

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2012 at 10.30 am at County Hall, Northallerton.

PRESENT:- Cllr Keith Barnes in the Chair

County Councillors:- Andrew Backhouse Vice Chair , Executive Member Carl Les, John Batt, David Blades, David Jeffels, Janet Jefferson Group Spokesperson, Janet Sanderson, Joe Plant, Tim Swales, Cliff Trotter, Caroline Seymour, Michael Heseltine (substitute for Jim Clark), Graham Richards Church of England representative, Jos Huddleston Non-Conformist Church representative, Helena McGouran Roman Catholic Church representative, Chris Head Secondary Teacher representative and Bjorn Risi Voluntary Sector representative.

Officers:- Cynthia Welbourn Corporate Director CYPS, Anton Hodge Assistant Director CYPS, Stephanie Bratcher (Scrutiny Support).

Apologies for absence were received from Executive Member Arthur Barker, County Councillor Jim Clark, Mrs Suzanne Morris Parent Governor and Judith Bromfield Voluntary Sector representative.

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming a new member to the committee County Councillor Janet Sanderson and also County Councillor Michael Heseltine who was substitute for County Councillor Jim Clark.

92. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2011 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

93. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

94. EXECUTIVE MEMBERS ORAL BRIEFING

The oral report of Executive Member County Councillor Carl Les.

County Councillor Carl Les informed the committee he would respond to the questions forwarded by the Chairman in advance of the meeting but initially wanted to talk about the Barnado's 'Cutting them free Campaign' email. Cllr Les explained that this email is being circulated widely and addressed to individual County Councillors to encourage sign up to their campaign – *Cutting them free: How is the*

UK progressing in protecting its children from sexual exploitation. He agreed that it is an important issue and that the Executive Members had also received emails.

Cllr Les said the current situation is that the Executive Members and the Corporate Director Cynthia Welbourn, are due to have in-depth discussions with regard to what the County Council's position should be and re-assured Members of the Committee that when these discussions have taken place and a response has been agreed all Members of the County Council will receive a position statement.

County Councillor Andrew Backhouse asked the Executive Member and Corporate Director for more detail about the incident that had occurred at Eppleby Forcett Primary School recently when a number of young children were left on their own for an unreasonable length of time.

Corporate Director Cynthia Welbourn explained that it had not been made clear that the Supply Teacher was unavailable on this particular day and as a consequence eight children had been left for more than an hour unsupervised. The children had all behaved remarkably well and whilst a couple of them had gone outside they had not left the school grounds. It was a young person who took the initiative and went to the School Secretary to tell them what had happened. The Head Teacher has apologised, spoken and met with all the parents who were very alarmed by the incident. The Corporate Director said this had been a significant near miss and one that North Yorkshire County Council is taking very seriously. The Children and Young People's Support Adviser together with the Health and Safety Officer are attending the School and a full review will be undertaken.

In response to members' questions and concerns about how the matter is handled the Corporate Director responded by saying that the Children and Young People's Service was mindful to handle the situation carefully so as not to alarm people but that the matter would still be taken very seriously. Members also expressed their surprise no one had checked to see that the Supply Teacher had arrived and asked the Corporate Director if a reminder and general advice notice was going to be circulated to all schools? The Corporate Director confirmed that a notice was in the process of being drafted.

Cllr Michael Heseltine the local member for Eppleby Forcett said that this was the first time he had heard there was a problem and was concerned that as the local Member he had not been notified of the incident and the measures being taken. The Corporate Director assured the Committee that key members, which should include the local member, had been immediately notified but would look into whether the local member had been included.

In relation to Free School Meals registrations Cllr Joe Plant asked the Executive Member Cllr Les about the promotional exercises in place to encourage parents to register for free school meals, whether these were proving to be successful or whether there is more that could be done? The suggestion was that the County Catering Board would raise this at their next meeting.

The Chairman then asked the Executive Member – Cllr Les to comment on the three questions forwarded prior to the meeting.

Question 1 - It would appear that a number of sixth form pupils drive to school by car often parking in streets close to their school which causes local congestion. Is the County Council aware of other areas/towns where this is a problem and is the County Council together with the school in a position to discourage pupils from bring cars to school?

Cllr Les advised the Committee that the County Council does not have any powers to enforce the use of alternatives to cars. However, schools are in a position to raise

the issue with the pupils concerned. He explained that there is an element of choice here for young people but it is likely that pupils travelling to school in their cars are pupils who are not entitled to free transport to school and prefer to drive rather than use the yellow bus network. Every School has a School Travel Plan which aims to encourage young people to take a healthier approach to getting to school either by walking or in some cases cycling or getting the bus.

Several Members raised related parking issues in their local areas and the congestion caused but also acknowledged that as young citizens they are entitled to use their car but should also be encouraged to park considerately. It was also noted that where parking was very limited in some schools a number had used 'grasscrete' to expand the parking areas in grassy areas.

Question 2 - Does North Yorkshire County Council have any role in encouraging and supporting gifted and talented children?

Members of the Committee were advised that North Yorkshire County Council has given as much support as possible to these pupils across all phases of their education for the past ten years. The education and achievement of gifted and talented pupils was a priority for the previous government and centrally funded and North Yorkshire County Council was a founder member of the Yorkshire and Humberside Gifted and Talented Strategy Board. Funding is no longer available but the Children and Young People's Service has allocated some of the Quality and Improvement Service resource to this and asked schools to contribute to maintain this work.

Question 3 - Will North Yorkshire County Council have to compete more pro-actively in selling services to Academies and even maintained schools? Can NYCC sell services outside its geographical area?

The Corporate Director explained that traded services have been operating in a competitive environment for many years, including facing competition from some schools (which do not need to be Academies to offer services to other schools, inside or outside the County). There are eight Academies in North Yorkshire, representing 2% of the 384 schools in the county and the Council continues to offer traded services to Academies in most cases. Schools in other local authorities have shown an interest in purchasing from North Yorkshire County Council and this will be looked into provided it makes sense and does not damage what is provided to North Yorkshire Schools.

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

RESOLVED –

That the information provided at the meeting be noted

That the Corporate Director – Children & Young Peoples Service looks into the recipients of the sensitive issues alert to confirm they include the local member.

95. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICE – KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

CONSIDERED –

The report of Cynthia Welbourn Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service on the Quarter 2 - Key Performance Indicators.

The Corporate Director introduced the report and advised the committee that the County Council's performance arrangements include a quarterly report by the Children and Young People's Service to the Executive against a set of ten key performance indicators. These ten indicators are set out in the report provided and include further detail under each indicator.

A number of issues and questions were raised by Members in relation to the ten indicators and in particular Members voiced concern regarding the timeliness of initial assessments in Scarborough and asked if this was related to deprivation, the transient population or a staffing issue. The Corporate Director advised the Committee that this was a management issue and that the matter had been looked into thoroughly by herself and her Assistant Director Children's Social Care and that there are significantly more staff in Scarborough, and this relates to the needs of the area.

Members also remarked on the comment the 'target is too ambitious' adding that it is usual to aim to reach a high target rather than lower it. The Corporate Director explained that in the past the performance history behind initial assessments had not been good; then there had been real problems with new computer systems; standardising practice across the county and of course the Baby Peter tragedy. The service had wanted to lift their game and set an extremely high target and had wanted to bring performance above national average. However, their ambitions have not been lowered and they continue to drive hard on performance still.

The Corporate Director was asked to expand upon the indicator in relation to the Timeliness of SEN Statements which did not appear to be a good achievement by North Yorkshire standards. The committee were advised that there has been a doubling of requests for Statements in the last two and a half years and the added pressure of staff with significant illness and injury. Temporary cover has been provided but the service remains under pressure.

In relation to the performance indicator for young people not in education, employment or training Members asked about the opportunities being made available to help young people remain in education, employment and training. The Corporate Director advised the Committee that the overall figure remains relatively low compared to national figures and comparative local authorities. However it was acknowledged that it will become more difficult to anticipate need around certain groups of young people and that North Yorkshire County Council will want to maximise the number of opportunities for young people such as Apprenticeships, and work with local businesses to bring them on board. Whilst Careers Guidance in schools has stopped there is good support and guidance for young people to find different opportunities and where appropriate Targeted Youth Support Services.

The Chairman asked the Corporate Director about progress towards targets for the other success measures included in the Children and Young Peoples Plan 2011-2014 and was advised by the Corporate Director that a report would be brought to the next Committee meeting.

RESOLVED –

That the information provided at the meeting be noted

That the Corporate Director – Children & Young People's Service brings a report to the next meeting of the Committee which sets out the targets for the Success Measures in the Children & Young Peoples Plan 2011-14.

96. **SCHOOL FUNDING BRIEFING**

CONSIDERED –

The report of Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service: School Funding Briefing.

The briefing provided Members with an update to the previous report presented at Committee in September 2011. In addition they also received an update on the Pupil Premium and the on going discussions regarding the Academy top slice.

Briefing 1 – School Funding Reform

Anton Hodge, Assistant Director Finance and Management Support (CYPS) introduced the report and reminded Members of the three key issues included in North Yorkshire’s response to the national consultations on “School Funding Reform: Proposals for a Fairer System” and advised the Committee that the government has not yet published any further details since the consultation took place in the summer of last year. The three key issues are:

- a) LAs such as North Yorkshire should not be punished because they allocated additional funding to schools at a time when the national formula did not recognise the true cost
- b) NYCC has a system of allocating funds to schools which works, and which is reflected in our very low number of schools facing financial difficulties
- c) Decisions about local funding should be made at local level and not based on some arbitrary levelling up or down to a national average, which will mean unmanageable fluctuation in school budgets

Anton Hodge advised the Committee that although an earlier consultation highlighted the possibility of a national funding formula at LA and individual school level, the latter consultation paper stated: “We are not proposing to introduce a national formula for existing schools with no local flexibility.” Instead the Consultation Paper suggested how a national formula at a (revised) DSG level would then allocate funding to each LA. The LA would then distribute the money according to its own local formula, although this local formula will have further restrictions.

The Committee was also made aware of a report by the Institute of Fiscal Studies in which it modelled some of the proposals in the school funding consultation and that the content of the report appears to confirm some of the concerns expressed in the County Council’s response to the consultation.

Briefing 2 – Pupil Premium

The Committee was advised that in 2012/13 the Pupil Premium will increase from £488 to £600 per pupil on Free School Meals or for children who are looked after and from £200 to £250 for service children. The total paid to schools will be based on numbers from the January pupil count and is not allocated in proportion to the overall budget of each school. Anton Hodge added that as the number of pupils being counted has increased the government’s “illustrative” figures for North Yorkshire indicate an overall increase from £3.6m to £7.8m, however, these figures have not yet been verified by the Council.

Members welcomed the Pupil Premium but had some concern with its links to SEN payments.

Briefing 3 – On going discussions regarding Academy Top Slice

Anton Hodge informed the Committee that in December 2011, the Department for Education published a consultation paper “on the proposed decision on the calculation and recovery arrangements for the Academies Funding Transfer for 2011-12 and 2012-13. The consultation period ran for four weeks only with responses due by the 12th January. This followed an earlier consultation on the same issue.

Anton Hodge explained that North Yorkshire’s response to the first consultation made it clear that any top-slicing should reflect actual numbers (not future predictions) and be based on current, rather than historic budgets. These points have now been accepted by government though North Yorkshire’s response to the December consultation makes it clear that a number of concerns remain.

Members were advised that the December consultation can be split into four main issues:

Topslice for 2011-12 - This amounted to £2.1m in 2011-12 and the Department for Education (DfE) does not plan to return any of this, even where the number of Academies in a particular Local Authority Area is lower than the top-slice and North Yorkshire expressed its disappointment with this approach.

Topslice for 2012-13 - This amounts to £3.8m and the DfE has said that where the number of Academies in a LA area is lower than the top-slice an unringfenced grant will be paid to the LA later in the financial year. North Yorkshire welcomes this principle but the timing does not assist budget planning.

DSG Recoupment – The consultation paper took the opportunity to make proposals regarding recoupment from DSG, in addition to LA top-slice, which partly funds the Academies programme. North Yorkshire understands the principle but commented that not all budgets and services should simply be allocated pro-rata to schools. These services target need but the Recoupment and LACSEG assumes that the same resources are required for every child. This is one of the reasons most quoted by schools in North Yorkshire for rejecting conversion to Academy status.

Arrangements for 2012-14 onwards - Although the paper contains nothing concrete for the period beyond next year, it states that the Department will explore removing the funding for some LA services from the formula grant and then redistribute these to the LA and Academies proportionately which will be done using a national rate.

The Chairman thanked Anton Hodge for his detailed briefing and for clarifying a number of issues raised by the Committee.

RESOLVED –

That the information provided in the report and briefing be noted.

97. SCRUTINY REVIEW - YOUTH PARTICIPATION INTERIM REPORT

CONSIDERED –

The Interim report of the Task Group on the work of the Task Group so far.

County Councillor John Batt introduced the Task Group’s Interim Report and spoke about the meeting they had attended with the North Yorkshire Youth Council on the 21st December in York. The visit provided Members of the Task Group with an opportunity to meet and talk with young people and secondly to explain the aims and purpose of the Committee’s in-depth scrutiny review of Youth Participation which has

a particular focus on Youth Councils. The Youth Council representatives were asked for their thoughts on the review and were very happy to engage in the discussions and put forward their views.

The Task Group Chairman said that the consultation event with the young people had proved to be a really positive and insightful meeting into what local Youth Councils have meant to young people and provided a useful discussion base in relation to the big issues that are important to young people, in particular transport – fair fares (which has been an issue for young people for many years); healthy eating (learning to cook simply healthy meals) and first aid training (a subject they would like to see included into the curriculum).

Members were pleased to hear that young people wanted to engage with Councillors at all levels as the general feeling had been that Councillors were not necessarily welcome. Other questions raised by the Committee related to how local youth councils feedback to local young people with a suggestion that this is followed up at the next Task Group Meeting, and if raising the awareness of all County Councillors is one of the aims of the review to which Councillor John Batt replied that increasing awareness and improving the links with MP's, Town, District or County Councillors is an integral part of the review.

RESOLVED –

That the information provided in the report and briefing be noted.

98. REVIEW OF THE WORK PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

Councillor Keith Barnes, Chairman of the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee introduced the report and the draft Work Programme. He said that the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14 had been used as the baseline document from which the Work Programme Review Group had identified and agreed many of the areas included in the draft document and asked the Committee for their comments and approval on the content.

County Councillor Andrew Backhouse suggested under the heading 'Supporting young people not in mainstream schools' that this specifically picks up on the Pupil Referral Service an area which has not been cover by the at Committee and that the item is moved forward to June.

County Councillor Janet Jefferson requested that under the same heading there is an opportunity for the committee to learn about the type of educational support available for families who have children with long-term illness.

Members of the Committee were reminded that this is a Working Document and timeframes may need to be adjusted where appropriate and additional items added as they arise.

RESOLVED –

The Committee approved the Work Programme subject to the amendments shown below :

- a. That a briefing report is requested on the Pupil Referral Service under the heading 'Supporting young people not in mainstream schools'.
- b. That a briefing report is also requested, under the same heading, on the support available for families with children who have long-term illness.

99. WORK PROGRAMME

CONSIDERED –

The Work Programme Report of the Scrutiny Team Leader.

The Chairman introduced the report and worked through each of the items covered by the Mid-Cycle Briefing in December.

Under item 2.1 of the report 'OFSTED Inspection of Children's Centres' County Councillor Joe Plant welcomed the report that was coming to the next meeting in March on Children's Centres and suggested that any Member who had not visited their local Children's Centre took the opportunity to do so and to add their contribution to this item.

RESOLVED –

That the information in the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 12:45

SB/ALJ