

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2007 at County Hall, Northallerton.

**PRESENT:-**

County Councillor Heather Garnett in the Chair.

County Councillors Michelle Andrew, Andrew Backhouse, Tony Hall, David Heather, Michael Heseltine, Martin Smith, (as substitute for County Councillor John Blackburn), Caroline Seymour, Brian Simpson, Jim Snowball and Melva Steckles.

Members other than County Councillors:- Michael Barrie (Parent Governor) and Judith Bromfield (Voluntary Sector).

In attendance: -

Executive Members County Councillors Caroline Patmore and John Watson.

Officers:- Stephanie Bratcher, Jane Wilkinson and Cynthia Welbourn.

Present By Invitation:-

North Yorkshire & York Primary Care Trust - Janet Probert (Director of Operations), Jo Dicks (Head of Children's Services) and Ken Dennis (CAMHS Development Manager).

North Yorkshire Police - Stuart Macklestone (Community Safety Officer).

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of County Councillors John Blackburn, Elizabeth Casling, and Christopher Pearson. Apologies were also received from Helen Suckling (Parent Governor).

One member of the public was also present.

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**COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK**

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**99. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Committee was advised that Robert Fothergill the Non-Conformist Church Representative voting Member of the Committee had tendered his resignation, on account of his work and other voluntary work commitments.

**100. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED –**

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 April 2007, having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**101. PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS**

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

## **102. EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATE**

CONSIDERED –

A letter appended to the agenda papers written by County Councillor John Watson addressed to the Chairman of the Committee that identified current issues affecting his portfolio.

The Committee noted with concern his comments on falling rolls, head teacher recruitment and confederation. In particular the prospect all schools faced of having their future budgets and income reduced as a result of falling rolls. One Member commented that based on current practice large schools would suffer an inequitable loss in view of the increased financial support currently given to small schools so that they remain viable. Members acknowledged that falling rolls was a national as well as local problem but that in view of the scale this problem posed for North Yorkshire suggested that the Committee start to explore immediately possible solutions.

The Corporate Director – Children and Young Peoples Service together with the Executive Member were asked if it would be of assistance to them if the Committee explored in depth options surrounding current local arrangements whereby schools are allocated funding and in particular the effect of changes made to the local funding formula upon small schools.

Cynthia Welbourn, Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service indicated that any consideration of funding redistribution would be sensitive and particularly so at the current time. There was uncertainty about the future of funding for Authorities such as North Yorkshire as a result of a review being undertaken by the DfES which is currently the subject of consultation. A number of the proposals under consideration could well have the effect of distributing funds from North Yorkshire to more urban areas because of the considerable emphasis placed on giving additional weighting to deprivation. North Yorkshire's funding at present reflected the priority given to school funding by the County Council because grant had historically not recognised the costs of sparsity. The additional funding provided by the County Council had hitherto been protected by DfES since its decision to control funds nationally and allocate them through the Direct Schools Grant. It was important therefore that the Committee should take an interest in the consultation. Any changes which reduced income for schools would aggravate the problems created by falling rolls.

In relation to the local effects of falling rolls she did not accept the view that larger schools were more affected than small schools and flagged up the considerable sensitivity involved in examining whether funds could be redistributed from small schools to large ones to provide protection against falling rolls in larger schools. She reminded the Committee that such matters fell within the statutory remit of the Schools Forum. As with the national proposals, any local proposals for redistribution would also have a particularly destabilising effect on schools also contending with falling rolls.

For these reasons she advised the Committee that if they wished research work on this subject to be undertaken by the Directorate it would need to be on a "no commitment" basis and as a hypothetical exercise. Given the pressures on the Directorate at this stage, it would not be possible to progress such work before September.

Some Members of the Committee were not in favour of conducting this theoretical exercise which they considered flew in the face of the County Council's policy to promote confederation. They contended that confederation was in need of

significant capital investment if it was to be successful. The age profile of Head Teachers within the County also meant that there would be an increase in Headship vacancies and a falling number of applications received so confederation applications could be set to rise. Some Members believed the timing was wrong and that it could de-stabilise the current confederation policy. Instead of commencing this work the County Council should instead seek to review its policy of confederation. Small schools played a vital role in many communities and the County Council needed to support them in order to engage with communities at a local level.

Assurances were given by the Executive Member and the Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service that the County Council would continue to promote confederation and emphasised that the County Council did not have a general policy supporting the closure of small schools many of whom had excellent facilities.

Members of the Committee welcomed the opportunity to explore objectively solutions to future funding pressures caused by falling rolls and considered that this work would give support to the Executive.

The Chairman stated that this was clearly an area of concern for many Members and that in view of this the Committee would monitor the situation closely.

The Corporate Director Children and Young People’s Service took on board the comments made by Members and agreed as requested to produce a report in September 2007 exploring on a theoretical basis revisions to the local formula for schools funding in the light of falling rolls.

A Member expressed disappointment at the recent rise in the cost of school music lessons which now according to her calculations were more expensive than private tuition.

The Executive Member stated that the recent rise was in line with inflation and was the same percentage increase as had been applied in previous years. He was surprised to hear that private tuition was cheaper than school music lessons which was a valuable component of a child’s education and agreed to look further into the matter.

The Chairman thanked the Executive Member for his attendance and the information contained in his report and looked forward to receiving further reports in due course.

**RESOLVED –**

- (i) That the information in the report be noted, together with the issues highlighted.
- (ii) That the Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service submit a report to the September meeting of the Committee that explores options on a theoretical basis revisions to the local formula for schools funding in North Yorkshire in the light of falling rolls.

**103. EVALUATING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICE**

**CONSIDERED –**

The Corporate Director - Children and Young People’s Service gave a short presentation and briefing evaluating the performance of the County Councils Children and Young Peoples Service. She informed the Committee that as a result of a recent

local review of the Children and Young People's Plan various revisions to the original document had been made and a copy of the working draft of the revised Children and Young People's Plan was circulated for inspection at the meeting. Hard copies of the working draft were available to Members upon request. She anticipated that the final revised document would be a shorter version of the copy circulated at the meeting.

The Corporate Director – Children and Young Peoples Service explained that the working draft was well progressed and that the final version would be available as from 1 June 2007. She proposed that for the next meeting of the Committee she would prepare a comprehensive report on the review of the Children and Young Peoples Plan and at the same time inform the Committee of the service priorities for the forthcoming year.

The Committee welcomed her suggestion and looked forward to receiving a full update at its next meeting.

The Corporate Director – Children and Young Peoples Service was asked what was being done to encourage those schools in North Yorkshire (40%) who did not take up training materials/initiatives on anti-bullying provided by the County Council.

The Corporate Director stated that as part of her report to the next meeting she would include an analysis of different anti-bullying initiatives provided by the County Council and provide details of the take-up of training materials by schools in North Yorkshire on an area basis.

The Chairman thanked the Corporate Director- Children and Young Peoples Service for her presentation.

**RESOLVED –**

- (i) That the content of the presentation be noted.
- (ii) That a report on the local review of the Children and Young People's Plan incorporating service priorities and anti-bullying initiatives be referred to the next meeting of the Committee.

**104. NORTH YORKSHIRE AND YORK PRIMARY CARE TRUST – HEALTH IMPROVEMENT ISSUES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

**CONSIDERED –**

Janet Probert, Director of Operations at North Yorkshire and York Primary Care Trust supported by Jo Dicks, Head of Children's Services and Ken Dennis, CAMHS Development Manager gave a joint presentation on Children's Services commissioned and provided by the Primary Care Trust. Copies of the presentation slides were tabled at the meeting. The presentation described the effects of the recent re-configuration of the four former Primary Care Trusts in North Yorkshire and the current financial position of North Yorkshire and York Primary Care Trust. The Committee was assured that that despite severe financial difficulties the PCT had not reduced their budget allocation for children's services. Details of the delivery mechanisms whereby services were provided and performance management arrangements were also outlined to the Committee.

It was noted that due to the incompatibility of IT systems in each of the areas of the four former PCTs difficulties were still being experienced surrounding the single assessment process. Whilst IT improvements had been made and a national IT programme was currently underway there was still a lot of work to do in this area.

Due to difficulties surrounding the recruitment of school nurses the PCT had introduced a school nurse development programme that combined the roles of health visitors and school nurses. This presented new opportunities for specialist practitioners and the programme was in the process of being rolled out across the County.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee said that she looked forward to receiving a copy of the PCT's Service Delivery Plan for Children and Young People and regular performance management update reports.

In response to a question from a Member Janet Probert agreed to provide the Committee with details of access to NHS Dentists by children and young people in North Yorkshire.

The Committee was provided with national statistics of numbers of children and young people with mental health problems and the structure for the delivery of these specialist services in North Yorkshire.

It was noted that that demand for CAMHS services was the fastest growing in the NHS and that it was a service priority to establish a countywide strategy for the delivery of CAMHS in North Yorkshire. In the light of this Members requested that they be provided with information and statistics on the numbers of children and young people in North Yorkshire with mental health problems.

A copy of the draft Plan for the Selby Children and Young People's Mental Health Strategy 2007-2010 was tabled at the meeting for Members information. It was noted that each of the 22 localities identified in the Children and Young People's Plan are tasked with the production of a Children and Young People's Mental Health Strategy. Members requested that as and when copies of these locality Mental Health Strategies were available that they be forwarded to the Scrutiny Support Officer for onward distribution to Members.

Members enquired what arrangements were in place for quality control of clinical activity in Child Health Clinics. In response the Committee was informed that in view of comments made that day clinical activity in Child Health Clinics would be investigated and that the PCT was looking to introduce alternative models for Child Health Clinics where mothers would still be offered support but their attendance would be more of a social event.

The Chairman thanked Janet Probert, Jo Dicks and Ken Dennis for a comprehensive presentation and looked forward to working closely with the PCT in the future.

**RESOLVED -**

- (i) That the content of the presentation be noted.
- (ii) That a copy of each of the 22 Locality Children and Young People's Mental Health Strategies be forwarded to the Scrutiny Support Officer as and when available.
- (iii) That the Committee receive regular performance management reports on Children and Young People's services from North Yorkshire and York PCT.
- (iv) That details of children and young people's access to NHS dentists in North Yorkshire be forwarded to all Members of the Committee.

- (v) That statistics for children and young people in North Yorkshire suffering from mental health problems be provided to the Committee.

**105. NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE – YOUTH POLICY AND ENGAGING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**

**CONSIDERED –**

The covering report of the Scrutiny Support Officer giving an overview of the attached North Yorkshire Police Youth Policy Document.

Inspector Stuart Mackleston gave a presentation and briefing on North Yorkshire Police's Youth Strategy and overarching Youth Policy.

The presentation highlighted the drivers for the Strategy and Policy and described the statutory framework within which the Police operated.

The presentation went on to give details of the objectives, content and delivery structures of the Strategy and Policy.

Members were advised that the Youth Strategy and the Overarching Youth Policy were a challenge for North Yorkshire Police as they represented a huge cultural shift in that the traditional approach had been previously 'to catch and convict' as opposed to concentrating on the preventative agenda. Whilst there was still a lot of work and education to be done the Committee was informed that the personal experience of Inspector Mackleston was that the message was starting to filter through to front line staff. There was however still a capacity and resource issue. A business case was being prepared and the views of the recently appointed Chief Constable for North Yorkshire would be instrumental to prioritising the work identified in the Policy and Strategy documents.

The Chairman with the agreement of the Members offered the support of the Committee to assist with the implementation of the work outlined in the presentation and extended an invitation for Inspector Mackleston to attend a future meeting to discuss in detail delivery of the Strategy and Policy once the views of the new Chief Constable were known.

The Chairman thanked Stuart Mackleston for his attendance and for the information he had provided to the Committee, and welcomed any suggestions he had for joint working in the future.

**RESOLVED -**

- (i) That the content of the presentation be noted.

JW/ALJ