

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 May 2008 at County Hall, Northallerton.

PRESENT:-

County Councillors:- Michelle Andrew, Andrew Backhouse, Peter Brown (substitute for Christopher Pearson) Elizabeth Casling, Heather Garnett, Tony Hall, David Heather, Michael Heseltine, Caroline Seymour, Brian Simpson, Jim Snowball and Herbert Tindall.

Members other than County Councillors:-

Jos Huddleston (Non Conformist Church).

Anne Swift (Primary Teacher Representative).

Also in attendance

Executive Member County Councillor Caroline Patmore.

County Councillor Tim Swales and Paul Richardson

North Yorkshire and York Primary Care Trust:- Jo Dicks, Megan Pattinson, Jane Richardson and Stephanie Rees.

Officers present: - Stephanie Bratcher, Bernadette Jones, Kathy Peacock, Suzanne Firth and Jane Wilkinson.

One member of the public.

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Christopher Pearson.

**COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK
As the Chair of the Committee was not present for the start of the meeting the Vice
Chair County Councillor Caroline Seymour took the Chair.**

163. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 April 2008 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

164. PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS

There were no questions or statements from members of the public.

165. WORK PROGRAMME

CONSIDERED –

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Corporate Performance asking the Committee to note the information in the report and to confirm, amend or add to the list of matters shown on the Work Programme attached at Annex A.

County Councillor Tony Hall sought an explanation of why the subject “Drug and Alcohol Treatments and Services” had disappeared from the Committee’s work programme. He said that as the former Young Peoples Champion he had campaigned hard to raise the profile of this important subject in various arenas. Despite his best efforts he was sorry to say that he had been unsuccessful and was extremely disappointed not to have made any significant progress. The Committee had deferred consideration of this topic several times and it had now completely disappeared altogether. County Councillor Tony Hall then invited the Committee to reinstate Drug and Alcohol Treatments and Services on the work programme.

The Scrutiny Support Officer said that she had on several occasions attempted to contact Leigh Bell the Manager of the Drug and Alcohol Action Team who had failed to return any of her calls or emails. Members of the Committee agreed with County Councillor Tony Hall that this was an important subject and instructed that it be reinstated on the work programme.

County Councillor Liz Casling requested that all Members of the Committee be kept informed and supplied with relevant documentation on the progress of the scrutiny review ‘A Sporting Chance’.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the information contained in the report be noted and agreed.
- (ii) That the subject ‘Drug and Alcohol Treatments and Services’ be reinstated on the Committee’s work programme.
- (iii) That all Members of the Committee are kept informed of progress and supplied with relevant documents in respect of the scrutiny review ‘A Sporting Chance’.

166. CORPORATE PARENTS

The Committee received an oral presentation from the Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Group – County Councillor Paul Richardson on the Group’s activities over the course of the previous year. The government white paper ‘Care Matters’ had he said introduced many changes the most notable being the creation of a Children In Care Council. He described a meeting of the Group held in February at the Golden Lion in Northallerton at which a group of young people had outlined to elected Members and Officers their thoughts on how a Children In Care Council should operate in North Yorkshire. He was pleased to report that the first meeting of the newly named Young Persons’ Council was due to meet in June 2008. A structure chart for the Young Persons’ Council was circulated at the meeting and a copy placed in the Minute Book. Members noted that the Young Persons’ Council would be able to refer matters direct to the Committee.

County Councillor Paul Richardson said that now the new Young Persons’ Council was about to be established there was no longer a role for the Corporate Parenting Group which had been disbanded. He drew attention to a concern of the Group that consideration of topics such as inspection of children’s homes and educational achievements of looked after children previously within their remit were not appropriate topics for debate by the Young Persons’ Council. He recommended that in addition to the Young Persons’ Council a reporting framework for elected Members was needed in order for them to carry out their responsibilities as corporate parents.

County Councillor Paul Richardson concluded his presentation by thanking all those involved with the Corporate Parenting Group for their support and cooperation.

Members of the Committee agreed that a reporting structure for elected members was needed in addition to the Young Persons' Council. The Chairman agreed to discuss this in further detail at the next mid-cycle briefing meeting and to report back to the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the content of the presentation be noted.
- (ii) That the arrangements to enable elected members to fulfil their corporate parent responsibilities be discussed at the next mid-cycle briefing meeting and a report placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the Committee.

167. PRIMARY CAPITAL STRATEGY

CONSIDERED –

A report introduced by the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service that explained and sought Members approval of the Primary Capital Strategy for North Yorkshire.

Members were informed that whilst there was widespread support for the Strategy as at the date of the meeting only a small number of schools had completed and returned the response sheet as referred to in appendix A of the report. The DCSF guidance stated that the Strategy should be supported by the majority of schools.

Members welcomed the receipt of the capital monies which they said would benefit the whole of the education community in North Yorkshire and not just the 15 schools that had been awarded priority. Members were keen that provision of the monies should not be jeopardised through a lack of response from schools and asked for details of those schools who had failed to respond. Upon receipt of this information Members undertook to contact those schools in their electoral division who had failed to respond. The Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service thanked Members for their offer of support and agreed to provide the information requested together with a brief explanation for the benefit of those elected Members who were not Members of the Committee.

Whilst all Members expressed their support for the Strategy some Members voiced concerns about increased transport costs and journey times arising from amalgamating schools. The problems experienced by some parents whose children were not able to attend their local school were also noted.

RESOLVED –

That the Primary Capital Strategy and the release of capital funding to North Yorkshire schools are approved.

That the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service send via email to all elected members details of those primary schools in North Yorkshire that had failed to return a completed response sheet for the Primary Capital Strategy together with a brief explanation of why it was important that they did so.

At this point County Councillor Heather Garnett took over the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

168. CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND THE PRIORITIES FACING YOUNG PEOPLE AND HEALTH RELATED ISSUES

The Committee received a joint presentation from representatives of North Yorkshire and York Primary Care Trust. The presentation covered the following areas:-

- PCT Priorities for Children and Young People
- Short Breaks Pathfinder
- Aiming High for Disabled Children

A copy of the presentation slides were placed in the Minute Book together with a copy of the current 'Core Offer' document on North Yorkshire and York Health Visiting and School Nursing which was tabled at the meeting. Members were assured that if the PCT at any time revised its capital investment as described in the 'Core Offer' document it would inform the Committee. Members were informed that over time the content of the 'Core Offer' would inevitably change as commissioners identified gaps in services and competition resulted in changes being made to both services and providers. An action plan for delivery of the services outlined in the 'Core Offer' was in hand and visits to all the teams in North Yorkshire were planned to ensure clarity and consistency in delivery.

In response to questions from Members the following points were made by the PCT:-

- acknowledged that there was a gap in service provision with regard to the transition of children with mental health problems to the associated adult services. Work to plug this gap was being prioritised.
- acknowledged that in the past their 'contract terms' were inadequate. Following advice from the Strategic Health Authority documentation was now much clearer about desired outcomes and monitoring arrangements much stricter. The use of penalty clauses had still to be introduced.
- confirmed that currently there was no freeze on staff recruitment and described the procedure used to address staff vacancies. The PCT agreed to provide the Committee with statistical information on the number and type of vacancies approved by the vacancy control panel.

Members were advised that a copy of the North Yorkshire Young Persons Drugs & Alcohol Needs Assessment 2007 and Young People's Specialist Substance Misuse Treatment Plan 2008/09 had been sent to the Scrutiny Support Officer who agreed to provide them with copies.

The Chairman said that it was clear from the presentations that good partnership working between the health community and the County Council was crucial to the welfare of young people in North Yorkshire. Assurances were given by the PCT that it was keen to engage fully with the Committee and was happy to attend future meetings.

RESOLVED –

That the content of the presentations be noted.