

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2011 at 10.30 am at County Hall, Northallerton.

PRESENT:- Cllr Keith Barnes in the Chair

County Councillors:- Andrew Backhouse Vice Chair , Executive Members Arthur Barker and Carl Les, John Batt, David Blades, Jim Clark, David Jeffels, Janet Jefferson Group Spokesperson, Patrick Mulligan, Joe Plant, Tim Swales, Cliff Trotter, Melva Steckles (as participating observer) Geoffrey Webber (substitute for Caroline Seymour), Graham Richards Church of England representative, Jos Huddleston Non-Conformist Church representative, Suzanne Morris Parent Governor, Chris Head Secondary Teacher representative, Bjorn Risi and Judith Bromfield Voluntary Sector representatives.

Officers:- Cynthia Welbourn Corporate Director CYPS, Anton Hodge Assistant Director CYPS, Andrew Terry Assistant Director CYPS, Martin Kelly General Manager CYPS, Stephanie Bratcher (Scrutiny Support). James Parkes and Caroline O'Neill (observing)

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Caroline Seymour

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming two young people who were attending the Committee Meeting as part of North Yorkshire County Council 2011 'Take Over Day'.

The Chairman also drew the Committee's attention to the tabled document – a letter from OFSTED regarding the annual assessment of children's services for which North Yorkshire County Council has strategic or operational responsibilities, either alone or in partnership with others.

85. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2011 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

86. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

87. EXECUTIVE MEMBERS ORAL BRIEFING

The oral report of Executive Members County Councillor Arthur Barker and Carl Les.

In advance of the meeting the Chairman had submitted four questions to the Executive Members and Corporate Directorate – Children & Young Peoples Service.

- (i) Q: The Chairman requested an update and position statement on the Children and Young Peoples Savings & Transformation Strategy and asked about the expectations for percentage cuts to frontline services.

A: The first quarter indicates the service is performing ahead of target to deliver their part in the County Council savings. It is expected that Quarter 2 will continue this trend.

The majority of savings (84.1%) have been made from back office reconfigurations with 15.9% from frontline services. The restructure of the Integrated Youth Service has been undertaken and there is nothing further envisaged currently. Members were reassured that the Transformation Strategy continues to be mindful of frontline services and that some of the changes or further improvements being pursued had positive features that would result in better practices and improved services.

- (ii) Q: The Chairman asked that the main points and concerns arising from NYCC's response to the Government's School Funding Consultation are shared with the Committee.

A: The Consultation on School Funding Reform: Proposals for a Fairer System forms the second stage of a two-part consultation about reforms to school funding and the introduction of a fair funding formula.

In summarising the basis of North Yorkshire's response the Executive Member tabled a briefing note which outlined the principle points and concerns raised.

The Executive Member went on to explain that a major concern refers to the future funding of the DSG and that individual school budgets cannot be judged in isolation to the current financial situation. Keen representation has been made to point out that the County Council has already added £14m to school budgets over and above the old formula.

In addition the Executive Member went on to explain that were any changes made to the funding of Local Authorities, the consultation proposals do not fully take account of some particular circumstances in North Yorkshire, namely:

- the large rural nature of the county and its schools
- the needs of areas with large numbers of military personnel
- additional needs arising from coastal deprivation

- (iii) Q: Although these services are outside of NYCC is there any knowledge on possible cuts to college courses?

A: Executive Member confirmed these services are outside of NYCC but explained that the County Council does have a shared responsibility for young people and that education needs to be as broad and for as long as it needs to be. He referred to the tabled briefing note which explained the position for Askham Bryham College, Craven College, Harrogate College and Selby College which confirmed course numbers are holding up. The position

in relation to Yorkshire Coast College is not known but Officers will try for an update later.

Reference was made to the number of young people NEET (not in education, employment or training) and the Executive Member explained that North Yorkshire is better placed than other parts of the Country. However, although the percentage of young people NEET remains low compared to other parts of the region it is now over 5% and all young people known to the County Council are receiving good support services.

Members asked whether any links are being developed to meet training needs with the York Potash project which has the potential to create significant jobs in the area. Officers advised the Committee that colleagues in Scarborough are in direct negotiations with those concerned.

The Chairman then asked if there had been any changes in the number of schools who had converted to Academy status since the last briefing and were advised that the number of Academies in North Yorkshire stands at 8 (7 secondary and 1 primary) with two other schools in the formal process. These 10 schools represent 2.6% of schools in the County. Officers reported that North Yorkshire remains lower than the national average at 6%.

(iv) Q: The Chairman asked what North's Yorkshire's performance is on adoption, in particular the percentage of children and young people adopted within 12 months.

A: The Executive Member advised the Committee that Performance data for the timeliness of adoptions covering a three-year period from 2008 to 2010 showed that 87% of adoptions in North Yorkshire were completed within the required 12 month timescale. This is well above the national average of 74% and places North Yorkshire in 18th position amongst the 152 local authority adoption services. Of note is North Yorkshire's position during 2010/11 with 94% of adoptions completed within 12 months.

The Chairman thanked the Executive Members and the Corporate Director for their detailed responses.

RESOLVED –

That the information provided at the meeting be noted.

88. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2011-2014

CONSIDERED –

The covering report of the Scrutiny Team Leader and the summary document of the North Yorkshire's Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2011-2014.

The purpose of the report and briefing was to introduce the summary document of the Children & Young Peoples Plan 2011-2014; to provide an opportunity for Members to raise any questions and to ask them to consider how this Plan might influence the development of the Young Peoples Overview & Scrutiny Committee 2012 - Work Programme.

The Corporate Director briefly introduced the Children and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP) and explained that there is still a requirement for local authorities, under section 17 of the Children Act 2004, to prepare and publish a plan setting out how the

local authority will discharge its statutory duty to cooperate with partners to promote the well-being of children and young people in the local area.

Members were advised that the purpose of the CYPP 2011-14 is to tackle inequalities; promote the well-being of all children and young people; provide additional focus for groups who are more vulnerable to poor outcomes and set out the principles of differentiated support based upon need.

The Corporate Director advised the committee that the Plan was developed in conjunction with the Children's Trust Partners who have endorsed the proposed strategic priorities and focus areas for impact and that the CYPP is aligned to the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the Savings and Transformation Strategy for CYPS and the 'One Council' objectives.

Members asked what involvement there had been with young people and their families and were informed by the Corporate Director that in developing the CYPP, which had taken over five months, there had been extensive consultation with children and young people and their parents and partner agencies through the Children's Trust. The background preparation included a rigorous needs assessment and draws on performance data, on the views of over 1000 parents and over 15,000 school age children and young people through the Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire 2010.

The Chairman raised the matter of there being no performance targets included within the Plan and received reassurances from the Corporate Director that this piece of work is in hand and will be completed shortly.

The Chairman thanked the Corporate Director for her succinct briefing and for providing Members of the Committee with the opportunity to ask questions.

RESOLVED –

Members of the Committee noted the content of the Children and Young Peoples Plan 2011-14 but would await the inclusion of performance targets to monitor progress against the Principal Objectives.

Members also noted that the Children and Young Peoples Plan whilst providing the basis for allocating resources it is a key strategy for the County Council and aligned to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

At this point in the proceedings the Chairman adjourned the Committee Meeting to allow Members of the Committee to attend the Remembrance Day Service.

Meeting resumed at 11:20am

89. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE RESTRUCTURE AND IMPLICATIONS OF MUNRO REPORT

CONSIDERED –

The report and presentation of the Children's Social Care Restructure and Transformation.

Martin Kelly County Residential Manager advised Members that the restructure and transformation of Children's Social Care has three main points. Firstly, it will create a service that puts more emphasis on earlier interventions and on work with the whole family. Secondly, it will improve outcomes for children and families and hopefully reduce the numbers of children and young people who enter care. Thirdly, with the financial challenges facing the County Council the restructure will create a service that costs less to run than at present.

Members concerns focussed around cuts to frontline services and the protection and safeguarding of children and young people but were given firm assurances that in relation to Child Protection matters Children's Social Care will continue to safeguard and protect vulnerable children and young people and that this remains a very high priority area for the service.

The briefing provided Members with further detail on the proposed new service and the type of improvements to be achieved. The main aim being to make the service and resources more accessible to children and families when they are needed, provide early intervention support to families in crisis and at the same time look to reduce the number of young people who become looked after.

Members were also advised that the proposed new service aims to put Social Workers more in the frontline with administrative help from Case Support Workers so they can spend more time in the field and less time in the office.

Members of the Committee welcomed the increase in frontline services and were pleased to note the early and intensive interventions being developed to provide children, young people and their families with support and services when they needed them.

RESOLVED –

Members of the Committee noted the information provided at the meeting and agreed to the Chairman's suggestion that a Progress Report on the implementation of the restructure of Children's Social Care is brought back to the Committee in approximately nine to twelve months time.

90. DRAFT STRATEGY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY

CONSIDERED –

The covering report of the Scrutiny Team Leader, the report of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service and the Draft Strategy for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

The Chairman reminded Members of the Committee that at the end of their previous meeting they had been advised that the Draft SEND Strategy was about to begin a widespread consultation and that it had been proposed that the Draft Strategy together with feedback from the on-going consultations were brought to the next committee meeting.

Andrew Terry Assistant Director CYPS advised Members that 12 out of a total of 15 consultation events on the draft SEND Strategy had taken place. That there had been two Consultation events held in each area – morning and evening - to provide every opportunity for young people, their parents and/or carers to attend; that the consultation period ends mid December and the revised draft Strategy will go before full Council in February.

The briefing covered some of the feedback received so far from parents, carers and young people. In general terms these related to how the County Council communicates with families and the language used. For example what is meant by local offer or what are 'Short Breaks'. There were concerns about transition to Adult Services which in itself is a difficult and confusing journey and some dissatisfaction with Mainstream Schools being able and willing to be inclusive.

Members were assured that all comments will be taken into account when the draft Strategy is revised at the end of the consultation period.

The Chairman thanked Andrew Terry for the briefing and for sharing some of the comments and feedback from the consultation events which highlighted some of the concerns raised by the families who are affected by the proposed developments and changes. He also thanked Andrew and his colleagues for the commitment and hard work put into the consultation which he witnessed together Cllr Bill Hoult recently.

RESOLVED –

Members of the Committee noted the information provided at the meeting and will await the revised draft Strategy for Special Educational Needs and Disability when it is presented at full Council in February.

91. WORK PROGRAMME

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Scrutiny Team Leader.

The Chairman briefly went through the Mid Cycle Briefing agenda items and invited members of the committee to ask questions or comment on the areas covered.

In relation to the Work Programme the Chairman suggested that it would be timely to review the Work Programme for 2012 especially as the 2011 -2014 Children and Young Peoples Plan has now been published and asked Members of the Committee how they would like to be involved.

The proposal put forward was for the Chairman together with the Group Spokespersons to undertake this piece of work and bring their findings back to Committee.

In-depth Scrutiny Review – Youth Participation

The Chairman reported that Members of the Task Group have arranged to hold their first meeting immediately following Committee. It is planned that they will be joined by a number of young people from North Yorkshire Youth Council. As is the usual practice the Task Group Chairman will be elected prior to the start of the meeting.

Nominations for Parent Governor

Members were advised that no nominations have been received for the Parent Governor vacancy and that the term of office of the remaining parent governor is due to expire in May 2012.

The proposal put forward to Members of the Committee was that nominations for both vacancies are sought in the New Year with a view to getting nominations ratified at full Council in May.

Prior to this Committee Meeting both the Chairman and Vice Chairman had raised their concerns regarding there being no nominations received for the Parent Governor vacancy and had asked the Governors' Support Office for copies of the letter and information sent out. They proposed to follow this matter up at the Mid-Cycle Briefing in December.

RESOLVED –

Members of the Committee noted the information provided at the meeting.

It was agreed that the Chairman is authorised in consultation with the Group Spokespersons to review the content of the Work Programme for 2012 and present their findings to the full Committee.

Members agreed to the suggestion that nominations are sought for both Parent Governor vacancies at the same time in March 2012.

It was agreed that the Chair and Vice Chair seek clarification regarding the information sent out in relation to Parent Governor nominations.

The meeting concluded at 12:50

SB/ALJ