

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2007 at County Hall, Northallerton.

PRESENT:-

County Councillor Heather Garnett in the Chair.

County Councillors:- Michelle Andrew, Andrew Backhouse, Elizabeth Casling, Tony Hall, David Heather, Michael Heseltine, Christopher Pearson, Caroline Seymour, Jim Snowball, and Herbert Tindall.

Members other than County Councillors:- Michael Barrie and Mrs Helen Suckling (Parent Governors).

In attendance

Executive Members County Councillors John Fort and John Watson.

County Councillor Eric Broadbent.

North Yorkshire and York PCT – Jo Dicks and Jane Dickinson

Officers:- Stephanie Bratcher, Pippa Manson, Carly Walker and Jane Wilkinson.

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of County Councillors Brian Simpson and Melva Steckles and Judith Bromfield (Voluntary Sector).

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

117. MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2007 were tabled at the meeting.

It was noted that some Members were unhappy at the lack of consultation there had been surrounding selection of the meeting date to determine the call-in relating to the increase in school meal prices. Members repeated concerns they had raised at previous meetings about a lack of consistency in the content of Minutes of the Committee and were disappointed not to have received advance notice of the Minutes of the previous meeting.

It was explained that the arrangements within the County Council's Constitution for processing call-in requests were very explicit and time sensitive. In view of this Committee Services would whenever possible seek to consult with call-in signatories but were unable to promise to do so on every occasion. The Minutes of the Committee were not verbatim, they were a summary of the main points of the debate and a record of the decision making process. On this occasion it had not been possible to attach a copy of the draft minutes to the agenda in the usual way as in order to comply with statutory deadlines the agenda had to be sent out before the meeting took place on 25 July 2007.

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 July 2007, having been tabled at the meeting be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following amendments:-

- That the name of County Councillor Tony Hall be added to list of those present at the meeting
- That the figure of £18,000 in the eighth paragraph referred to the average wage in the Scarborough area and not the County
- That the comments attributable to Michael Barrie referred only to marketing and segregation of pupils and not dining facilities, lack of choice and queuing times.

118. 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.

119. POST IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW ON SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION – TEENAGE PREGNANCY STRATEGY

In introducing this item the Chairman referred Members to the report prepared by the Head of Scrutiny and Corporate Performance outlining the current position following the Committee's Scrutiny Review in 2006 on Sex and Relationship Education.

At the invitation of the Chairman Carly Walker, Teenage Pregnancy Strategic Coordinator together with Jo Dicks and Jane McIntosh North Yorkshire and York PCT gave a joint presentation to the Committee on progress made implementing the recommendations made in the Scrutiny Review. Members were also informed of developments to the National Teenage Pregnancy Strategy. Copies of the presentation slides were tabled at the meeting and a copy placed in the Minute Book. The presentation included the latest teenage pregnancy figures on an area basis and details of "hotspot" wards in North Yorkshire. Copies of the latest National Guidance that had been issued to local authorities and PCT's on effective delivery of teenage pregnancy strategies were available at the meeting. Members were advised that since the Scrutiny Review under 18 teenage pregnancy rates in North Yorkshire had reduced by 26.1% as compared to a national decrease of 11.8%.

Members noted the poor take up by school governors of the specialist training that was available and said that they would be interested to know the reasons for this. The Chairman referred Members to the Committee's Work Programme and the item on School Governors and said that issues around school governor training would be covered as part of that item.

A Member asked why there was no recruitment activity in response to a vacant school nurse post in his local school. He added that schools were being advised by the PCT that there was a block on recruitment to these posts. The Committee was advised that following the reconfiguration of the Primary Care Trust in North Yorkshire in 2006 it was apparent that a different model of delivery was in operation in each of the four former PCT areas. Consequently the model of delivery across the whole of North Yorkshire for sex education in schools needed to be reviewed and workforce planning work completed and agreed. The PCT was considering adopting a model whereby a range of services would be provided on an area basis by a team of professionals including a specialist nurse practitioner as opposed to each school having a dedicated school nurse. The new model would allow services to be distributed equitably across rural and urban areas. The Chairman was assured that schools were being kept fully informed of any changes made to the usual method of delivery.

The Chairman thanked Carly Walker, Jo Dicks and Jane McIntosh for an informative presentation and was pleased to see the progress that had been made. Finally she requested that the Committee be kept apprised of the outcome of the review of the provision of sex education in schools.

RESOLVED –

That the content of the presentation be noted.

120. IN DEPTH SCRUTINY REVIEW – DRAFT FINAL REPORT OF THE MEMBER TASK GROUP ON THE OUTDOOR EDUCATION SERVICE.

CONSIDERED –

The report of The Member Task Group on its review of the Outdoor Education Service.

The Chairman introduced the report which she said complimented the work the Committee was doing on Sports Provision and arose from a request from the Executive Member County Councillor John Watson. She commented that Task Group Members had found the visits to Outdoor Education Centres very enlightening and had witnessed the benefits the children gained both in terms of their education team working and social skills. Task Group Members were very supportive of the Service and were keen for it to continue in the future.

The Head of the Outdoor Education Service expressed her thanks to the Task Group for the work it had done. The report whilst supportive was not uncritical and had identified a number of areas where further work was needed including the need for efficiency savings. She supported the suggestions made about a move toward environmental learning and agreed that the Service needed to broaden its appeal and customer base. She confirmed that she would prepare a formal response to the review that would consider in detail the staffing and resource implications arising from its recommendations.

Members welcomed the report and the suggestions it contained and expressed their support for the Service and recounted details of the positive feedback they had received from children who had attended the Centres and local residents.

County Councillor John Fort reminded the Committee that the provision of an Outdoor Education Service was not statutory. He was concerned at the number of schools within the County who chose to use private providers as opposed to the County's own Service and stated that this needed to be addressed.

Other comments made by Members included the following:-

- That the accommodation at each of the Centres needed to be upgraded if it was to have a wider appeal
- That the Service needed to invest in marketing and explore opportunities with partner organisations and commercial organisations such as the Ramblers Association
- That the Service be made more accessible to those families on the margins of affordability (provision of funding from educational trusts be investigated)
- That the Schools Forum be approached for more funding on the basis that aspects of the Service covered areas in the curriculum not covered by schools including climate change and sustainability
- That further work be done with schools to review entitlement to the Service

- That the report be amended to include an analysis of service costs for each of the four centres including staffing ratios

The Chairman thanked Members for their comments and it was noted that some of them fell outside the scope of the Review and agreed to amend the final report to include the relevant comments that had been made.

Executive Member County Councillor John Watson urged Members of the Committee to give further consideration outside of the meeting to service improvements and confirmed that he would be delighted to hear from them with their suggestions. He believed that the successful use of marketing opportunities would result in increased occupancy levels for the Service.

Pippa Manson stated that money had been set aside in the budget to use a marketing consultant to identify Service objectives and discover its unique selling point.

At the request of the Chairman the Head of Service Pippa Manson agreed to develop an Action Plan based on the findings of the Review to be reported to the Committee in due course.

Finally County Councillor John Fort said that he would welcome any suggestions from Members for the appointment of patrons of the Service. He was pleased to report that he had approached Alan Hinkes a local well known mountaineer who had agreed to act as a patron for the Bewerley Park Centre at Pateley Bridge.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the Member Task Group review report on the Outdoor Education Service be approved and amended to incorporate the comments made by Members at the meeting.
- (ii) That a report on implementation of the Review recommendations be referred to the Committee in due course.

121. WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Corporate Performance giving details of the Committee's Work Programme and requesting Members to confirm amend or add to the list of matters highlighted in Appendix A of the report. Members were asked to comment on the proposed next scrutiny review to be undertaken by the Committee.

The Chairman explained that as a result of recent meetings of the Committee and in response to suggestions made by Members a number of items had been added to the Work Programme. The items were not listed in any particular order and it was noted that some of the matters would be overview reports. It was explained that not all of the topic areas listed would be referred to meetings of the Committee as some would be dealt with at mid-cycle briefing meetings.

Some Members were nevertheless concerned at the number of items on the Work Programme and requested that they be prioritised and graded in order that the Committee did not become daunted and discouraged at the amount of work it had outstanding. Members also considered that unless the Work Programme was prioritised then some items would not receive the time and attention they deserved

as the Committee would be engaged upon endeavouring to complete all of the items listed. The Chairman whilst noting the comments made reminded Members that the Committee had a very wide remit and it was important Members were kept fully informed.

County Councillor Michelle Andrew requested that the Work Programme topic on Anti-Bullying be given priority. She added that she had in the past made several requests for information on the number and identification of schools on an electoral division basis that had not taken up support packages offered by the County Council on anti-bullying measures. She was extremely disappointed not to have received this despite having received assurances that it would be made available to her.

Members noted the inclusion of the item on School Governors and were very keen that this work be given priority. Members of the Committee who were also school governors were concerned at the increased responsibility school governors now had and the consequential adverse affect this was having upon their retention and recruitment. It was reported that increasing numbers of school governors were dissatisfied with their role and the level of support they received from the Local Education Authority. Members suggested that the aims/terms of reference for the work with school governors that was included in the Work Programme was widened to include matters raised at a general session to be arranged on "governor gripes".

The Chairman noted the comments made and said that this was obviously a sensitive area. She proposed that the Committee initially invite James Fairburn Head of the Governor Support Unit at the County Council to attend a future meeting to brief the Committee on the work of his section. She said that governors had a key role to play was keen to ensure that they were kept fully informed and made aware of the work of the Committee which would help support them in their role and assist the Committee with its duties.

County Councillor Tony Hall referred the Committee to the published results of the Health Related Behaviour Survey of primary and secondary pupils in North Yorkshire conducted during Summer 2006 on their lifestyles. He believed that it contained valuable information that should be used to prioritise and inform the Committee's work on the Work Programme topic "School Health Education Unit".

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the information contained in the report be noted together with the issues highlighted.
- (ii) That the Scrutiny Support Officer prioritises the work topic items on the Committee's Work Programme.
- (iii) That James Fairburn Head of Governor Support Unit is invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee.

JW/JD