

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2010 at County Hall.

PRESENT:-

County Councillor Keith Barnes in the Chair.

County Councillors:- Andrew Backhouse, David Blades, David Jeffels (substitute for John Batt), Liz Casling, Heather Moorhouse, Patrick Mulligan, Paul Richardson and Cliff Trotter.

In attendance:-

Executive Members:- County Councillors Caroline Patmore and John Watson.

Officers:- Cynthia Welbourn and Anton Hodge (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 John Batt, Janet Jefferson Joe Plant, Caroline Seymour and Tim Swales) and Suzanne Morris and Patricia Stowell (Parent Governors), Jos Huddleston (Non-Conformist Church), Rev Judd (Church of England) and Chris Head (Secondary Teacher Representative).

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

52. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November, 2010 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

53. MATTERS ARISING

Minute No 46 - Executive Member Update

The Chairman referred to the questions he had put to Executive Members at the previous meeting and asked if in future, written responses could be supplied in addition to the oral responses given at the meeting. County Councillors John Watson and Caroline Patmore replied that they were happy to do so and said it would be helpful if the written questions could be submitted at least two days in advance of the date of the meeting. It was agreed that this practice would be extended to all Members of the Committee.

Minute No 47 - Home To School & College Transport

The Chairman sought clarification of the qualifying criteria for transport to be applied to pupils attending faith schools. The Corporate Director – Children & Young People's Service said that it was impossible to give a single definition that could be applied across the entire county because of local circumstances. She assured Members that the final report prepared at the end of the consultation period would define in detail eligibility criteria. She emphasised that the proposals if introduced would only affect those pupils who were due to start at a faith school in September

2012 and that entitlement to transport was based on the reasons for sending a child to a particular school and not the school itself. Finally she confirmed that any school wanting to change its admission criteria/catchment area was not able to do so without first undertaking a formal consultation.

RESOLVED –

That all written questions submitted at least two days in advance of meeting dates by Members of the Children & Young People's Overview & Scrutiny Committee to the Executive Members for Children and Young People's Service shall receive a written response.

54. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

55. BUDGET ISSUES, SAVINGS TRANSFORMATION

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service presenting the current position of the Children and Young Peoples Service – Savings and Transformation Strategy..

The Committee noted that initially in February 2010 the savings target was £11,524K for the period 2010/13. As a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review this figure had over the course of the last few months been increased several times and currently stood at £19,477K over the longer period of 2010/15. The final figure however would not be known until 13 December 2011 when the Government was expected to announce the amount of final settlement figures. It was quite possible that following the announcement on 13 December the figure of £19,477K could increase. Also as the profile of the savings was front-loaded it was expected that nearly three quarters would have to be found during the first two years (2011/12, 2012/13).

The report was introduced by Cynthia Welbourn, Corporate Director – Children & Young People's Service who said CYPs expenditure was dictated by two large demand led budgets, Home To School Transport and Children's Social Care both of which were statutory functions. Together they were expected to contribute about one third of the savings required. This meant that the non-statutory areas of service expenditure where there was an element of discretion would have to bear the brunt of the savings, namely two thirds would have to be found from one third of service expenditure. Whilst priority would be given to frontline services the scale of the savings required meant that they could not be protected completely. She anticipated the loss of approximately 350 jobs some of which would be via compulsory redundancy. The percentage of reductions in non-statutory areas of services averaged 35% comprised of 8% frontline and 25% management/support services. She assured Members that every effort was being made to review practice, delivery and the levels of service provided to ensure cost effectiveness.

The Committee was advised that all redundancy costs would be met by the £5M PIP budget the Executive had allocated. A specially appointed Board would consider all redundancy applications.

Members were invited to comment on progress made against the savings targets set out in the 18 savings projects described in the report.

A Member asked if it was possible to measure the impact of the cuts to ensure the right balance had been achieved and their impact on front-line services.

Cynthia Welbourn replied that some areas of work were no longer required as a result of policy changes and the discontinuance of Contact Point, Comprehensive Area Assessment etc. Consequently the Directorate's priorities would be reviewed alongside a thorough review of working practices. There would be greater integration between services and back office functions would be centralised. The Children & Young People's Plan would be revised and a single management team would implement service changes through a combination of delivery, extending or increasing charges as necessary, rationalising the property portfolio and improvements in procurement. By adopting this approach the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Services was confident of achieving the desired outcome although she did highlight the following potential risks namely, a lack of attention to detail, a reduced speed of work and communication difficulties.

When asked if Council performance would be affected and if services would be reduced to minimum requirements she replied that as the profile of the savings was front-loaded this would provide an opportunity in 2013/14 to reflect upon the action taken and to make any necessary adjustments. She assured Members that discretionary services such as outdoor education would be retained albeit in a reduced form.

The Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service responded to a number of questions that sought clarification and further detail on the 18 savings projects referred to in the report.

Members expressed support for the approach outlined in the report and at the meeting which in the circumstances they said was the only sensible option.

The Chairman thanked Cynthia Welbourn and the Executive Members for her attendance and the information they had provided and commended the CYPS senior management team on what continues to be a very challenging and difficult task. The Chairman requested that the Committee be kept informed of progress and notified of any changes to the priorities described at the meeting.

RESOLVED –

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

JW/ALJ