

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2008 at County Hall, Northallerton.

PRESENT:-

County Councillor Heather Garnett in the Chair.

County Councillors:- Michelle Andrew, Keith Barnes (substitute for David Heather), Elizabeth Casling, Gordon Charlton (substitute for Brian Simpson), Michael Heseltine, Chris Pearson, Caroline Seymour, Martin Smith, Jim Snowball, Melva Steckles and Tim Swales.

Members Other Than County Councillors:-

Rev A Judd (Church of England).
Jos Huddleston (Non-Conformist Church).
Suzanne Morris (Parent Governor Representative).
Anne Swift (Primary Teacher Representative).
Gill Gentle (Voluntary Sector).

Officers:- Gary Cochrane, Catherine Hodson, Michael Lord, Andrew Terry and Cynthia Welbourn (Children and Young People's Service) Stephanie Bratcher (Scrutiny Support Officer and Jane Wilkinson (Committee Administrator).

One member of the public.

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of County Councillors Andrew Backhouse, David Heather and Briam Simpson and Dr P Stowell (Parent Governor) and Maggie Allen (Voluntary Sector).

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

The Chairman welcomed Rev Judd to his first meeting of the Committee.

183. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 July 2008 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

184. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None received.

185. REVIEW OF PROVISION FOR SEN AND BEHAVIOUR

CONSIDERED –

Report of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service outlining progress achieved in taking forward Phase 1 of the implementation plan for delivering

the agreed outcomes of the review of provision for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Behaviour Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD).

Members were advised that at the November meetings with Head teachers and SENCOs it was hoped that September 2009 provision timetable dates could be circulated. Finding a suitable site for the Pupil Referral Unit in Selby was proving difficult and the County Council was currently in discussion with the district council about a possible site near the leisure centre. A potential site for the location of the second BESD school had been identified but disclosure of further detail was not permitted at this stage as it was commercially confidential. In the meantime work was ongoing to identify further sites in case acquisition of the preferred site was not successful. Members noted that the overall position of the review was positive and that the big challenge was to secure completion of building works in line with the timetable.

The Committee noted that training for all affected staff was mandatory, however those individuals delivering specific support would receive specialist training.

In response to requests from Members, Andrew Terry agreed to provide a briefing note for Selby elected members on the various sites considered for the Pupil Referral Unit. A Member sought clarification of the process whereby children were awarded a statement of special educational needs. She was concerned that schools received no direct funding for those children just under the threshold qualification but who still required additional specialist support. Andrew Terry agreed to speak with her outside of the meeting to discuss the qualification process whereby children in North Yorkshire are assessed and awarded statements of special educational needs and the associated available funding.

Committee Members agreed that implementation of the Review was a large and complex undertaking and were keen to be kept informed of future progress and requested further regular update reports in due course. Members said they would find it helpful if the update reports contained a glossary of useful terms and acronyms.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That progress achieved to date in implementing Phase 1 of the Review of SEN/BSED provision is noted.
- (ii) That further regular progress reports on the review of Provision for Special Education Needs (SEN) and Behaviour Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) be referred to the Committee in due course.

186. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL CONTACT POINT SYSTEM AND IMPLCATIONS FOR NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service updating Members on progress achieved implementing the national contact point system since the Committee’s initial briefing in June 2007. Members received a power point presentation and copies of the slides were placed in the Minute Book.

In response to Members questions it was stressed that the system was passive and not an active intelligence system. Contact Point enabled professionals to identify the services involved with a child or young person, it was not designed to identify children whose details had not been entered at the appropriate time. There were other systems currently in operation that protected children who dropped out of Contact Point either as a result of casualness or deliberate action. The Contact Point system

was intended as a tool to aid integrated working that that enabled practitioners to work across professional boundaries in order to share information and coordinate support to meet a child or young person's needs. The Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service said that provided the alternative systems referred to earlier in the meeting worked properly there should be less need for Contact Point in the future. If services were fully integrated practitioners would already be aware of the involvement of others and therefore reliance upon Contact Point less critical. In North Yorkshire the introduction of the Common Assessment Framework was available to all professionals and she was confident that services would in due course become fully integrated.

Members said that whilst they welcomed any initiative designed to safeguard children they nevertheless still had grave concerns surrounding data security, accuracy and the governance arrangements for the system.

The Chairman acknowledged Members concerns expressed at the meeting and said that the Committee would continue to monitor the situation closely and be kept fully informed of future developments.

RESOLVED –

That a further progress report on implementation of the national contact point system be referred to the Committee in due course.

187. SCRUTINY REVIEW – YOUNG PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC ABUSE

The draft report of the Scrutiny Task Group was presented to the Committee by County Councillor Caroline Seymour.

In her introduction County Councillor Caroline Seymour stressed that the report was still in 'draft' form and invited comments from Members which she said would be added along with the findings of some research that remained outstanding. The Task Group was due to meeting later that day to finalise the recommendations. The final report was due to be presented to the Executive in early December.

Members congratulated the Task Group on what was an interesting but disturbing review and supported their initial findings. Members agreed that following the meeting of the Task Group later that day the final report was to be referred direct to the Executive.

RESOLVED –

That the final report on the in-depth scrutiny review of "Young People Affected by Domestic Violence is referred to the Executive.

188. WORK PROGRAMME

CONSIDERED –

A 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.

Members noted that County Councillor Tim Swales was due to report to the next mid-cycle briefing meeting following his attendance at a meeting of the North Yorkshire Youth Council.

The Scrutiny Support Officer said that she was aware that some Members of Committee were unable to attend the reserve meeting scheduled for 31 October 2008 as it was also school half term week. In view of this she proposed that the meeting on 31 October 2008 be cancelled and that the meeting on 28 November be extended to incorporate any extra agenda items. She suggested that the meeting on 28 November start at 10.00 am, break for lunch at 12.30pm and resume at 1.15pm finishing by no later than 2.30pm. Members supported this suggestion.

A Member referred to the consultation launched by the Secretary of State For Children Schools and Families in July 2008 on the role of schools promoting the well being of their pupils. It was intended that the contribution made by schools would be assessed through specific indicators and by surveying parents and pupils. The Member suggested that this would be an interesting area of work for the Committee that would contrast with work monitoring pupil achievement.

The Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service welcomed the Committee’s involvement which she said was timely as it would coincide with reforms to the Schools Inspection Framework that were designed to reflect the changes outlined in the consultation. She said it would be helpful if the Committee could look at whether the Children and Young Peoples Plan supported pupil well-being. Members agreed to add to add this work to the Committee’s Work Programme.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the information contained in the report be noted and approved.
- (ii) That the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 31 October 2008 is cancelled and that the meeting on 28 November 2008 be extended.
- (iii) That promotion by schools of pupil well-being is added to the Committee’s Work Programme.

JW/JD/ALJ