

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2009 at County Hall, Northallerton.

PRESENT:-

County Councillor Heather Garnett in the Chair.

County Councillors:- Michelle Andrew, David Heather, Michael Hesletine, Stuart Parsons (substitute for Caroline Seymour), Chris Pearson, Martin Smith, Jim Snowball, Melva Steckles and Tim Swales.

Members Other Than County Councillors:-

Rev A Judd (Church of England).

Jos Huddlestone (Non-Conformist Church).

Suzanne Morris and Patricia Stowell (Parent Governor Representatives).

Ann Swift (Primary Teacher Representative).

Judith Bromfield (Voluntary Sector Representative).

Officers:- Stephanie Bratcher (Scrutiny Support), Bridget Watt, Katharine Bruce and Claire Lowery (Children and Young People's Service) and Jane Wilkinson (Legal and Democratic Services).

One member of the public.

Executive Member: County Councillor Caroline Patmore.

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Elizabeth Casling, Caroline Seymour and Brian Simpson.

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

201. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Meetings held on 28 November 2008 and 9 December 2008 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

202. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None received.

203. EVERY CHILD MATTERS (ECM) IN NORTH YORKSHIRE HEALTH RELATED BEHAVIOUR QUESTIONNAIRE (HRBQ) SURVEY 2008

CONSIDERED –

Report of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service on the 2008 Every Child Matters (ECM) Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire (HRBQ) survey within North Yorkshire. Members were reminded that the Committee had requested the results of the 2008 survey after having received a similar report following the 2006 survey.

The report was jointly presented by Katharine Bruce and Bridget Watt who described how the data was collected, the findings and how the results informed future work that included work on the 2010 HRBQ.

It was emphasised that the survey results were pupil's perceptions that to them represented reality and for that reason were taken seriously. Examples of particular pieces of work done as a result of the 2006 survey and the impact of this work as demonstrated by the 2008 survey results were described to Members. Emerging issues and trends arising from the 2008 survey results were also highlighted. Members noted the new questions in the 2008 HRBQ and that work to correlate the 2006 and 2008 results had only been done where the same question had been asked in both surveys.

Members were informed that the summary results report attached to the agenda was based on the whole of the County. By way of comparison the 2008 survey results had been broken down into six individual areas (based on the geographical areas in the Children & Young People's Plan 2008/11) copies of which were available at the meeting.

In response to Members questions the following clarifications were provided:-

- That a further HRBQ survey would be conducted in 2010 as it was recognised that the high quality data it produced was essential when planning services.
- That further information on the County Council's Arts Strategy would be forwarded to Members.
- That further consideration would be given to asking questions in the 2010 HRBQ survey on young people's relationship with their parents in order to assess their self-esteem which was regarded as integral to their level of achievement.

Members all agreed that the survey results provided very interesting reading and were keen that they be disseminated to as wide an audience as possible. Members were informed that the 2008 survey results were about to be sent out to schools. In 2006 the results had been sent to school heads. Members agreed that it would be beneficial if a copy of the 2008 survey results was sent to both school heads and Chairs of Governors with a request in the accompanying letter that the information be made available to parents.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee thanked Katharine Bruce and Bridget Watt for their excellent presentation.

RESOLVED –

- (i) That the information in the report and provided at the meeting be noted.
- (ii) That the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommends that 2008 HRBQ results is sent to school heads and chairs of governors with a request that the information be disseminated to parents.

204. COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT

CONSIDERED –

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Corporate Performance advising Members of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment inspection regime. The report also described work being undertaken by partners within North Yorkshire in preparation. The Councillors Guide to Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) was attached at Annex A to the report.

The Committee received a power-point presentation from Claire Lowery highlighting how the new arrangements differed from the previous Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). The timetable for implementation of CAA was outlined and Members were informed of the web-site details where they could view an example assessment of a fictional authority. A copy of the slides was placed in the Minute Book.

Members were informed that CAA will hold local public services collectively to account for their impact on better outcomes for local communities. The County Council and its partners would be expected to work together to tackle the challenges facing their communities.

Members noted that within North Yorkshire work to implement the new assessment process was most advanced in the district of Hambleton where a pilot self-assessment had already been completed.

Some Members were sceptical about the value of the new assessment process especially as their experience was that the approach adopted by the partners in North Yorkshire was uncoordinated. The example quoted was of partners hosting separate public consultation meetings. Some Members said that the new assessment process was predicated upon the public being interested in the work of the organisations subject to CAA a view they did not share.

Other Members of the Committee voiced their support for CAA and said that they supported the introduction of an Area Assessment. The Area Assessment would lead to an expansion of the scrutiny role as local evidence collected could be used to inform scrutiny reviews and enable the performance of partners to be assessed.

It was acknowledged that further work was needed to promote CAA which it was hoped would ultimately lead to improved services and fewer inspections as a result of the evidence collected.

Members suggested that the report and presentation should be referred to each of the seven Local Strategic Partnerships in North Yorkshire so that they could examine their relationship with overview and scrutiny committees.

The Chairman said that the information provided at the meeting would be used to inform the Committee's Work Programme.

RESOLVED –

That the information within the report and the Councillors Guide to CAA attached as Annex A of the report be noted.

205. 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 (Annex A of the report).

The following documents were tabled at the meeting (copy placed in Minute Book):-

- Children & Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2008/11 – Improvement Priorities.
- Revised Work Programme – now based upon outcomes in CYPP 08/11.
- Briefing note on the Trig meeting held on 15 January 2009.
- Letter from Ofsted dated 17 December 2008 to Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service on the 2008 Annual Performance Assessment of Services For Children and Young People in North Yorkshire County Council.

Members of the Committee were aware of concerns surrounding school building projects and requested that the topic be added to the Work Programme to enable the Committee to scrutinise the situation.

A Member referred to recent media coverage highlighting concerns in other local authority areas surrounding safeguarding and asked if the Committee was satisfied with the current arrangements in North Yorkshire. The Chairman replied that at the previous meeting, the Committee had considered a report from the Manager of the North Yorkshire Local Safeguarding Board (NYLSCB). At that meeting the Committee had resolved to receive at its mid cycle briefing meetings quarterly progress reports on the work of the NYLSCB. Any concerns raised at those meetings would be referred to the next meeting of the Committee. This was now included in the Committee's Work Programme. Consequently the Chairman was satisfied that the Committee had done all it could to ensure that children and young people in North Yorkshire were adequately protected.

The Committee noted that as a result of the 'Baby P' case safeguarding was now a top priority for the County Council. The Executive Member said that she was currently engaged in negotiations to secure the 2009/10 budget allocation for Children & Young People's Service. The final allocation would be determined at the meeting of the County Council on 18 February 2009. The Committee agreed that it was crucial that current budget levels were maintained in order not to put at risk children's lives in North Yorkshire.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the information in the report and tabled at the meeting be noted.
- (b) That an item on school building projects be added to the forward Work Programme of the Committee.
- (c) That the Executive and County Council is recommended to ensure that when determining the County Council's priorities and Revenue Budget 2009/10 resources continue to be allocated to Children and Young People's Service, without reduction in existing budgets.

JW/ALJ