

North Yorkshire County Council

Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2013 at 10.30 am at County Hall, Northallerton.

Present:- Cllr Keith Barnes in the Chair

County Councillors:- Andrew Backhouse Vice Chair, Janet Jefferson Group Spokesperson, David Blades, Tim Swales, Janet Sanderson, Caroline Seymour, Joe Plant, Cliff Trotter, John Batt, David Jeffels, Jim Clark, Graham Richards Church of England representative, Mrs Rebecca Newman Parent Governor, Mr Chris Head Secondary Teacher representative, Mr Michael Clarkson Primary Teacher representative.

In attendance:

Executive Members County Councillors Arthur Barker and Tony Hall

Officers:- Anton Hodge and Judith Hay Children and Young People's Service (CYPS), Mandy Whitehead Children's Centre Payment by Results Project Officer, Stephanie Bratcher Corporate Development Officer (Scrutiny Support).

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Graham Crerar (Parent Governor), Ms Helena McGourran (Roman Catholic Church representative) and Carolyn Bird, David O'Brien and Lynette Smith (Children and Young People's Service).

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed the newly appointed parent governor Mrs Rebecca Newman. He also mentioned that a new Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Service had been appointed, a Mr Peter Dwyer who will be taking up his post in April 2013.

The Chairman drew the Members' attention to the additional papers tabled at the meeting – Children's Centres Payment by Results – "The Measures", Looked after Children Statistical Report Quarter 2 and presentation hand-outs for Payment by Results and the Post Inspection Action Plan.

132. Minutes

Resolved –

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

133. Public Questions

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

134. Executive Members Oral Briefing

The Chairman invited the Executive Members to respond to the three questions he had submitted to them in advance of the meeting on the following areas:

1. Is the funding of sixth forms to change and if so could the Executive Member explain how this might affect North Yorkshire?

Executive Member County Councillor Arthur Barker explained that currently Post 16 funding is allocated to schools and colleges via a national formula. This formula will change from September 2013 and he informed the Committee of the principles behind the change.

He advised the meeting that shadow allocations have been provided to schools – some North Yorkshire schools with VI Forms will see an increase in their per student funding, some will see a reduction. Final allocations are expected in the next few weeks.

2. At the close of quarter two there were 450 children subject to a Child Protection Plan. This is more than 10% up on the end of Q1. Could the Executive Members explain why and is there anything that can be done to reduce this figure.

Executive Member County Councillor Tony Hall informed the committee that the increase of 10% was correct and in fact the increase over a 4-year period has been 100%. Three-quarters of the increase accounted for emotional abuse. The increase in child protection on under 2 year olds has almost doubled but this has meant that children identified and assessed as being at risk are put on plans very early.

The Executive Member advised the Committee that the independent reviewing officers have been tasked with looking at this issue, and ensuring that children only remain on plans when necessary.

3. Could the Executive Member advise the Committee on whether our Children's Centres are reaching the 'hard to reach' families?

County Councillor Arthur Barker responded by saying that he considered that the positive Ofsted Inspections of Children's Centres showed that the County Council are reaching and working with these vulnerable families and that this is at the heart of Children's Centre services. Partnership working is good and appropriate information is shared to ensure the right approach is provided to these families.

The Chairman thanked both Executive Members for their responses.

The Chairman then asked County Councillor Jim Clark, Chairman of the Scrutiny of Health Committee if he had anything to add regarding paediatric and maternity services at the Friarage Hospital. Cllr Clark advised the meeting that the Secretary of State had called for an Initial Review, by the Independent Reconfiguration Panel, on the future of paediatric and maternity services at the Friarage Hospital. The panel is to report by 22nd February on whether a full review is needed.

135. Children and Young People Budget Savings

The Committee received a report which presented the current position of the County Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Anton Hodge Assistant Director Children and Young People's Service introduced the report which confirmed for Members of the Committee that by the end of the current

four year Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/15 the County Council's plans are in line to make savings of £69m.

As a result of the Chancellor's autumn statement announced in December 2012 and the Council receiving its Provisional Government Settlement for 2013/14, this figure has increased by £24m to £93m.

Members were advised that the Council is on course to have saved £52m of the £93m by the end of this year and that plans are already in place to identify the level of savings required. Each Directorate has been asked to identify potential savings and the Committee was advised that the Children and Young People's Service has identified overall 4 million pounds worth of savings over two years. The Assistant Director informed Members of the potential areas of savings that the service had identified.

The Assistant Director advised the Members that the announcement of the Final Government Settlement figure for 2013/14 is expected in the next couple of weeks and is anticipated to be slightly better. However the County Council continues to plan for the level of savings required and the finalised list of potential savings will be considered by the Executive in February prior to going before the County Council.

Resolved –

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

136. Payment by Results Project

The Committee received a report and presentation from Mandy Whitehead, Children's Centre Payment by Results Project Officer.

The presentation summarised the core purpose of children's centres - improve outcomes for young children and their families with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged families and identified the three main national policy drivers that underpin the Children's Centre Payment by Results (PbR) trial.

Members were advised that nationally there is a strong and growing evidence base of the importance of early education, effective parenting and good health on child development and readiness for school and beyond. The purpose of the children's centre PbR trial is to translate this evidence into specific PbR measures that can work for children's centres locally.

The Committee learned that having successfully put forward an application in the summer of 2011 North Yorkshire and East Riding will work together and focus on a number of project areas overseen by a PbR trial management group with the membership made up from officers from both local authorities.

Members were pleased to note that this trial is providing a unique opportunity for local authorities to work together to share learning and best practice but stressed that it was important not to lose focus on local need.

Members asked about performance and projected payments information and were advised that baseline figures were submitted in May 2012 so performance data would not be available until May 2013.

Resolved –

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

137. Outcome of Children and Young People's Plan Review

Considered –

The results of the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014 review – One Year On presented to the Committee by Judith Hay – Children and Young People's Service.

Members were advised that the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014 was designed to provide a clear set of shared priorities across partner agencies and set out six principal objectives which are underpinned by 43 key delivery objectives and 250 strategic actions.

Progress across the principal objectives has been fairly consistent and Members were informed that many of the objectives in the plan are designed to make an impact over the next three years.

Members were interested to know what feedback and evaluation of the service areas has been undertaken with young people. The Assistant Director advised the Committee that many of the service areas involved users in the planning but there is still further work to embed this approach across the whole service. Examples of where young people's feedback is gathered included: Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire, Student Voice, Youth Council developments and service users in the redesign of Special Educational Needs and Disability Services.

In summing up the Chairman commented on the size and complexity of the document which he considered was rather large. He also asked what had happened to the targets and measures which the Committee had requested at length as these did not appear to be part of the document. He appreciated that a lot of time had been spent by officers in gathering and compiling this information but questioned whether their time could be better spent elsewhere.

The Chairman added that he felt it was time to review the document and that the committee will want to be kept informed how evidence of service users' feedback will be gathered and included in any future plan, and requested that progress reports on work to measure and assess impact are made available to the Committee.

Resolved –

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

That further information is received regarding achievements against a list of targets and measures for the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14.

That a progress report is received which evidences how feedback from service users will be gathered and used in future evaluations.

That a report is received that sets out the progress being made to measure and assess the impact of services being delivered to children, young people and their families.

138. Looked After Children – Members' Group Report

Considered –

The Annual Report of the Looked after Children-Members' Group Chairman County Councillor John Batt

In introducing his report Cllr Batt acknowledged the support he had received from officers and young people since taking up his role as Chairman. Since his appointment Councillor Batt felt that the group had made stronger links with the Young People's Council who now regularly attend the Looked after Children-Members' Group (LAC-MG). He said that many Councillors when they are newly elected are unaware that they become corporate parents and more importantly do not understand what this means or what their role is. He hopes that he can help raise the awareness of all County Councillors of their responsibilities.

The Committee were advised that the LAC-MG continue to monitor the health and well-being of looked after young people but earlier in the year had raised their concerns regarding the low number of health and dental assessments being undertaken. However, having highlighted the matter and with concerted efforts from officers and health colleagues Cllr Batt was pleased to report that these checks are now back on track.

Members of the Committee were assured that the safeguarding of all looked after young people has a high priority for the Members' Group who receive regular updates on any young person who has been reported as missing and are also advised of the help and support available to these vulnerable young people.

County Councillor Batt highlighted the other reports received by the Members on a regular basis which include a quarterly Statistical Report, Educational Attainment and Achievement, together with reports from the Independent Reviewing Officer Service and the Leaving Care service.

County Councillor Tim Swales thanked Councillor Batt and the Members Group for all their efforts and as the Young Persons' Champion he also attends the LAC-MG and meets with representatives of the Young People's Council.

County Councillor Tony Hall added his thanks and reminded everyone that all North Yorkshire County Council Officers and Members are corporate parents. He advised the Committee of "The Pledge" newly developed by young people in care, which is a promise from North Yorkshire County Council to all children and young people in North Yorkshire's care. He hopes that not too long after the Council elections that all Members will sign up to this pledge.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Batt for his report and for the good work the Members' Group undertakes on behalf of the County Council.

Resolved –

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

139. Post Inspection Action Plan

The Committee received a report and presentation on the Post Inspection Action Plan which has been developed by the Children and Young People's Service following the OFSTED Inspection of local authority arrangements for the protection of children undertaken in October 2012.

The Assistant Director Children's Social Care, Judith Hay, introduced the presentation and put into context the ten Ofsted recommendations and areas for improvement. She advised the Committee that the key actions are detailed in the Post Inspection Action Plan together with the proposed monitoring and reporting arrangements for each action. Members were advised that one key action required immediate action; four within three months and the remainder within six months.

The Chairman drew the Members' attention to Recommendation 10 – *ensure that elected Members routinely scrutinise the effectiveness of child protection and preventative work*. He reminded Members that six monthly briefings on Early Help and Child Protection have been added to the Work Programme and considered that it would be useful if there is a rethink in the way reports are presented to the committee. He suggested that it would be helpful if officers highlighted not only the strengths within a service area but also gave some indication of any challenging aspects of the service being delivered, and areas for improvement, to help Members better understand the service being delivered.

The Chairman was also keen to ensure that feedback and evaluation from young people as users of a service is incorporated into officer reports and reminded the Assistant Director that a report on Children Protection and Early Help is expected for the next meeting in April and that there is an expectation that this will include evidence of feedback from young people.

The Chairman thanked the Assistant Director for her briefing and for putting the recommendations into context and looked forward to the report on Early Help and Child Protection.

Resolved –

That the content of the report, the Post Inspection Action Plan and the information provided at the meeting be noted.

That a progress report is received in six months on the key actions identified in the Post Inspection Action Plan.

Officers from the Children and Young People's Service are requested to include feedback and evaluations received from young people as service users in future reports.

140. Work Programme

Considered –

The report of the Corporate Development Officer inviting comments from Members on the content of the Committee's programme of work scheduled for future meetings.

The Chairman summarised the items discussed at the last Mid Cycle briefing and suggested that if a Member requires a copy of any of the Briefing Reports to contact the Corporate Development Officer.

The first Task Group Meeting on 'The role of the School Nurse' was being held immediately following the Committee Meeting with representatives from Harrogate District Foundation Trust.

Members were advised that the Corporate Development Officer was in early discussions with the North Yorkshire Youth Council Officers regarding a visit by the newly elected officers to County Hall during the February half-term.

The Chairman asked if Members had any additions, comments or changes to make on the Work Programme.

Resolved –

That the content of the Work Programme report and the Work Programme Schedule are noted.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 12:45

SB/ALJ