

North Yorkshire County Council

Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2012 at 10.30 am at County Hall, Northallerton.

Present:- Cllr Keith Barnes in the Chair.

County Councillors:- Andrew Backhouse Vice Chair, Janet Jefferson, Executive Member Tony Hall, Executive Member Arthur Barker, David Blades, Jim Clark, Janet Sanderson, Tim Swales, Caroline Seymour, Chris Pearson (substitute for Joe Plant), Graham Richards Church of England representative, Judith Bromfield Voluntary Sector representative.

Officers:- Cynthia Welbourn, Corporate Director Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) Judith Hay Assistant Director, CYPS Children's Social Care, Alan Critchlow CYPS Principal Education Social Worker, Stephanie Bratcher, Corporate Development Officer (Scrutiny Support).

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Joe Plant, Cliff Trotter, John Batt, and Ms Helena McGourran, Roman Catholic Church representative, Ann McMorris Manager Local Safeguarding Children's Board and Mr Chris Head Secondary School representative.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming Executive and Lead Member for Children and Young People's Service County Councillor Tony Hall and Mr Michael Clarkson who is to be the new Primary School representative.

108. Minutes

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2012 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

109. Public Questions

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

110. Executive Members Oral Briefings

The Committee received oral briefings from County Councillors Tony Hall and Arthur Barker.

Executive Member Cllr Tony Hall summarised his activity as the newly appointed Executive and Lead Member for Children and Young People's Service and reassured the Committee that although on a steep learning curve he was coming to terms with the enormity of his new role and felt confident that professionals and partner agencies were all working in the same direction.

Executive Member Cllr Arthur Barker reviewed his first year and advised the Committee that he continues to learn in such a diverse directorate with many statutory responsibilities. He welcomed and valued the input from the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the many changes and the constant consultations coming from Government.

In response to a question from the Chairman the Corporate Director apologised for the delay in reporting back on the targets and success measures linked to the Children & Young People's Plan 2011-14. The Corporate Director assured the Committee that a brief report outlining the headline indicators will be available for the Mid-Cycle Briefing in July.

The Chairman then asked the Corporate Director if she would briefly explain the tabled paper on Service Pathways for Children's Journeys in North Yorkshire.

The Corporate Director explained that the paper tabled this morning shows the "Big Picture" and identifies the "Early Help Offer" available to children, young people and families in the County. And, although the Department for Education's response has not been finalised the new Ofsted inspection framework is already using the term "Early Help Offer" so it is important to be clear about the position in North Yorkshire where services have continued to be protected and developed. The purpose of producing the Big Picture is to refresh the understanding between partner agencies about ongoing local developments and how the range of complex services on offer join up to meet a family's need. The Early Help Offer comprises Levels 1-3 of the Big Picture with Level 4 providing Intensive/Acute support. The Corporate Director also mentioned the updated Statement of Service Entitlement which provides the information about services and providers, underpinning the Big Picture, together with the Vulnerability Checklist which reaffirms the agreed definitions of need and thresholds of need.

Members' questions were based around how families access the help on offer and asked for clarification on some of the acronyms used. One Member suggested the use of a credit card size directory of key telephone numbers which the Corporate Director thought was an interesting and helpful idea and thanked the committee for their input.

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

Resolved –

That a report on the headline indicators linked to the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14 is received from the Corporate Director for the Mid-Cycle Briefing in July.

111. Children and Young People Service (CYPS) Savings and Transformation Strategy: Social Care Transformation

Considered –

The report of the Corporate Development Officer and a progress report on the MTFs Strategy: Project 2b of the CYPS Savings and Transformation Strategy: Social Care Transformation.

The Committee received a presentation from Judith Hay Assistant Director of CYPS who described the developments and actions taken under the Transformation Strategy to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families. The presentation detailed the national and local context for change and a vision to

develop new ways of working with children, young people and families by improving frontline delivery, embedding evidence-based practice to reduce demand and deliver sustainable positive outcomes. The Assistant Director advised the Members that the Family Intervention Service will be instrumental in working and supporting families with children on the edge of care and early indications are thought to evidence this is working well.

In response to a question from the Chairman the Assistant Director responded by saying that outcomes in some cases take time but with regular interrogation by casework audits on a case by case basis that this will look at outcomes being achieved.

Members asked how many looked after children were in the care system compared to twelve months ago and were advised that in 2011 there were 499, currently there are 468 a reduction of 31.

In response to Members' questions on the effect of the economy on families the Assistant Director confirmed that the Family Intervention Team will respond early and quickly to reduce the chaos experienced by some families.

The Chairman thanked the Assistant Director for her detailed presentation and said that the Committee would be interested to receive an update in 9 months.

Resolved –

That the information provided at the meeting is noted.

That the Committees request to receive an update in 9 months is added to the Work Programme.

112. Arrangements for Monitoring and Safeguarding Children and Young People in Education

Considered –

The report of the Corporate Development Officer and the Monitoring Report on Safeguarding in Education and Missing Children which provided Members with an update on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in education and early years settings.

Alan Critchlow, Principle Education Social Worker commenced his briefing with an outline of the policy background and the new OFSTED framework for schools issued in January 2012. Working through the detail in his report the officer re-assured the Committee that work has continued to ensure all arrangements for Child Protection and Safeguarding in maintained schools remain secure and monitored.

Members were asked to note that the Department for Education is consulting, until 4 September, on a greatly revised draft of the statutory guidance "Working together to Safeguard Children" which is a keystone document for children's services and is in line with the first recommendation of Prof. Eileen Munro's review of child protection.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the OFSTED judgements for North Yorkshire schools on 'Pupils Feel Safe' and 'Effectiveness of Safeguarding Procedures', and in the main NY schools are judged as being good or outstanding. Just one primary school was judged as inadequate under Effectiveness of Safeguarding Procedures due to a recording discrepancy which was immediately addressed and rectified.

Members asked about the management arrangements for dealing with allegations against persons who work with children. The officer advised the Committee that Education Safeguarding Managers are the appointed Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO's) for managing arrangements and responding to allegations against persons working with children in schools, education service arms and early years group settings. The number of referrals relating to staff and volunteers working in or on behalf of education services and settings from April 2010 to March 2011 were 112 and between April 2011 and March 2012 there were 127 referrals.

The Chairman thanked the officer for their briefing and mentioned that the safeguarding and protection of all children is a priority area for this Committee and an update would be requested early next year.

Resolved –

That the information provided at the meeting is noted.

That an update and follow up briefing is requested on the Arrangements for Monitoring and Safeguarding Children and Young People in Education and that this matter is added to the Work Programme.

113. North Yorkshire Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2012/13

Considered –

The covering report of the Corporate Development Officer and the Executive Summary of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2012-13 (NYSCB) attached at Annex A.

The Chairman had explained at the start of the meeting that the Local Safeguarding Children's Board Manager was not available to provide the Committee with a briefing on the NYSCB Annual Report so proposed moving this to the next Mid-Cycle Briefing. He explained that the NYSCB are required to provide an annual report to reflect on progress over the year, interagency working and serious case reviews.

Although Members of the Committee had received a copy of the Executive Summary with their agenda papers this was not considered to contain enough detail to allow for any discussion or comment.

The Chairman requested full copies of the North Yorkshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report are made available to the three group spokespersons who will discuss the report at the next Mid-Cycle Briefing.

Resolved –

That a full copy of the North Yorkshire Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2012/13 is made available to the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Independent Group Spokesperson.

114. Work Programme

Considered –

The report of the Scrutiny Team Leader.

The Chairman introduced the report and ran briefly through each of the items covered by the Mid-Cycle Briefing in May and asked the Committee if there were any questions.

Members recalled the suggestion made by Cllr Tony Hall in his capacity as Chairman of the Hambleton and Richmond PRS Management Board to visit the Pupil Referral Service Unit in Northallerton and asked if any arrangements had been made? The Corporate Development Officer advised the Committee that this has still to be progressed and that she would discuss the arrangements with John Bell Assistant Director CYPS and the Head Teacher of the Northallerton Unit.

As the in-depth Scrutiny Review on Youth Participation is drawing to a close the Chairman asked Members if anyone had any thoughts for the next in-depth Scrutiny Review. He suggested that any ideas could be forwarded to the Corporate Development Officer.

The Vice Chairman referred to the recent briefing received at the Mid-Cycle Briefing on Risky Behaviours and in particular young people taking risks with drugs. He mentioned his concern about the use and availability of Methadone in Scarborough and the massive impact this is having on young people living on the coast. He suggested this might be a suitable topic and proposed that further information is gathered so this can be discussed in more detail at the Mid-Cycle Briefing.

Parent Governor Vacancies (two posts)

The Chairman advised the Committee that there are now two Parent Governor Vacancies for this Committee. He explained the election process seeking nominations for the two posts is underway with a view to the vacancies being filled for the new academic year in September.

Work Programme Schedule

Following the completion of the 12 week consultation on the Autism Strategy Members were advised that Andrew Terry Assistant Director CYPS has suggested that a report is brought to Committee in September to consider the consultation responses received. Members will be invited to add any comments they may wish to make which will then be included in the report presented to the Executive Members in September.

Resolved –

That the information provided at the meeting is noted.

That the suggestion for the next Scrutiny Review is discussed at the Mid-Cycle briefing in July.

That the Members agreed to receive an update regarding the consultation on the Autism Strategy for the September Committee meeting.

The meeting concluded at 12.30.

SB/ALJ