

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2009 at County Hall, Northallerton.

PRESENT:-

County Councillor Heather Garnett in the Chair.

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

Members Other Than County Councillors:-

Suzanne Morris and Patricia Stowell (Parent Governors)

Officers:- Stephanie Bratcher (Scrutiny Support), Jane Wilkinson (Legal and Democratic Services) Alan Critchlow, Diane McConnell, Wendy Jamison and Cynthia Welbourn (Children and Young People's Service) and Ann McMorris (North Yorkshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board).

One member of the public.

Executive Member: County Councillor Caroline Patmore.

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Andrew Backhouse, Liz Casling, Brian Simpson, and Melva Steckles and Rev A Judd (Church of England), Jos Huddleston (Non-Conformist Church) and Maggie Allen (Voluntary Sector).

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

208. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Meetings held on 23 January 2009 and 3 March 2009 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

209. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None received.

210. EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATE

In response to questions from Members County Councillor Caroline Patmore updated the Committee on progress on the following areas of her portfolio:-

- SEN & BESD Review - Members requested a further update report later in the year. The report to provide details of the monitoring arrangements and allocation of funding.
- Restructure of the 4Youth Service.
- Looked After Children 'Staying Put' – Members requested statistics on the number of children accessing this support.
- Restorative Justice Pilot in Scarborough – Following evaluation of the pilot the Police and Integrated Youth Service representatives to be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee.
- Youth Councils and the Young People's Council – Members agreed that greater integration/communication links were needed.

RESOLVED –

That the information provided at the meeting be noted and the Work Programme amended to take account of the comments made at the meeting.

211. REDUCING THE INCIDENCE OF BULLYING AND DISCRIMINATION

CONSIDERED –

Report of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service highlighting progress with key strategies aimed at reducing the incidence of bullying and discrimination in North Yorkshire schools.

The Committee received a power-point presentation on the Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) used by schools to evaluate their performance with anti-bullying measures. A copy of the presentation slides was placed in the Minute Book.

Members requested a copy of the Children and Young People's Service: Anti-bullying Strategic Map and Key Priorities referred to in the presentation.

Members supported the initiatives outlined at the meeting and in respect of IQM asked to be informed of those schools in their individual electoral divisions that had undergone the programme. The subject of training for mid-day supervisors was once again raised and Members again repeated requests for more to be done in this area.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the information contained in the report and presentation be noted.
- (b) That Members of the Committee be supplied with a copy of the Anti-Bullying Strategic Map and Key Priorities.

212. CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

CONSIDERED –

Report of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service reviewing the arrangements for carrying out the County Council's functions and responsibilities for identifying and maintaining contact with children missing or at risk of going missing from education.

The report was presented by Alan Critchlow who gave examples of when and why children were most likely to go missing from education. He described in detail the five areas of work identified in National guidance as being necessary to achieve a robust system. He said that good progress had been in North Yorkshire and that work was continuing with Contact Point to extend the reach of tracking systems to cover all children.

RESOLVED –

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

213. WORK PROGRAMME

CONSIDERED –

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Corporate Performance presenting the Work Programme and inviting comment.

It was noted that the Children's Trust Board had at their last meeting received a report prepared by David Walker on Young People Affected by Domestic Abuse. At that meeting the work of the Task Group had been recognised and a further report was due to be considered at its May meeting. Task Group Members asked to receive a copy of both reports when available together with notes from a consultation meeting held on 13 March 2009 on a draft York and North Yorkshire Domestic Abuse Strategy.

In view of concerns surrounding the level of resources allocated to children's services by NHS North Yorkshire and York, Members agreed to submit a series of pertinent public questions to future Board meetings of the Primary Care Trust. The Scrutiny Support Officer agreed to circulate details of future Board meetings and to liaise with her counterpart on the Scrutiny of Health Committee regarding engagement with health partners. Members were keen that partner engagement in safeguarding should remain a high priority for the Committee

The Chairman agreed to meet with the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service following the meeting to discuss partner involvement in safeguarding and for the matter to be added to the Work Programme.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the content of the report be noted.
- (b) That the Scrutiny Support Officer circulate to all Members of the Young People Affected by Domestic Abuse Task Group a copy of the report considered by the Children's Trust Board together with notes from a consultation meeting held on 13 March 2009 on a draft York and North Yorkshire Domestic Abuse Strategy.
- (c) That 'partner involvement' in safeguarding' be added to the Work Programme.

214. SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN NORTH YORKSHIRE

CONSIDERED –

Report of Ann McMorris, Manager of the North Yorkshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board informing the Committee of progress against the LSCB Business Plan and significant events since the previous report.

Members were informed that the recruitment of an Independent Chair had commenced. The closing date for applications was 25 March 2009 with interviews scheduled for 27 April 2009.

Since the report had been written the Lord Laming report had been published. The Laming report contained 58 recommendations which had been accepted by the Secretary of State. Guidance on how to implement the Laming recommendations was currently awaited from the Department For Children Schools and Families.

Members agreed that safeguarding children and young people in North Yorkshire should remain a high priority for the Committee and requested regular update reports in the future.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the content of the report be noted.
- (b) That the Committee continues to receive regular update reports on safeguarding at meetings of the full committee and mid-cycle briefing meetings.

215. INTEGRATED CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION

CONSIDERED –

Report of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service describing implementation of the Integrated Children's System (ICS) also known as *Protocol* in North Yorkshire.

The report summarised the problems encountered when the system became operational, the remedial steps taken and the recovery plan now in place.

The Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service said that she was sympathetic to the principal behind ICS. The system was designed to standardise casework in children's social care and would provide increased consistency and ensure that staff were properly supervised. She said that the system required staff to adopt a new way of working. The software failings described in the report had meant that implementation of ICS had proved extremely problematic. A recovery plan was now in place and she agreed to keep the Committee informed of progress and to report the outcome of the proposals referred to in paragraph 6.7 of the report.

Members noted the current position and were reassured that the transfer of resources in order to give greater emphasis to safeguarding had not impacted adversely on other service areas.

In response to questions from Members regarding the level of financial response from other partner organisations the Committee was advised that greater investment in children's services was needed as well as decisions surrounding commissioning of relevant services.

The Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service suggested that the Committee might find it helpful to receive a report summarising the findings of Lord Laming’s recently published report. Members supported this suggestion.

The Chairman said that the comments of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service in respect of partner organisations would inform the Committee’s Work Programme and future engagement with partners. To this end she would hold further discussions with the Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service following the meeting.

Finally Members were informed that the use of a spreadsheet designed by the County Council was currently being used in parallel with ICS to ensure no data was lost. Assurances were given that the two systems would continue to run in parallel until all concerns surrounding IT difficulties with ICS had been overcome.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the content of the report be noted.
- (b) That a summary of Lord Laming’s report be added to the Committee’s Work Programme.

JW/ALJ