

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2009 at County Hall, Northallerton.

PRESENT:-

County Councillor Paul Richardson in the Chair.

County Councillors:- John Batt, John Blackie, David Blades, Janet Jefferson, Chris Pearson, Caroline Seymour, Melva Steckles and Geoff Webber.

Members Other Than County Councillors:-

Rev Judd (Church of England), Jos Huddleston (Non-Conformist Church), Dr Patricia Stowell (Parent Governor), Bjorn Risi and Judith Bromfield (Voluntary Sector).

In attendance:-

Executive Members:- County Councillors Jim Clarke and Caroline Patmore.

NHS North Yorkshire & York:- Jo Johnson, Gareth Whiles and Katy Needham.

Officers:- Cynthia Welbourn, Carolyn Bird, Lynn Turner, Amanda Crow and Debbie Bell (Children and Young People's Service), Stephanie Bratcher (Scrutiny Support) and Jane Wilkinson (Legal and Democratic Services).

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Andrew Backhouse and Joe Plant and Suzanne Morris (Parent Governor) and Anne Swift (Primary Teacher Representative).

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

1. CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed new Members to the first meeting of the Committee following the County Council elections in June 2009.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 May 2009 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Committee was advised that no notice had been received of any public questions or statements to be made at the meeting.

4. SAFEGUARDING UPDATE SUMMARY BRIEFING ON LORD LAMINGS REPORT "THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN ENGLAND"

The Committee received an oral presentation from the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service on safeguarding with particular emphasis on the findings of Lord Lamings second report and delivery of his recommendations as set out in the new National Action Plan For Protection of Children in England.

Members were advised that the National Action Plan was a clear and concise document. Whilst approximately half of the recommendations arising from the National Action Plan required further clarification it was clear that overall, the recommendations would have a significant impact on front line workers.

A briefing note was tabled at the meeting (copy placed in Minute Book) that described in detail those recommendations in the National Action Plan that did not require further clarification. The recommendations in the briefing note had a mixture of both short and medium term delivery targets (2/3 years) and were divided into the following four themes:-

- Governance and Accountability.
- Performance and Inspections Framework.
- Social Work Workforce.
- Professional Practice/Provision.

The Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service described the action needed and why it was necessary in order to implement each of the recommendations referred to on the tabled briefing note. In particular she drew Members attention to the new external inspection regime.

Members were advised that invariably the recommendations under the heading ‘Social Work Workforce’ would lead to requests for more resources and staff shortages. The good news was that the deadlines for implementing ICS had been relaxed as had the requirement to use the prescribed software both of which had proved to be very problematic both nationally and in North Yorkshire.

The Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service concluded by saying that the recommendation surrounding compulsory initial assessments for all referrals was not current national practice and would be extremely difficult to achieve. She hoped that the recommendation would be revisited as she did not believe that it added value to the process.

The Chairman thanked the Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service for a comprehensive overview of safeguarding a subject he felt sure the Committee would return to in the future.

RESOLVED –

That the information provided at the meeting be noted.

5. BE HEALTHY: IMPROVING THE HEALTH & WELL BEING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (BIRTH TO PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE)

The Committee received a joint presentation from representatives of the Children and Young People’s Service and NHS North Yorkshire and York.

The presentation described the Early Support available to the parents and families of children aged 0-5 years in North Yorkshire with complex and/or multiple health, social or educational needs.

The benefits of partnership working were outlined and practical examples of integrated working were described at the meeting. A copy of the presentation slides was attached to the agenda.

The Committee was advised that the referral system used was able to detect children whose families migrated into North Yorkshire. A lot of the work done promoted the benefits of good nutrition and healthy eating some of which was tailored to meet the

needs individual service users. The use of social networking sites was currently being explored as a means of communicating with teenage mums.

In response to questions from Members, the Committee was advised that it was estimated that there were between 80-100 children in North Yorkshire currently in receipt of Early Support. One area identified as in need of further work was the transition arrangements for children receiving early support about to commence school.

The Chairman was keen to meet with service users especially those living in rural areas to hear their views on access to services. He proposed that a small group of Members meet with service users on an informal basis. This proposal was supported by Members of the Committee.

The Chairman thanked the presenters for their attendance and an interesting presentation.

RESOLVED –

That the presentation and information provided at the meeting be noted.

That the Scrutiny Support Officer arrange for Members of the Committee to visit a children's centre and/or meet with service users to listen to their views and to discuss their personal experience of the services and support available to them.

That transition arrangements for pre-school children in receipt of early support be added to the Committee's Work Programme.

6. WORK PROGRAMME

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Corporate Performance presenting the work programme and inviting comment.

The Scrutiny Support Officer introduced the report and welcomed suggestions from Members for future agenda items.

The Chairman said that he had approached County Councillor Melva Steckles and asked her to be the Chairman of the Corporate Parent Standing Group. County Councillor Steckles thanked the Chairman for his offer and agreed to respond after having spoken to the Scrutiny Support Officer to find out more about the role. The Chairman said that the Scrutiny Support Officer would contact Members of the Committee outside of the meeting to seek expressions of interest regarding membership of the Corporate Parent Standing Group and/or willing to carry out Regulation 33 inspections of residential children's homes.

The Scrutiny Support Officer then sought suggestions from Members for the topic of the next scrutiny review to be undertaken by the Committee. County Councillor Caroline Seymour was keen for the Committee to undertake a review of young carers whilst County Councillor Melva Steckles suggested the education attainment or transition arrangements for Looked After Children and Young People. No final decision was taken by the Committee.

RESOLVED –

(a) That the content of the report be noted.

- (b) That the Work Programme be updated and suggestions made earlier in the meeting incorporated.
- (c) That the Scrutiny Support Officer seeks expressions of interest from Members to join the Corporate Parenting Standing Group and/or willing to undertake Regulation 33 Inspections of residential children's homes.

JW/ALJ