

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY EDUCATION JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Community Education Joint Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee held at County Hall, Northallerton on Thursday, 7 September 2006.

PRESENT:-

County Councillors:- Michelle Andrew, Andrew Backhouse, Bill Barton, Bernard Bateman, John Blackburn, John Blackie, Elizabeth Casling, Heather Garnett, Les Parkes, Stuart Parsons, Christopher Pearson, John Savage, Caroline Seymour, Brian Simpson, Jim Snowball and Herbert Tindall (as substitute for Melva Steckles).

Members other than County Councillors:- Michael Barrie

In attendance: County Councillors Caroline Patmore and Helen Swiers.

Officers: Terry Begley, Stephanie Bratcher, Bryon Hunter, Fran Lett, Chris McGee and Jane Wilkinson.

One member of the public.

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of:-
County Councillors Arthur Barker, Tony Hall, David Heather, Robert Heseltine and Melva Steckles and the following Members other than County Councillors:- Ken Allinson, Judith Bromfield, Robert Fothergill and Helen Suckling.

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED -

That County Councillor Heather Garnett is elected as Chairman, to serve until the first meeting of the Community Education Sub-Committee subsequent to the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2007.

2. ELECTION OF A VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED -

That the appointment of a Vice-Chairman to the Community Education Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee is not required.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS

The Sub-Committee was advised that no notice had been received of any public questions or statements to be made at the meeting.

4. **IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE YOUTH WORK AND ADULT LEARNING SERVICES**

CONSIDERED –

The interim report of the Corporate Director - Children and Young People's Service updating Members on implementation of new management and administrative arrangements for the Youth Work and Adult Learning Services.

In introducing this item the Chairman welcomed everybody present and invited Chris McGee, Fran Lett and Terry Begley to address the Committee. Chris McGee with support from Fran Lett and Terry Begley gave a brief overview of the current position. Members were advised that implementation of the new management and administrative arrangements had been a complex operation that directly affected 93 staff. Overall the process had gone smoothly and agreement with the Trade Unions had been reached. Since the report had been written a further four members of staff who had been facing redundancy had left the service. Three had found alternative employment and one had been made redundant. Therefore there had been eight redundancies in total, seven of which had been on a voluntary basis.

ADULT SERVICE

There had been problems in establishing some of the area bases and with the delivery of prospectuses in some areas. The problems with area bases centred on demands from some schools for excessively high levels of rent and consequently alternative premises had now been found. With regard to delivery of prospectuses the County Council had appointed Amaro to be the distributor following a procurement process. Whilst copies of prospectuses had been delivered to more households than had been the case in previous years the distribution overall had been patchy and was generally unsatisfactory. The County Council was currently engaged in discussions with Amaro to try and find a solution and would be seeking to renegotiate fees. Members were advised that by printing and designing prospectuses centrally significant savings had been achieved. The cost of prospectuses this year was £68,000 as opposed to the previous year's cost of £200,000. The distribution problems encountered did not appear to be adversely affecting enrolment. As at the date of the meeting approximately three thousand people had already enrolled on programmes across the whole of the County and this figure was still rising.

Members were informed that whilst overall there had been a decrease in the amount of monies received from the Learning Skills Council for both accredited and non-accredited learning officers were nevertheless confident that the new budgets were manageable. The County Council was currently predicting a 6.7% provisional overachievement for 2005/06 in further education. This figure was exceptional and would have a positive impact on the 2007/08 budget and meant that it was unlikely that 'clawback' would be an issue.

YOUTH SERVICE

An induction programme had been held throughout July with very good rates of participation. Forty applications had been received for the three vacant posts, and interviews were due to be held on 5 & 6 October 2006. Area Managers no longer felt isolated and enjoyed the benefits of being part of a team. Key themes for development of the service had now emerged and had been incorporated into a one hundred day plan. Members were informed of the timetable for the appointment of Youth Work apprentices. Once signage for buildings and publicity was agreed there would be an official launch of the new service which was planned to coincide with the annual Youth Work Week at the end of the year.

Copies of area prospectuses and the Adult and Community Learning Development Plan 2006/09 were tabled at the meeting.

At the conclusion of the presentation the Chairman suggested the establishment of a Task Group to enable Members to conduct further primary research on implementation of the new service arrangements and ultimately contribute to the post implementation review. Expressions of interest from Members of the Sub-Committee were welcomed with the final membership of the Task Group to be agreed by the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of both parent Scrutiny Committees. In response to a request from the Chairman, assurances were given that those Officers responsible for the management of the Youth Work and Adult Learning Services would support the work of the Task Group.

A post implementation review of the new arrangements was scheduled for February/March 2007 and it was anticipated that the next meeting of the Sub-Committee would take place at this time on a date to be agreed when the findings of the Task Group would also be reported and considered. Members of the Sub-Committee supported this proposal and agreed to contact Scrutiny Support Officers with their expressions of interest.

Following the initial report and presentation the following matters were discussed and responses given:-

- (a) Provision
Provision of both accredited and non-accredited adult learning was available across the whole of North Yorkshire on broadly the same basis as it had been available in previous years. There had been some changes at the margins to improve the curriculum and the range of programmes offered as previously this had been patchy and repetitive.
- (b) Equality of Access
Access to Adult Learning remained available across the whole of North Yorkshire. Officers welcomed feedback from Members on any gaps in provision.
- (c) Relationships with Schools
Officers were working closely with extended schools to ensure that there was no duplication in provision or that "price wars" developed. The service had good relationships with the majority of schools and was working to provide an integrated service with these schools.
- (d) Gateway Clubs
Members were advised that previously Gateway Clubs had been funded from Youth Service budgets but that the majority of their members were outside the age range of the Youth Service i.e. over 25. Changes to the funding of adult non-vocational programmes meant that unless learning outcomes could be demonstrated programmes were unlikely to qualify for funding. This was proving very difficult for Gateway Clubs. The social/recreational benefits they offered were acknowledged but it was proving very difficult to find alternative funding streams and some Gateway Clubs had refused to adapt their programmes. Alternative funding sources had been investigated with varying success. Some Gateway Clubs had applied to the County Council's Area Committees for support. Skipton Gateway Club was not fully engaged in the search for alternative funds and as a result had fallen behind some of the other Clubs. . In response to a request from Members Fran Lett agreed to ask Caroline Applebaum (Curriculum Development Officer) to reinstate contact with Skipton Gateway Club and discuss open college opportunities.

- (e) **Prospectuses**
Officers were investigating the possibility of producing a joint area prospectus that would also include reference and contact details of other service providers. This would benefit those people living on or close to area boundaries and the information about other providers would be very useful for those people to whom the course provided by the County Council was not convenient.
- (f) **Locality Provision**
Details of provision on a locality basis would be reported to the November/December round of meetings of the County Council's Area Committees. It was envisaged that thereafter the Area Committees would adopt a monitoring role with regard to performance management in their patch. In the interim all Members would be supplied with a briefing note informing them of the current service arrangements for Adult Learning in their area.
- (g) **Launch Date**
Members were disappointed at the postponement of the original launch date of the Youth Service and agreed that the new date once fixed should be actively promoted.
- (h) **Post Implementation Review**
Members were disappointed at the lack of detail contained in the report accompanying the Agenda papers. Officers agreed to supply the following substantive information in the report to accompany the post implementation review:- a breakdown on an area basis of provision, enrolment, and to include the response of course tutors and students to the new arrangements. This information was to be made available to the Sub-Committee at its meeting to be held in March/April 2007. The format and presentation of this information would be decided by the Task Group.
- (i) **Response Mechanisms**
It was noted that the feedback mechanisms for the Adult Service were well established but that discussions were ongoing in respect of the Youth Service. The role of young people's development workers was fundamental in capturing the voice of young people.
- (j) **Youth Workers**
Members noted that recruitment of Youth Workers especially those who were qualified was still proving difficult in some areas. The County Council had introduced an accreditation scheme that was beginning to reap rewards. The workforce was also being reviewed as the majority of posts were part-time. If posts were made more substantive then recruitment problems could be eased.

The Chairman thanked Officers for their attendance and the information they had provided to the Sub-Committee which had been very helpful. Members were encouraged by the positive aspects reported that day and congratulated Officers for all their hard work to date which had already resulted in considerable savings in management costs being made.

RESOLVED –

1. That the content of the presentation and report be noted.

2. That a Task Group be established with membership to be agreed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Young People's and Economic Development and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committees .Expressions of interest to join the Task Group to be communicated to Scrutiny Support Officers.
3. That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Young People's and Economic Development and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committees meet with appropriate Officers to scope the work of the Task Group.
4. That the Task Group receive input and advice from those Officers responsible for the management of the Youth Work and Adult Learning Services.
5. That the Task Group prepares a report to be considered at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.
6. That all County Councillors be circulated with details of current Adult Learning programmes and Youth Work provision in their areas.
7. That Caroline Applebaum contact the Skipton Gateway Club to discuss alternative sources of funding.

5. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

RESOLVED –

That the contents of the background documentation accompanying the Agenda be noted.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members agreed that the next meeting of the Sub-Committee should coincide with the post implementation review and take place sometime during March/April 2007.

RESOLVED -

That the date of the next meeting of the Sub-Committee to be agreed by the Chairman and circulated to all Members of the Sub-Committee.

JW/HP