement**

My Chairman's statement for this full council includes details of the Committee meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014. The meeting focussed on the budget implications for the Children's and Young People's Service, the 2013 annual report of the Chairman of the Looked After Children Members Group, sports funding to support primary school aged children, proposals from the North Yorkshire commission for School Improvement and an update on the Developing Stronger Families programme.

**1. Budget implications for the Children's and Young People's Service**

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to comment on the budget implications for the Children's and Young People's Service and appreciate the challenges that lie ahead. The Directorate has been tasked to find £16m in savings for the 2015/16 budget and although this is a mammoth task, it is reassuring for Members to see that work is being undertaken now to see how the savings can be found for the future. This involves, looking at ways to reduce the care population with positive steps to assist families to stay together, considering creative services to support children and families in areas of greatest need, ensuring that buildings are utilised fully for community benefit, whilst also looking for improvements and efficiencies in the way we provide services.

**2. 2013 annual report of the Chairman of the Looked After Children Members Group (LAC MG)**

County Councillor Janet Sanderson gave a full statement to the Committee in which she outlined the work undertaken by the LAC MG over the previous year. The Committee was unanimous in its support of the work of the Group and thanked Cllr Sanderson for her commitment and the dedication in which she has approached her work with the County Council's looked after children. Cllr Sanderson reiterated the need for all County Councillors to remember their role as a corporate parent and think how they might help the young people in our care. I was particularly pleased to hear that future meetings of the LAC MG will receive a 'pen portrait' of a young person in our care to help develop understanding around the circumstances that can lead to children and young people being 'looked after' and to recognise that each child has his or her own story.

**3. Sports funding to support primary school aged children**

Members were interested to hear a report on sports funding to support primary school children and that all schools with 17 or more primary pupils will receive a lump sum of £8000 plus a premium of £5 per pupil. Smaller schools, we were told, will receive £500 per pupil for two years. In North Yorkshire this means that the smallest primary school will receive £7,500 and the largest £10,925 per annum. It represents over £5.5 million worth of funding across the County in the first two years alone! In these austere times it is good to report on something positive for our young children. First of all it means that extra sport and physical education could in the long run help to reduce obesity in young people; secondly if this country is to achieve the highest rewards at not only at national, but also at international

levels such as the Olympic Games and World Sports, then the training has to begin with the youngest.

#### **4       Proposals from the North Yorkshire Commission for School Improvement**

The report informed the Committee that the Commission was established to address the question: *'How can we develop a collaborative system for effective school improvement that ensures that every school in North Yorkshire is good or outstanding?'*

In addressing this question it was important that the right people were sitting around the table and so Members were pleased to see that those involved included leaders from primary, secondary and special schools, academies and federations together with local authority teams. The collaborative spirit in which this piece of work has been approached bodes well for the future and the proposals that the Commission has developed. These include the development of a small number of school-led commissioning groups across the County. We look forward to a follow up report once the consultation on the proposals is completed and the results analysed.

#### **5       Update on the Developing Stronger Families programme**

This really is a good news story not only for the County Council but more importantly for those families that have been involved in the programme. The Committee learnt about the work that continues to support those households who are defined as 'troubled families'. The approach which the County Council has taken builds on the strengths of the family. This ensures that they access the right support to address the needs for the whole family rather than responding to each problem, or person separately. We support the overarching aim of the programme to change the lives of these families for the better in the long term.

#### **6       Work programme**

The Committee agreed to add an agenda item to the work programme in the autumn of 2014 on children and sexual exploitation. The final report on the scrutiny review for 'online safety of children and young people' will be addressed at the June 2014 meeting of this Committee.

**County Councillor Elizabeth Shields**

Chairman Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Feb 2014