

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2007 at County Hall, Northallerton.

PRESENT:-

County Councillor Heather Garnett in the Chair.

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

Members other than County Councillors:-

Maggie Allen (Voluntary Sector), Judith Bromfield (Voluntary Sector), Michael Barrie (Parent Governor) and Anne Swift (Primary Teacher Representative)

In attendance

Executive Members County Councillors Caroline Patmore and John Watson.

Officers:- Stephanie Bratcher, Katharine Bruce, Nigel Ogle and Jane Wilkinson.

Apologies for absence were received from Helen Suckling (Parent Governor) and Rosemary Readman (Secondary Teacher Representative).

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

137. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 31 October, 2007 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

138. 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.

139. EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATE

CONSIDERED –

The briefing report of County Councillor Caroline Patmore highlighting issues within her Portfolio she had considered since the Committee last met. The report also identified key issues and priorities for the coming months. In introducing her report County Councillor Caroline Patmore stated that she was happy to expand upon any of the topics referred to or respond to questions from Members.

In addition to the items mentioned in her report she informed the Committee that since it had been written the results of the Annual Performance Assessment by OFSTED for North Yorkshire County Council's Children's Services had been announced. The grade for Staying Safe had improved from a 2 to a 3 which was largely attributable to improved management and performance in Children's Social Care. She congratulated all the Officers concerned especially Cynthia Welbourn the Corporate Director for managing and coordinating the inspection.

In response to Members' questions the following points were made:-

- Langcliffe Primary School - It was confirmed that following the imminent closure of the Primary School in December 2007 the future use of the building would be determined by the Council's Corporate Asset Group.
- Multi-Agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP) - The newly established county wide Partnership Group had met twice to date and was designing an overarching Looked After Children's Strategy in line with the Children and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP). Further quarterly meetings were planned and copies of minutes of meetings of Group were available from the Chairman, Paul Nixon (Assistant Director – Children's Social Care).
- Corporate Parenting Group – The Group was next due to meet on 3 December 2007. At that meeting the creation of a children in care council for North Yorkshire would be discussed. The establishment of a children in care council was a requirement of the Government White Paper "Care Matters, Time for Change". The children in care council would ultimately replace the Corporate Parenting Group. The views of looked after children were being sought on its design whilst receipt of Government advice/guidance on its terms of reference, reporting arrangements and standards of practice was still awaited. It was anticipated that the new children in care council would be fully operational sometime during the course of 2008.

It was noted that the City of York Council had already established a children in care council and the Lead Member suggested that the Committee consider inviting representatives from the City of York to a future meeting to brief Members on its operation and their experiences.

All Members agreed that the new arrangements once finalised should continue to include an opportunity for Members to formally exercise their Corporate Parent responsibilities.

140. 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 Annex A of the report and to comment on the Draft Scrutiny Guidance attached at Annex B of the report.

The Chairman invited the Committee to comment on the Draft Scrutiny Guidance. Members suggested no changes and accepted the draft Guidance as presented to them.

The Chairman then referred to the development of a Children and Young People's Art Strategy. She said that she had been contacted by Paula Taylor, the Officer responsible for producing the Strategy, who was keen to include Members in the process. The Chairman then sought expressions of interest from Members who wanted to contribute to this work. County Councillor David Heather volunteered and the Chairman requested that any other Members interested in participating should contact the Scrutiny Support Officer outside of the meeting. It was noted that a report on the draft Strategy would be referred to the autumn meeting of the Committee.

The Scrutiny Support Officer confirmed that the draft Scrutiny Report on Sports Provision "A Sporting Chance" attached at Annex D of the report was now complete and she sought Members approval. She said that the Review was due to be presented to the Executive at the earliest opportunity together with the Scrutiny Review on Outdoor Education "Learning In The Wet and Mud" which had been amended to incorporate comments made by Members previously. Members noted the revisions made to both review reports and agreed to both being presented to the Executive in their present format.

It was noted that the School Meals Task Group was due to meet later that day to scope the review and it was anticipated that the final report would be considered by the Committee at an additional meeting to be arranged on a date to be agreed in January.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the information contained in the report be noted together with the issues highlighted.
- (ii) That the Committee approve the Draft Scrutiny Guidance attached at Annex A of the report.
- (iii) That the final draft Scrutiny Review Reports on Outdoor Education "Learning In The Wet and Mud" and Sports Provision "A Sporting Chance" are approved and referred to the Executive at the earliest opportunity.
- (iv) That County Councillor David Heather is nominated to assist with the development of a Children and Young People's Arts Strategy in North Yorkshire.
- (v) That a report on the draft Children and Young People's Arts Strategy be referred to the Committee when available.

141. HEALTH RELATED BEHAVIOUR SURVEY

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Corporate Performance informing Members of the background to the 2006 Summary Report Results of the Health Related Behaviour Survey. Members were advised that the item was in response to a request from Members to be informed of the work being undertaken in response to the recommendations arising from the Survey.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Katharine Bruce, (Quality and Improvement Advisor), highlighted key aspects of the summary report and response actions taken to date. She said that the Survey was in effect a base line audit that had been used

to inform the County Council of the effectiveness of the actions contained in the Children and Young People's Plan. The results also enabled the County Council to benchmark its performance against other comparable Local Authorities and to focus on the performance of individual schools.

Members were informed that all of the schools that had taken part in the Survey had received a copy of the summary report together with their individual results. Following distribution of the results, participating schools had been invited to attend a conference held in March, that had focused on delivery of the Healthy Schools Programme.

At the conference key note speakers and a series of work shops had challenged schools on their individual performance. The locality data shown in Annex B of the report had led to Draft Guidance for schools On Risk Taking being drawn up. The locality data meant that specific schools could now be targeted to improve the quality of their provision. She gave an example of a school initially without a Sex and Relationship Education Programme in place that had now agreed to initiate such a programme. She confirmed that the Survey would be repeated in May 2008 which would enable the County Council to track progress. It was anticipated that more schools would participate in the May 2008 Survey as its value was now more widely recognised.

Members thanked Katharine Bruce for the information she had provided to the Committee which clearly demonstrated the response of the County Council to the survey results and the links between the Children and Young Peoples Plan and the Healthy Schools Programme.

Members asked a number of questions through which various issues were clarified and the following points made:-

- It was recognised that issues surrounding capacity had resulted in many schools deciding not to take part in the 2006 Survey. As a result of publicity following publication of the results Schools were now much more aware of the benefits the Survey offered. The County Council had organised an improved campaign to promote take up in May 2008 which would coincide with the distribution in spring of the Risk Taking Guidance currently being drafted.
- Preventative work to increase the numbers of pupils who ate breakfast before attending school was underway. The work was being delivered through the Extended Schools Partnership. It was recognised that closer relationships between partners were needed and the appointment of Integrated Service Managers responsible for the Healthy Schools Programme would ensure that participating schools would raise awareness and help to identify vulnerable pupils.
- Members were advised that officers had met with the Director of Public Health, Doctor Peter Brambleby (North Yorkshire and York PCT) to discuss the survey results and, in particular, joint working around an obesity strategy and smoking cessation.
- Members were informed of various initiatives designed to help children stay safe. Members were assured that these strategies were balanced against the need to teach children how to manage risk.

A Member recommended that those Members of the Committee who were also School Governors should use the list of recommendations produced at the end of the report to ensure that their school was actioning the priorities that had arisen from the Survey.

A Member referred to the lack of communication and coordination between the different agencies and received assurances that this was being addressed.

Members requested that in due course the Committee be provided with a copy of the May 2008 Survey results.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That a report on the Summary Results of the May 2008 Health Related Behaviour Survey be added to the Committee's Work Programme.

143. ANTI BULLYING MEASURES

The Committee received a presentation from Nigel Ogley (Head of Behaviour Support Service) on anti-bullying measures and training programmes designed for use by schools in North Yorkshire. The materials also covered the supervision of young people at vulnerable times during the school day. He stressed that as bullying could have a profound and sometimes tragic affect on a young person's life it was an extremely important area of work. Evidence had shown there was a direct link between bullying and pupil attainment levels and that that an improvement in the quality of teaching was effective in reducing instances of bullying. A copy of a CD of the November 2007 National Conference on Anti-Bullying together with copies of self-evaluation questions designed to measure the effectiveness of anti-bullying initiatives in schools were circulated to all Members of the Committee.

It was noted that as there was no accepted definition of bullying, or collection of data for a national survey, this made it very difficult for the County Council to benchmark its performance in this area. Members were advised that the message being given to schools was that they needed to raise the profile of bullying, encourage a whole school approach and remember to include the less structured times in the school day.

The Chairman thanked Nigel Ogley for an interesting presentation and said that the self-evaluation questions that had been circulated were an extremely useful practical tool for Members to use. She looked forward to receiving a further up-dated progress report in due course.

RESOLVED -

- (i) That the content of the presentation be noted.
- (ii) That a further progress report on Anti-Bullying measures be added to the Work Programme and referred to the Committee in due course.

144. MONITORING PUPIL NUMBERS

The Scrutiny Support Officer reported that due to pressure of work the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service had been unable to prepare a report and had asked that the item be referred to the next meeting.

Members expressed their disappointment at this news but accepted the reasons for the delay.

RESOLVED –

That the report on Monitoring Pupil Numbers be referred to the next meeting of the Committee.

JW/ALJ/PAT