

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2010 at County Hall, Northallerton.

PRESENT:-

County Councillor Paul Richardson in the Chair.

County Councillors:- Andrew Backhouse, Keith Barnes, John Batt, John Blackie, David Blades, Elizabeth Casling, Janet Jefferson, Melva Steckles, Tim Swales and Geoff Webber (substitute for Caroline Seymour).

Members Other Than County Councillors:-

Rev Adrian Judd (Church of England), Jos Huddleston (Non-Conformist Church). Chris Head (Secondary Teacher Representative), Anne Swift (Primary Teacher Representative) and Judith Bromfield (Voluntary Sector).

In attendance:-

Executive Member:- County Councillor Caroline Patmore.

Officers:- Catherine Hodson, Paul Carswell, John Rose and Andrew Terry (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 Joe Plant and Caroline Seymour and Suzanne Morris and Patricia Stowell (Parent Governors), and Bjorn Risi (Voluntary Sector).

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

30. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2010 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the addition of the name of County Councillor Janet Jefferson being added to list of those giving their apologies.

31. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

32. POSITIVE ACTIVITIES AGENDA FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

CONSIDERED

The covering report of the Scrutiny Support Officer providing background information on the Positive activities and active engagement agendas for young people in North Yorkshire.

The Committee received a presentation from Paul Carswell (Senior Youth Officer) and John Rose (Support Manager) on the contribution of the 4Youth Service to the delivery of Positive Activities. Positive Activities were described as covering all activities undertaken by children and young people, that are both educational and leisure based and which do not form part of the school curriculum.

The presentation commenced with an outline of the policy background to Positive Activities before focusing on the activities provided by the County Council. Images of actual events organised by the 4Youth Service were shown and the benefits they provided to local communities and young people were described. The Committee watched a short promotional video on the 'Culture Shock' event held the previous year which was due this year to take place in Northallerton over the weekend commencing 3 July 2010. The presentation concluded with information on the ways the 4Youth Service engaged with young people and the future challenges facing the 4Youth Service. The Committee noted that securing funding in the future would become increasingly harder as the ring fencing on some grants was about to be removed.

Members congratulated the 4Youth Service on the quality and breadth of the work they provided which given the available resources was very impressive.

County Councillor Tim Swales said in his capacity as young people's champion he had attended many events and activities organised by the 4Youth Service in the past and he urged other elected Members to show their support by attending future activities. In his opinion he said that the Culture Shock event worked best when the venue was located centrally in town. He asked if dates and details of future events could be circulated to elected Members who if they chose to attend could witness for themselves the benefits of the activities provided.

In response to a request from Members it was agreed that performance details in respect of national indicator 110 would be circulated after the meeting. Officers agreed to investigate whether details of local positive activity events organised by the 4Youth Service were published on the internet so that Members could provide to parish councils in their division.

The Chairman thanked Paul Carswell and John Rose for their attendance and the information they had provided.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

33. IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (SEN) AND BEHAVIOUR, EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DIFFICULTIES (BESD) REVIEW

CONSIDERED -

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Corporate Performance.

The Committee was advised that the report should be treated as a source of reference by Members as it outlined the background to and progress on the Phase 1 implementation plan for delivering the agreed outcomes on the review of provision for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Behaviour Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD). As the last update on the Review the Committee had received was in September 2008 the Chairman had requested a progress report.

The Committee received an oral presentation from Andrew Terry. He described the purpose of the SEN/BESD review, progress achieved to date, identified the current position and outlined the next steps. He said that prior to the review provision had

varied across the county. As a result of the review, SEN/BESD provision in North Yorkshire was now uniform and more local. Children with special needs now progressed through the service through a flexible extended network of specialist outreach support. Only a few services continued to be provided centrally.

The Committee was advised that only children with high needs in North Yorkshire had statements of which there were approximately 1800. The Schools Forum was currently reviewing the options available to manage the statement budget.

In response to questions from Members, Andrew Terry advised that it was still possible for schools to access informal advice on how to deal with behavioural problems without going through the referral process. He acknowledged that an application from an enhanced school for academy status would be disruptive to implementation of the review.

RESOLVED –

That the information provided at the meeting be noted.

34. SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE INTO EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

CONSIDERED –

The Chairman of the Supporting Young People Into Education, Employment and Training Task Group, County Councillor Liz Casling presented the draft final report of the Task Group to the Committee for approval.

County Councillor Liz Casling said that following on from her attendance at a meeting of the NEET Strategy Group earlier in the week she intended to make a number of amendments to the draft report in front of Members that day. The alterations would she said include additional recommendations. The additional recommendations would reflect her concerns about the amount and quality of the data presented at the NEET Strategy Group meeting she had attended. She stressed that this was no criticism of the Officers involved but suggested that a strategic review of the operation of that Group might be beneficial. She was also keen to raise the profile of youth justice issues where the performance of the County Council was below that of neighbouring authorities. She intended to provide a local context to the statistics presented in the draft report. She also proposed that the Committee resolve that day to receive a progress report on implementation of the recommendations made by the Task Group.

Members of the Committee were in full support of the suggestions made by County Councillor Casling. County Councillor Casling concluded by thanking all those involved in the scrutiny review and in particular the Scrutiny Support Officer, Stephanie Bratcher. The Chairman asked that if following the meeting Members had any further suggestions/comments that they forward them to the Scrutiny Support Officer for inclusion in the final report.

County Councillor Blackie noted the significant variations between the populations in the east and west of the county of young people not engaged in education, employment or training and asked what were the reasons for this. County Councillor Casling agreed to investigate and come back to him after the meeting.

RESOLVED –

That the final draft report and recommendations of the Supporting People Into Education, Employment and Training is approved and presented to the Executive in due course.

35. EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATE

County Councillor Caroline Patmore gave an oral report on recent developments within her portfolio.

She advised the Committee of the establishment and remit of the newly constituted member group that would support the Council's Corporate Parenting role.

She described a recent visit to the Wetherby Young Offenders Institute. During the visit she had spoken to staff and young offenders from North Yorkshire who had convinced her of the importance of the need for supported lodgings. A half-way house would she said provide young offenders with accommodation in close proximity to the Young Offenders Institute where they would receive on-going support from staff and be provided with a work placement/apprenticeship. She urged Members to lobby North Yorkshire MP's and the Government to gain their support of supported lodgings. The Committee noted that the Young Offenders Institute provided a range of educational and recreational activities which Members of the Committee had been invited to see for themselves later in the year.

RESOLVED –

That the information provided at the meeting be noted.

36. WORK PROGRAMME

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Corporate Performance presenting the Committee's programme of work at future meetings. Members' comments were invited.

The report was introduced by the Scrutiny Support Officer who summarised the topics discussed at the mid-cycle briefing meeting.

The Chairman said that he welcomed any suggestions from Members for the Committee's next in-depth scrutiny project.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the content of the report, business scheduled for future meetings and information provided at the meeting be noted.

JW/JD/ALJ