

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2008 at County Hall, Northallerton.

PRESENT:-

County Councillor Heather Garnett in the Chair.

County Councillors:- Michelle Andrew, Andrew Backhouse, Elizabeth Casling, David Heather, Michael Heseltine, Chris Pearson, Caroline Seymour, Brian Simpson, Martin Smith, Jim Snowball, Melva Steckles and Tim Swales.

Members Other Than County Councillors:-

Jos Huddleston (Non-Conformist Church)

Suzanne Morris and Dr P Stowell (Parent Governor Representatives)

Judith Bromfield (Voluntary Sector)

Anne Swift (Primary Teacher Representative)

In attendance

Executive Members:- County Councillors Caroline Patmore and John Watson and County Councillor Tony Hall.

Officers:- Leigh Bell, Julie Blaisdale, Stephanie Bratcher, Katharine Bruce, Louise Dunn, Cynthia Welbourn and Jane Wilkinson.

One member of the public.

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

177. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 June 2008 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

178. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None received.

179. EXECUTIVE MEMBER UP-DATE

CONSIDERED –

The tabled written statement of County Councillor John Watson circulated at the meeting. A copy of which was placed in the Minute Book.

The tabled report summarised recent activity on the following six areas within the executive Member's portfolio:-

- Children's Centres.
- Home To School Transport.

- School Meal Prices.
- National Challenge.
- White Paper “Raising Expectation – Enabling The System To Deliver”.
- Primary Capital Plan and Building Schools For the Future.

County Councillor Watson introduced his report by highlighting key points within the six areas of activity described in his report. He also outlined the background and reasoning behind some the decisions taken and the approach adopted by the County Council and said that he was happy to expand upon any of the topics further or to respond to questions from Members.

In response to a question about the introduction of “siblings’ discount” aimed at helping families to meet increased school meal prices the Executive Member and Corporate Director – Children’s and Young Peoples Services both gave assurances to the Committee that they would give further consideration to expanding the present criteria so as to make the discount eligible to families with children at different schools. This was on the proviso however that in so doing the system did not become overly bureaucratic to administer or costly in terms of time. The Executive Member said that the final decision about whether “siblings’ discount” would become a permanent feature had yet to be taken.

With regard to the Primary Capital Plan and Building Schools For the Future Members were advised that the amount of funds available were insufficient to replicate the existing pattern of school provision in North Yorkshire. It was also fully recognised that some schools within the County faced operational constraints due to the limitations of the site they occupied. In such cases work to explore alternative sites could and had in some instances been undertaken by the County Council. Generally speaking however unless a third party could be found who was willing to contribute to the project the capital monies available to the County Council would not be sufficient to cover both site acquisition and building costs.

RESOLVED –

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

180. YOUNG PEOPLE’S SUBSTANCE MISUSE – SUPPORT AND SERVICE PROVISION IN NORTH YORKSHIRE AND DRUG AND ALCOHOL ISSUES – REPORT AND BRIEFING FROM THE DRUG AND ALCOHOL ACTION TEAM

CONSIDERED –

Report of the Young People’s Substance Misuse Joint Commissioning Manager on young people’s substance misuse in North Yorkshire and the support and service provision available to them.

The Committee received a joint presentation from Leigh Bell, Katharine Bruce and Louise Dunn, that outlined the current position and future challenges facing the service. Members were informed that the service did not include smoking as it is not illegal. Members noted that the greatest area of work for the service surrounded alcohol abuse as opposed to drugs.

Katharine Bruce described the work being done in schools in North Yorkshire as part of the Children & Young People’s Plan under “being healthy” one of the five key outcomes. She described the support available to schools and informed Members that consideration was currently being given to implementing National Indicators which were in the course of being drafted and were expected to be circulated sometime in October 2008. The Committee noted that 66% of schools in North

Yorkshire had now achieved “healthy status” and supported the appointment of a risky behaviour post in January.

Members noted that this was a period of change for the Service both at a local and national level and were advised that the Service within North Yorkshire had the capacity to support the forthcoming changes.

Members were surprised to learn that previously no statistical data on the Service had been collected nor was there available any detailed budget information. Members were advised that under the new arrangements now in place performance monitoring information figures were now being collected and would be available for scrutiny later in the year. Generally speaking there were thought to be approximately 120 young people aged between 11 and 18 receiving treatment at any one time in North Yorkshire. The Service had an annual budget of £450K of which £100K was ring fenced to the Youth Offending Team. It was anticipated that in a years time a comprehensive report on the full spectrum of need in North Yorkshire would be available.

In response to a request from Members officers agreed to circulate a list of those schools in North Yorkshire that had now achieved healthy school status.

RESOLVED –

That the information contained in the report and provided at the meeting be noted.

181. 'NEW LOOK, NO SHUSH' LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE STRATEGY

The Committee received a presentation from Julie Blaisdale, Head of the Library Service - Adult and Community Services Directorate that alerted Members to the content of the draft Strategy and outlined the priorities for the Library and Information Service in North Yorkshire in the medium term, especially with regard to the needs of children and young people. She explained the four strategic aims of the Strategy called 'New Look, No Shush' and informed Members that its purpose was to modernise existing services so as to make them more accessible and relevant. Details of various schemes and initiatives designed to increase reading and learning were outlined at the meeting. A copy of the presentation slides were placed in the Minute Book.

Members noted that each of the each of the County Council's seven local area committees would receive a similar presentation with particular emphasis on local Service developments.

As part of the consultation Julie Blaisdale invited elected Members to submit their own personal response to the Strategy. In their role as community leaders she also sought their support to encourage the submission of responses from members of the public, the voluntary sector and other groups and organisation within their respective electoral divisions as part of the consultation, as she was keen to receive feedback from a wide range of stakeholders. The consultation was she said available on the internet and would continue into 2009. The final version of the Strategy that would take into account all feedback received would be made available in the New Year. Members were advised that an executive summary of the Strategy was due to be published shortly.

Members congratulated Julie Blaisdale on her excellent presentation which they said had been both interesting and informative. Members commented that they were impressed with the range of initiatives described and suggested that greater press coverage was needed so as to raise public awareness. Members suggested that

details of forthcoming area committee meetings at which the presentation was to given were prominently displayed in local libraries with an invitation for members of the public to attend and participate in their local area committee meeting.

Members also suggested that greater collaboration was needed between the Library Service and schools so as to encourage children to visit their local library. It was suggested that one way of achieving this would be for books relevant to coursework to be made available in libraries and for this service to be actively promoted by schools. School visits to libraries would also give young people an opportunity to see for themselves what activities were available. This was thought to be of particular benefit to children living in rural villages in the county. Julie Blaisdale acknowledged that this was an area where service improvements could be made. Making time available for a library visit within the school timetable however was not easy but she agreed to give the matter further thought.

RESOLVED –

That the content of the New Look, No Shush Strategy for the Library and Information Service in North Yorkshire be noted.

That in their capacity as community leaders elected members agreed to encourage input and comment on the Strategy within their respective local communities.

That the comments made by Members during the meeting be taken into account when compiling the final Strategy.

182. 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). The report also sought Members approval to establish a joint task group to look at 'school to school transport'.

The Chairman said that she had met with representatives of North Yorkshire and York Primary Care Trust the previous week to discuss how the Committee could develop arrangements to scrutinise its activities with regard to the Local Area Agreement. At that meeting she had agreed that the Committee would focus on individual healthcare pathways such as obesity and drug and alcohol misuse rather than specific services. A report outlining the healthcare pathways to be scrutinised would be referred to the next meeting. Members noted that further meetings with other County Council partners were planned.

With regard to the establishment of the joint school transport task group, the Chairman advised that the Transport and Telecommunications Overview and Scrutiny Committee had now appointed four members to the task group two of whom County Councillors Chris Pearson and Michael Hesletine were also Members of the Young People's Overview & Scrutiny Committee so would be able to give valuable cross cutting input. It was the intention that the Young People's Overview & Scrutiny Committee would lead the task group and that the group would meet in parallel with the officer transport group. It was stressed that the review would not be a full scale scrutiny review. The Chairman then sought nominations from the Committee to participate in the joint school transport task group.

A Member referred to the paragraph on Young Carers and said that previously she had been given assurances that a review of the funding available to young carers

was being undertaken in the County due to concerns about it being inequitable in different localities. In view of this she was concerned that it was now reported that there was nothing of substance happening and that the matter be deferred in the Committee's Work Programme. Members agreed that a progress report be initially referred to the mid cycle briefing and further action determined if necessary.

The Chairman referred to a previous meeting at which the Executive Member had told the Committee that the North Yorkshire Young People's Council had now held its first meeting. In view of this and the Committee's previously expressed concerns about the monitoring arrangements for Children Looked After the Chairman was anxious to receive a progress report.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the information contained in the report be noted and approved.
- (b) That a joint school transport task group is established and that County Councillors Michelle Andrew, Tim Swales, Heather Garnett and Brian Simpson together with Suzanne Morris be appointed to that Task Group to represent the Young People's Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- (c) That a report on healthcare pathways to be scrutinised by the Committee in conjunction with North Yorkshire and York Primary Care Trust be referred to the next meeting.
- (d) That a progress report on the review of funding for young carers and operation of the Young Person's Council and monitoring arrangements for Children Looked After be considered at the next mid cycle briefing meeting of the Committee.

JW/ALJ