

**North Yorkshire County Council**  
**Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2014 at 10.30 am at County Hall, Northallerton.

**Present:** - County Councillor Elizabeth Shields in the chair

County Councillors: Andrew Backhouse, Derek Bastiman, David Jeffels, Janet Jefferson, Anne Jones, Cliff Lunn, Joe Plant, John Ritchie, Janet Sanderson, Peter Sowray (as substitute for Cliff Trotter), Tim Swales, Robert Windass (as substitute for Val Arnold), Graham Richards (Church of England representative), Mr Michael Clarkson (Primary Teacher representative), Jon Carling (Voluntary Sector representative)

In attendance: Executive Member Tony Hall

Officers: -

David Walker (Head of Social Inclusion, Children's Social Care (Children and Young Peoples Services)), Jill Boak (Social Inclusion Officer (Homelessness Prevention), (Children and Young Peoples Services)), Carolyn Bird (Assistant Director Prevention and Commissioning, (Children and Young Peoples Services)), Emma Hubert (Performance and Change Manager (Children and Young Peoples Services)), Jon Coates (Senior Youth Support Officer (Coast), (Children and Young Peoples Services)), Jonathan Spencer (Corporate Development Officer (Central Services)), Jill Hodges (Assistant Director - Education and Skills, (Children and Young Peoples Services))

Bryon Hunter, Scrutiny Team Leader

Apologies: County Councillors: Val Arnold and Clifford Trotter

Co-opted member: Paul Bircumshaw

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**Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book**

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**36. Minutes**

**Resolved –**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2014 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**37. Public Questions**

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

### **38. Executive Members Oral Briefing**

County Councillor Tony Hall referred to the imminent publication of the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Social Care. He particularly thanked Members of the Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Looked After Children's Members Working Group for their involvement on a wide range of issues affecting young people since the last Inspection in 2012. Councillor Hall commented that the Inspection would be published on Monday, 30 June and that it would be sent to all Members of the Committee.

Carolyn Bird also referred to budget savings facing the Children and Young People's Service and that the Service would be consulting on a range of initiatives during the August/September period of this year. Carolyn commented that the Committee may want to be involved in that process. Carolyn also referred to plans for the commissioning of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

### **39. Homeless Prevention**

Considered -

The report of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Services to inform Members of the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the performance of the accommodation pathway in preventing youth homelessness.

David Walker and Jill Boak summarised the main elements of the pathway and its performance over the last 12 months in preventing homelessness amongst young people.

The pathway is provided through 7 District area hubs, where multiagency teams work to prevent homelessness. Wherever possible and safe to do so, young people are returned home or supported to remain in their accommodation. Where this isn't possible they are provided with accommodation and support until they are able to live independently.

The pathway is resourced through a community budget managed by the Supporting People Partnership. A Governance group including representatives from CYPS and housing authority officers, meets on a monthly basis.

David and Jill referred in particular to the hubs which have been developed with the involvement of the borough/district councils and how they now provide a single point of access for support, advice and advocacy. They highlighted that the level of presentation has increased over each quarter but around 80% of young people presenting at the hub are restored to their families or kinships.

Comments and questions raised by the Committee included:

- Concerns over the numbers of young people presenting as homeless, particularly in the Ryedale and Scarborough areas.
- That as the hubs prove their worth it was almost inevitable that demand would increase.
- The Scarborough hub, whilst facing the highest demand, could be used as an exemplar across the County.
- The need to consider the extent to which presentations are by young people coming into the area or whether they were local young people.
- The need to work with planning authorities to increase the supply of affordable and suitable accommodation and to improve the condition of the housing stock

in general.

- The need to maintain flexibility for young people to move into other parts of the County and still be able to receive support.
- The use of volunteers to mentor young people.

Cllr Bastiman disagreed with the statement that the standard of housing in Scarborough is poor.

In response David commented that there was a wide range of issues impacting on homelessness in the Scarborough area and that there was a need to break the life cycle of social exclusion. Advice on homelessness was only part of the service; we also need to consider providing advice on running a family budget, financial management and employability. David also commented that the presentations were mainly from local young people and that there were a low number of asylum seekers.

David also commented that as many young people go from Scarborough to Harrogate as the other way. The network of hubs provided flexibility and increased the employment opportunities across the County for young people.

#### **Resolved -**

That the report be noted and a follow up report be presented to the Committee on the issues raised above and a full performance report be presented to the Committee in due course to cover the period up to the end of 2014/15.

#### **40. Preventative Services Review**

Considered -

The report of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service to provide an update on the progress of the Prevention Service review.

Carolyn Bird commented that the report presented an opportunity to take stock with the Committee on this important issue. Carolyn added that this was one of the first 2020 North Yorkshire reviews and involves a significant restructuring of a range of preventative services. . From the responses received from staff there was very little dissent or disagreement about the proposed shape and purpose of the new Prevention Service model, although naturally there are concerns from staff about the significant contraction in staff numbers, particularly given that the aspiration for the service is to increase levels of casework. She commented that the restructuring aimed to preserve levels of frontline staffing targeted specifically on individual casework, and that over 80% of the staff budget would be on operational staff.

Carolyn also referred to concerns which had been raised about the contraction in services within children’s centres and whether the new service will have sufficient capacity to continue to support active and high quality children’s centre services. Carolyn commented that whilst it is very likely there will be fewer building the services will remain and become more prioritised. Similar concerns have been raised about the proposal that the council will in the main cease the direct provision of open access youth work, only retaining that in areas of greatest need, where, in effect, open access work is “targeted” due to the young people attending. Consultation was in progress with young people themselves to give them more of a voice in determining where and how the services are provided.

Carolyn informed Members that the report will be considered by the Executive in September with a view to the restructuring being completed by Christmas ready for the new service to go live from 1 April 2015.

Comments and questions raised by Members included:

- Whist accepting the need for change, will there be sufficient staff, particularly in those locations where the centre is closed, to support young mothers for example?
- Some centres may have a low usage but that does not necessarily mean that demand in the area is low. In Whitby, for instance the centre is small so the service is more community based. The involvement of the local school is also helping to underpin the services in Whitby.
- The need to invest in the community/voluntary sector to take on services.
- The need to an evidence-led approach and extensive engagement with local communities.
- The potential to charge for the use of buildings should be explored.
- The need for a long term plan so that services are not lost.

Carolyn advised Members that provision would be differentiated according to need. There would also be “drop-in” facilities for people to obtain the advice and support they need. She referred to one centre in Scarborough being too small and not suitable for activities but where there has still been a high demand for a drop-in type of service. In other locations the type of services required was different. Other facilities in the voluntary/community sector will be utilised. Carolyn highlighted the need to retain an “early years” facility in those buildings where the County Council has received capital funding otherwise the Department for Education might look to claw back funding. Carolyn also commented that the vast majority of savings will be in cost of overheads and that under the planned arrangements 80% of the budget would be allocated to front-line service. Buildings may close but services will continue in other facilities, for instance village halls.

#### **Resolved -**

That the report be noted.

That a further report on progress against the implementation plan be brought back to the Committee towards the end of this year.

#### **41. The Plan for all children, young people and their families living in North Yorkshire 2014-17**

Considered -

The report of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People’s Service.

Carolyn Bird and Emma Hubert introduced the background and the process of developing the Plan.

In July 2013 the Children’s Trust Board approved the creation of a project board, tasked with the development of a new CYPP to replace the existing Plan which was due to come to an end in March 2014. Membership of the project board was drawn from colleagues in CYPS, NYCC Central Services, Public Health, the Partnership Commissioning Unit, North Yorkshire Police and North Yorkshire Youth.

Extensive consultation with children, young people and stakeholders has taken place to capture the hopes and aspirations of children and young people across North Yorkshire.

The project board has also reviewed a wide range of information and other completed needs analyses to establish strengths and areas for improvement. This has included the incorporation of feedback following the recent inspection of services for children in need of help and protection by Ofsted.

Above all, Young and Yorkshire has been developed in collaboration with partners, stakeholders and importantly, children, young people and their families. The Plan is ambitious, aspirational and its delivery, whilst challenging, will be reliant on a range of agencies and stakeholders working together to collectively improve the lives of children and young people across North Yorkshire.

Two vision statements have been developed, a children's version and a statement drawn up by the professionals who work with children and young people:

*"We want North Yorkshire to be a cool place with loads of great things to do"*  
(Children's version)

*"We want North Yorkshire to be a special place where every childhood is magical and every young person thrives"*  
(Professional's version)

The vision statements, which basically gives the same message, albeit in different styles are supported by a range of guiding principles, priorities and supporting outcomes.

Comments and questions raised by Members included:

- The level of engagement with young people and the efforts that have been made to produce a Plan which young people can identify with is commended;
- The importance of children, young people and families having fun, being happy and enjoying life is a thread running through the whole document
- Accepting that safety, safeguarding and the need to protect young people are in the guiding principles and certain outcomes, Members felt that these issues could have been given more profile in the Plan.

#### **Resolved -**

- That the work undertaken to date on producing the Plan be commended.
- That the consultation plan set out in the document be supported and that it will culminate in being signed off by the County Council July 2014.

#### **42. The Promise**

Considered –

The report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Service asking the Committee to note the information in this report and to comment on the draft document 'The Promise'.

Jon Coates informed Members that the Promise is a tool to encourage organisations and services to involve children and young people in every aspect of

their planning and decision making processes where appropriate. Jon also commented that the Promise could be used by this Committee as a kind of checklist for considering other initiatives and service developments affecting young people.

Members welcomed the report. Their comments and questions included:

- The Promise is inter-twined with the Plan for all Children, Young People and their Families.
- The extent to which the Promise is an undertaking from all stakeholders is not clear. If it is solely a Promise from the County Council, then maybe it would be appropriate for the Council to promote its adoption by external organisations and stakeholders.
- In the Evaluation section, references to evaluating “services” should be extended to read “services and activities”.

**Resolved –**

That the draft Promise be noted.

**43. Online Safety of Children and Young People**

Considered –

The final report of the Scrutiny Task Group.

County Councillor Joe Plant introduced the draft report from the Task Group. In particular he referred to the fact that everyone has a responsibility to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and that responsibility applies in an on-line world as it is such a key aspect of everyone’s day to day life.

Cllr Plant that as part of its work the task group had looked at information existing on-line safety that was available via the internet, took account of national campaigns, the work of other local authorities, schools’ policies and the views of children and young people themselves. This included looked after children.

A key conclusion from the study was that we need to have a consistent message and one that can be easily understood, not just by children and young people, but also by adults, parents and guardians.

Members commented that:

- The task group had brought energy and enthusiasm to the topic;
- It will be impossible to entirely plug all the gaps and new opportunities available to the perpetrators of on-line abuse as no sooner are new security measures put in place, ways around them are, sadly, found. Education and awareness building are the best ways to combat the problem.

Carolyn Bird and Richard Irvine commented that the work of the task group was timely and very much welcomed by the Children and Young Peoples’ Service.

**Resolved –**

That the task group be commended on its work.

That the recommendations in the report be agreed.

#### **44. Welfare Benefit Reform and Child Poverty in North Yorkshire**

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Director – Policy and Partnerships on the impacts of benefit changes brought about by the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and associated regulations in relation to children, young people and their families and to provide details of child poverty data in North Yorkshire.

Jonathan Spencer introduced the report. He explained that the Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduced a wide range of reforms with the stated aims of making the benefit and tax credits system for people of working age more affordable and simpler by; creating incentives to get more people into work by ensuring that work always pays; merging out of work benefits and tax credits to create a single universal credit and reforms to other benefits aimed at reducing the cost of the benefits system. He went on to detail the various reforms and their impact to date on North Yorkshire residents, as set out in the report.

Members were advised that child poverty is currently measured as the proportion of children living in households with an income 60% less than median household income, and is described as the “Percentage of Children in Low Income Families”. The data is reported approximately two years in arrears and therefore the most recent measure available is for the year 2010/11. At that time the data indicates that North Yorkshire has the ninth lowest proportion of children in poverty among local authorities in England. However, across North Yorkshire there were areas where the percentage of children in poverty is much higher, rising to over 25% in some wards in Scarborough and Selby. Similarly indebtedness is highest in Scarborough.

Members were assured that the County Council supports, advises and works with families where benefit reforms may have a detrimental impact and where children may be living in poverty.

#### **Resolved –**

That the report be noted.

#### **45. School Improvement – School Ofsted Outcomes**

Considered -

Jill Hodges, Assistant Director (Education and Skills) introduced the report, the purpose of which was to inform Members of the Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee of:-

- Ofsted inspection judgements for primary, secondary, special and PRUs and the percentage of schools that are outstanding, good, requiring improvement or inadequate.
  - the current position in June 2014
  - improvements from September 2013
  - a North Yorkshire area profile
- the percentage of pupils that attend good or outstanding schools.

The Committee heard that whilst North Yorkshire schools are in-line with national comparisons for the percentage of schools that are good or outstanding, both

primary and secondary schools are slightly below, 1% and 2% respectively. Primary are gradually improving whilst secondary is maintaining its performance. The percentage of pupils who attend a good or outstanding school compares well with national figures for secondary and is below national for primary. However, rankings place North Yorkshire schools in the third quartile and Members were reassured that this is an absolute key priority for improvement. The Council is working pro-actively with schools to achieve an ambition of all schools being good or outstanding.

Members raised a number of comments and questions including:

- Do schools have well qualified teachers and are they being allowed to specialise or are they generalist?
- Do schools have enough teachers?

Jill commented that further work is in train to examine such factors and to draw correlations with the outcomes achieved. The outcome of that work will be reported back to the Committee.

#### **Resolved –**

The Committee is keen to maintain its interest in improvements including the impact of the strategies such as the use of trained and active Ofsted inspectors within schools and the use of partnerships and welcomes an update report to its next meeting.

#### **46. Work Programme**

Considered –

The report of the Scrutiny Team Leader inviting comments from Members on the content of the Committee's programme of work scheduled for future meetings.

The work programme report included information on the crime of female genital mutilation. Members acknowledged that this was raised at the last full council. It was agreed that the Council's responsibilities to the sufferers and those at risk is an area the Committee needs to look at in more detail, initially at the mid cycle briefing. Dallas Frank, North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board Manager, be invited to attend the briefing to assist Members in their deliberations as to how the Committee might take this work forward.

The Committee also agreed to include a report on lesbian, gay and bisexual young people onto the work programme.

#### **Resolved –**

That the content of the work programme report and the work programme schedule are noted.

The meeting concluded 1.00pm