

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2008 at County Hall, Northallerton.

PRESENT:-

County Councillor Caroline Seymour in the Chair.

County Councillors:- Michelle Andrew, Andrew Backhouse, Keith Barnes (substitute for David Heather), John Blackburn (substitute for Michael Heseltine), Eric Broadbent (substitute for Jim Snowball), Elizabeth Casling, Christopher Pearson, Brian Simpson, Melva Steckles, and Herbert Tindall.

Members other than County Councillors:-

Jos Huddleston (Non Conformist Church) and Anne Swift (Primary Teacher Representative).
Michael Barrie (Parent Governor Representative), and Gill Gentle (Voluntary Sector).

In attendance

Executive Member County Councillor Caroline Patmore.

Officers:- Stephanie Bratcher, John Bell, Lynette Dodds, Lesley Ingleson and Jane Wilkinson.

One Member of the public.

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Heather Garnett, Tony Hall, Michael Heseltine, and Jim Snowball and Maggie Allen (Voluntary Sector).

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

152. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman said that this was the last meeting of the Committee Michael Barrie (Parent Governor Representative) was due to attend as his current term of office would expire at the end of March 2008. Members of the Committee recorded their thanks to Michael Barrie for his valuable contribution to the work of the Committee.

153. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 January 2008 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

154. PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS

None received.

155. EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATE

CONSIDERED –

Briefing report prepared by County Councillor Caroline Patmore summarising recent activity on key areas within her portfolio.

In introducing her report County Councillor Caroline Patmore said that she was happy to expand upon any of the topics referred to or respond to questions from Members.

Members referred to the visits to children and young people's residential homes and offices in Scarborough, Harrogate and Skipton and asked for details of the outcomes of those visits. The Executive Member said that recent inspections had revealed that the buildings were no longer fit for purpose. No timescale for carrying out the necessary improvement had been specified. Discussions were on-going to identify resources and a number of options were being explored including moving to new buildings. Due to the variables involved such as obtaining necessary planning consents no definitive answers could be given at this stage. She gave assurances that she would keep the Committee fully informed of developments.

A Member referred to the YMCA project in Richmond and said that the organisers of this excellent project had recently been led to believe that monies awaited from the County Council's second homes budget would no longer be forthcoming. The Executive member replied that final decisions about allocation of second homes monies had yet to be made. The project in Richmond was an example of good practice which she did not want to see lost.

The Chairman was anxious that Members continued to be involved in decisions surrounding the future structure of Corporate Parenting within the County Council. The Executive Member said that she was currently in discussions with Paul Nixon, Assistant Director Children & Young People's Services about how best to achieve this. The Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Group had set a deadline of May 2008 for the arrangements to be finalised. She confirmed that in addition to a Children In Care Council a reporting framework for Members to be kept informed of the educational achievements of looked after young people and other matters was also needed. She gave assurances that County Councillor Heather Garnett would be a party to all such discussions.

A Members requested confirmation of the process whereby community members are initially appointed to the governing bodies of pupil referral units in Harrogate and Scarborough. John Bell advised that whilst the Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) were part of the County Council their Management Committees were independent and as such were governed by specific powers that included appointments. Members noted that generally speaking volunteers to be parent governor representatives on the Management Committee's of PRU's were not forthcoming. If parents could however be persuaded to join their contribution was usually very positive.

In response to a question about the lack of cover by school nurses in special schools, the Executive Member replied that she had made an appointment to discuss the matter with Johnny Wardle (Chairman North Yorkshire and York PCT) and was hopeful of a positive outcome.

RESOLVED –

That the content of the report and the information provided at the meeting be noted.

156. NORTH YORKSHIRE YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM (YOT)

CONSIDERED –

Progress report of the Youth Offending Team Manager on the development of the Youth Offending Team Education, Training and Employment Strategy.

Members were advised that the Strategy had been developed following an inspection of the YOT in 2006. Since the report had been written the post of Practice Manager has been re-advertised and a number of applications received, interviews were scheduled for 6 March 2008.

Members were informed that the minimum target for Education, Training and Employment (ETE) of young offenders was 25 hours per week. In practice this was very difficult to achieve as young offenders presented a real challenge to integrated service delivery. The good news was that many of the individuals were already known to the County Council. The County Council recognised that it needed to build closer links between the Youth Offending Team, Social Care, Health, Police and Education Services and was exploring creative options for service delivery in this area. The development of individual support packages was also under consideration.

Members were advised that following development of the YOT's Action Plan in March 2007 improved data capture had resulted initially in poorer performance levels being recorded. The successful recruitment of a Practice Manager was key to achieving improvement in this area.

Members were pleased to note the progress that had been made and requested the Committee be kept informed of future progress.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the content of the report and the information provided at the meeting be noted.
- (ii) That a further progress report on the Youth Offending Team Education, Training and Employment Strategy be referred to the Committee in March 2009 and added to the Work Programme.

157. YOUNG PEOPLE AND DIVERSITY

The Committee received a presentation from the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service on the diversity of young people in North Yorkshire. Details of work being done with schools to preparing them to manage changes in population so as to respond to young people from different cultural and languages backgrounds were outlined. A copy of the presentation slides are in the Minute Book.

Members were advised that schools were being encouraged to use the Inclusion Quality Mark to audit their performance surrounding inclusiveness and to identify and address any future improvements needed. Two hundred and twenty four schools in North Yorkshire had now received the award which was a big increase on previous years. The County Council was in receipt of Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant monies in the sum of £166,000. The Committee was informed that it had still to be determined whether to adopt a whole school approach or to target individual pupils when spending the limited resources that were available for this work. Officers considered it crucial however that a central policy approach was adopted as opposed

to allowing individual schools to decide how to spend the monies to ensure that the ethnicity data already collected from schools was used effectively and creatively.

Members were informed that traditionally information collected from schools had not been fed back to them. This practice had now changed. All schools now received a progress report each term. The report interpreted their results and gave advice on good practice. The results were also published on the County Council's website which enabled schools to benchmark their performance with others. The data had been used in both the Annual Performance Assessment and JAR inspection. This work had been nationally recognised by the DFES who were now using the model pioneered by the County Council.

A Member requested statistics on the diversity of the County Council's workforce. Members were advised that no information was currently available. It was acknowledged that the County Council did not have a diverse workforce and that in its role as an employer it was lagging behind the work it did with young people. This was a very sensitive area. Questionnaires on staffing had in past resulted in the County Council being accused of positive discrimination.

Members supported the work outlined in the presentation and requested a further report on the allocation of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant monies.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the content of the presentation be noted.
- (ii) That a report on the distribution and effectiveness of Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant monies be referred to the Committee in March 2009 and included in the Work Programme.

158. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT 2

CONSIDERED –

Report of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service outlining the background and timetable for the introduction and development of Local Area Agreements Two (LAA2) in North Yorkshire.

The Committee received a presentation from Lynette Dodds, Principal Performance Officer that highlighted the differences in the content of the old and new Local Area Agreement which had yet to be agreed by Government Office. Details of the timetable leading to the launch of Local Area Agreement 2 in June 2008 were outlined. Members were advised that some local indicators would be dropped from the new local area agreement as LAA2 Indicators had to highlight the priorities identified by the North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership (NYSP) in its Sustainable Community Strategy. To ensure planning and reporting frameworks were in alignment a new Children and Young People's Plan was under development to run from 2008-11. It was the intention that the dropped local indicators would be embedded into the new Children and Young People's Plan which would provide clear strategic links to LAA2 and the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Members were invited to comment on the report and presentation and make suggestions for receiving performance management information in the future.

Members noted with regret that young carers were not referred to in the LAA2 and hoped that the revised Children and Young People Plan would prioritise their needs.

The Chairman requested that the Scrutiny Support Officer continue to liaise with officers within Children and Young People's Service to keep the Committee informed of development of the LAA2.

RESOLVED –

That the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee continue to be kept informed of Local Area Agreement² and revised Children and Young People's Plan 2008-11 developments.

159. WORK PROGRAMME

CONSIDERED –

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Corporate Performance seeking approval of the suggested next in-depth scrutiny review topic and the Committee's future Work Programme (attached at Annex A) of the report. The report also included a summary of the matters discussed at the Triumvirate Group meeting held on 8 February 2008.

The Chairman said that the suggested finish date of May 2008 for completion of the Committee's next scrutiny review into Domestic Violence and Young People was unrealistic. The results of initial enquiries made by the Scrutiny Support Officer had revealed that this would be a much bigger piece of work than had been originally anticipated. The Scrutiny Support Officer said that she had spoken to the Support Officer for Safe & Sustainable Overview & Scrutiny Committee to make him aware of the Committee's work as the proposed Review was likely to be cross-cutting. It was possible that a joint task group would need to be established and offers of support from Members of both scrutiny committees were noted. Members of the Task Group were requested to stay behind following the meeting to discuss their availability for Task Group meetings.

A Member suggested that an item on school catchment areas in North Yorkshire was added to the Work Programme as he believed the existing boundaries were in need of review. He confirmed that he had raised this matter with County Councillor Heather Garnett who had agreed to have a discussion about the process for reviewing school catchment areas at the forthcoming mid-cycle briefing meeting of the Committee to which he had been invited to attend. The Chairman said before making a decision about whether to add the suggested review to the Work Programme it was important to first understand the process.

Members noted the topics discussed at the triumvirate meeting and agreed to receive a report on Integrated Services in March 2009 and a report on Extended Schools in November 2008.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the information contained in the report be noted.
- (ii) That the next scrutiny review to be undertaken by the Committee is Domestic Violence and Young People.
- (iii) That a discussion about the process for reviewing school catchment area boundaries be undertaken at the forthcoming mid-cycle briefing meeting.
- (iv) That reports on Integrated Services and Extended Schools be added as agreed at the meeting to the Committee's future Work Programme.