

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 May 2008 at County Hall, Northallerton.

PRESENT:-

County Councillor Heather Garnett in the Chair.

County Councillors:- Michelle Andrew, Elizabeth Casling, David Heather, Michael Heseltine, Bill Houlton (as substitute for Caroline Seymour), Christopher Pearson, , Brian Simpson, Jim Snowball, Tim Swales (as substitute for Tony Hall), and Herbert Tindall.

In attendance

Executive Members County Councillors Carl Les and Caroline Patmore.

County Councillor Richard Hall.

Hugh Bellamy – Head of George Pindar Community Sports College.

Officers:- Stephanie Bratcher, Fiona Campbell, Bernadette Jones, Cynthia Welbourn and Jane Wilkinson.

One member of the public.

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Tony Hall, Caroline Seymour and Jim Snowball and Jos Huddleston (Non-Conformist Church).

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

169. PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS

The Head of Committee Services reported that Hugh Bellamy Head of George Pindar Community Sports College had given notice of his intention to speak on the main agenda item.

170. CALL IN OF THE DECISION OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE RELATING TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES PROVISION IN EASTFIELD AND MIDDLE DEEPDALE

County Councillor Brian Simpson declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in the following item as a governor at George Pindar Community Sports College.

CONSIDERED –

Report of the Head of Committee Services outlining the procedure for call-in in respect of the decision made by the Executive Member, in consultation with the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service, recommending that public consultation should take place on Children's Services provision in Eastfield (including Middle Deepdale), Scarborough.

The Chairman read out the reasons given for the call-in before drawing Members attention to the tabled order of meeting as recommended in the County Council's

Scrutiny Protocols. The Chairman then invited the Executive Member and Corporate Director to explain the reasoning that had led to the decision being made.

The Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service said that the matter was extremely complex. In order to assist those Members not familiar with Scarborough Bernadette Jones would give a power point presentation that would explain the local geography and help them to understand the issues with reference to a map and diagram. She confirmed that when the decision was taken both of the Executive Members had seen a map and indeed were very familiar with the area and had discussed what type of map should be included in the consultation document.

The Committee then received a presentation – a copy of the slides were placed in the Minute Book. Members were advised that over the course of the next 15 years Scarborough would see a massive housing development programme implemented. Middle Deepdale being the first phase. The location of these building works were restricted by National Park and AONB boundaries where the availability of planning permissions was restricted. It was anticipated that the majority of the building works would take place in the south of Scarborough on areas of land that fell within the existing catchment areas for Graham and Raincliffe secondary schools. The boundaries of both catchment areas were shown on a map.

The Middle Deepdale development had been under discussion for the past ten years. It would consist of 1,200 houses of which 1,100 would be family homes. The application of a nationally agreed formula had calculated that the development would result in 275 primary pupils and 138 secondary pupils. The numbers were not huge especially secondary when broken down into year groups.

The consultation would be undertaken with the agreement of Scarborough Borough Council and the developer both of whom needed a decision on education provision by the end of the summer term to inform the planning process.

Due to the number of surplus places in Scarborough, 400 secondary and 300 plus primary in Eastfield Section 106 monies could not be accessed. The developer had however agreed to make a contribution of three million pounds towards primary provision which coincided with the receipt by the County Council of Primary Capital Strategy monies. Of the top 15 fifteen primary schools already identified as in need of improvement eight were on the coast including the three on Eastfield. She stressed that at present there was no capital monies available to improve secondary provision. Under the terms of the Building Schools for the Future project these monies would not be available until 2013. There was the possibility of bringing this date forward but this would not be confirmed until sometime next year and there was no guarantee that George Pindar Community Sports College would be prioritised.

The advantages and disadvantages of the three options set out in the consultation document were then outlined to Members.

Members were asked to consider the following points:-

- That parents at Middle Deepdale would have a wide choice of secondary provision: Graham/Raincliffe both in area and George Pindar on preference.
- That with effect from 1 April 2008 George Pindar became a trust school and its own Admissions Authority and had the ability to change its own catchment boundaries
- That there are no capital monies currently available for secondary schools – George Pindar is at present at maximum capacity. The location of a double temporary classroom on the site was proving problematic due to lack of space

- That community cohesion on Eastfield would be aided by the provision of a brand new primary school. Using the old primary school building as a childrens centre would further enhance community cohesion and improve local services.
- Children already use existing routes to travel from Eastfield into central Scarborough to go to school. Scarborough Borough Council has already given assurances that it would further improve public transport routes as part of the development proposals.

On behalf of the signatories to the call-in County Councillor Brian Simpson said that he fully supported the consultation for primary provision however he believed that for reasons of community cohesion it should also include secondary provision. Eastfield was working hard to improve its sense of community and it was essential that Middle Deepdale was not treated as a separate estate. The maps used were out of date and did not show the new link roads and cycle routes that had been created. He felt very strongly that there was no sound reason why secondary provision should not be debated in public. He referred to a telephone conversation he had had with a senior planning officer at Scarborough Borough Council who had assured him that the reason Section 106 monies were not forthcoming was due to the boundaries of the existing catchment areas for Raincliffe and Graham. People in Eastfield he said felt excluded from discussions about the development of the area where they lived.

County Councillor Richard Hall said that in excluding secondary provision from the consultation the County Council had missed an opportunity. Local people had a right to be involved in the development of their future. The consultation should be widened to include the whole of the education community

The Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service responded by saying that the consultation was honest as it sought feedback on only those things that were deliverable to do otherwise would be to mislead the public. There were no circumstances whereby the realignment of catchment area boundaries would trigger the release of Section 106 monies. At present 1 in 6 children who attended George Pindar were from outside the area the school therefore had the option of admitting more local children. Re-drawing the boundary lines would not in itself increase the capacity of the school.

The Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service said it was impossible to consult the parents of Middle Deepdale as the development had yet to be built. The current proposals were honest and protected parental choice. She fully agreed that in the future further discussions would need to take place about secondary provision as further housing was built. It was very possible that the discussions could include the relocation of George Pindar. She concluded by saying that there was a bright future ahead for children’s education in Scarborough.

The Executive Member added that all the points made by both the Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service and the Assistant Corporate Director had been fully considered by herself and County Councillor John Watson before reaching their decision.

The Chairman then invited Hugh Bellamy the Head of George Pindar Community Sports College to address the Committee. He said that as Raincliffe was currently undersubscribed it was the obvious choice as he fully recognised the County Council was responsible for the efficient use of resources. The argument put forward for not being a position to consult Middle Deepdale parents about secondary provision was also true of primary provision. The Middle Deepdale development when completed would be visible from the George Pindar site. The distance from Middle Deepdale to central Scarborough was 7 miles and he urged Members to consider the carbon

footprint and transport costs this would necessitate. These monies would he said be better invested in education. Scarborough already suffered from terrible road congestion problems and this would further increase the problem. He added his support to the arguments put forward about the decision diminishing community cohesion. Different school uniforms would he said lead to segregation and behavioural problems on an evening. In contrast allowing local children to attend George Pindar would promote community cohesion.

The Chairman then invited questions and comments. In the discussion that followed the following points were made:-

- That a proper review of secondary provision was dependant upon the receipt of Building Schools for the Future funds. Consequently a consultation on secondary provision would best be carried out at that time.
- That the catchment boundaries were set some time ago based on green fields and were no longer relevant and should be reviewed.
- That full consultation would better inform the planning process
- That the current proposals ran the danger of dividing Eastfield
- That parental choice would not be affected by changing the catchment boundaries
- That recent CPA results revealed that the County Council's performance on consultation had been identified as an area in need of improvement
- That secondary provision in Scarborough was not just about Eastfield – if consultation went ahead in respect of George Pindar it would ignore the needs of other secondary schools in Scarborough
- That the use of public transport was more environmentally friendly than parents driving their children to school
- The application by Eastfield for town status had no bearing on the discussion

The Chairman then invited the Corporate Director and Executive Member, followed by the signatories to sum up their respective arguments.

In conclusion the Chairman thanked everyone for their contribution that had helped to further understanding of what was a complex matter.

Members of the Committee were then invited to vote on whether they wished to refer the decision.

RESOLVED –

That the Committee does not wish to refer back the decision relating to Children's Services provision in Eastfield and Middle Deepdale to the decision maker or to refer the matter to full Council.