

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**20 July 2016****YOUNG PEOPLES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT****Strategic Reorganisations**

1. We set time aside at our last meeting to focus on the white paper: "Educational excellence everywhere". To do anything less, given the scale of the white paper's proposals, would simply have been remiss - especially after the announcement that it was no longer thought necessary to take blanket powers to convert good schools in strong local authorities to academies at this time. From briefings at seminars, members will know the extent of the white paper's reach, so I focus here on the committee's reaction. Our concerns were the same as those highlighted by the Directorate:
 - Concentration on structures
 - Capacity of the academy sector to take on more.
 - Particular concerns for authorities such as NY
 - Will schools find the levels of autonomy that they want?
 - Inclusiveness of multi-academy trusts: what happens to the small, the financially pressed, those with standards not as high as they should be?
2. The overriding feeling in the room was this represents an unnecessary rush to academise.
3. We acknowledged the uncertainty around how the Local Authority's education duties will focus on three areas:
 - ensuring every child has a school place
 - ensuring the needs of vulnerable children are met
 - acting as champions for all parents and families"
4. These are all significant - more so in what will be an increasingly dispersed system. In terms of what happens next, we asked to be kept informed of the results of the many structured conversations taking place with key players and partners. We are particularly interested in what happens as the directorate looks to develop traded services through Smart Solutions, and even further ahead, the possibility of forming a Learning Trust. All of this, however, will be guided by the draft legislation. In the meantime, it is important that we keep a weather eye on developments, which might include convening a separate, workshop type session as those developments unfold.

5. Largely because of the white paper, but also partly because of the recent experience of managing scrutiny's involvement in the proposed amalgamation of Whitby and Eskdale Schools, we thought it timely to review the committee's role in strategic reorganisations.
6. Up to now, there has been no hard and fast rule about what matters scrutiny should take an interest in. We have rarely wished to look at proposals, and where we have done it has tended to be with a view to ensuring that appropriate considerations have been made and that consultation has been carried out appropriately. Examples are:
 - a. The amalgamation of Graham and Raincliffe schools in Scarborough in 2011
 - b. The removal of the middle school system in North Craven in 2010/11
7. With so much change in the air, we settled on a way forward to see us through till the guidance is definitive. From now on, and as a matter of routine, when any proposal has been agreed by Executive Member to go to consultation, the Scrutiny Officer will be notified, to enable the Chairman of YPOSC to consider whether, and at what time, the committee might wish to learn more about the proposal. Once the legislation has been passed following the White Paper, there will doubtless be a further issue of guidance for decision makers.
8. In the light of that we supported the directorate's intention to look anyway at processes again, to ensure that we are all operating in the most reasonable and effective way. This may or may not require changes to the constitution and at that time the interface with Scrutiny will be re-examined.

Careers

9. Careers education is a topic that attracts considerable policy interest. The issue of what, how, how much, when and by whom careers-related education should be provided to young people remains a focus of much debate. The Education Act 2011 transferred responsibility for careers guidance from local authorities to Schools and there is now a duty on schools to secure independent and impartial careers guidance for all year 8--13 pupils.
10. We are looking forward to reviewing the findings from a baseline assessment of careers education and guidance in 17 schools in North Yorkshire and 3 schools in the City of York. The schools have been selected to participate in the North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and the York, North Yorkshire, and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership (YNYER LEP) funded project 'Putting the Learner First- Progression for Success' (hereafter referred to as Progression for Success). The project has been conceived as a way to improve the outcomes for young people in North Yorkshire through the development of the career and enterprise provision.

11. Schools participating in the project have been provided with funding of £2,745 to improve their provision. To achieve this they have been provided with a programme of focussed professional development days, support visits and encouraged to seek a recognised careers education and guidance quality award validated through the Quality in Careers Standard. A key objective for schools is therefore to successfully gain a quality mark for their careers provision within the timeframe of the project. It is hoped that this objective, when tied with the other support that schools will be receiving, will drive a transformation of practice within the schools.
12. Our work will focus on how schools approach the quality and scope of career guidance in the project schools and how to achieve a demonstrable improvement in the provision of career guidance in schools (inputs). Most importantly, however, a critical measure of success will be an improvement in outcomes for young people.

Youth Justice System

13. The committee has also taken the first steps in its intention to look at local changes planned to the Youth Justice System, which is under national departmental review for the Ministry of Justice. The review is examining evidence on what works to prevent youth crime and rehabilitate young offenders, and how this is applied in practice; how the youth justice system can most effectively interact with wider services for children and young people; and whether the current delivery models and governance arrangements remain fit for purpose and achieve value for money. The final report is expected in July 2016.
14. The members briefing will, therefore, be taken in September, as by then we may have a clearer view on what the future holds and what that means for the committee's work.

JANET JEFFERSON

Chairman, Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee
County Hall,
NORTHALLERTON

11 July 2016

Background Documents - Nil.