

North Yorkshire County Council

Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 12 April 2019 at 10am at County Hall, Northallerton.

Present: County Councillor Janet Jefferson in the Chair.

County Councillors, Val Arnold, Lindsay Burr MBE, Stephanie Duckett, David Jeffels (as substitute for Joe Plant), Cliff Lunn, Zoe Metcalfe, Richard Musgrave, Gill Quinn and Annabel Wilkinson.

Co-opted Members: Paul Bircumshaw, Dr Tom Cavell-Taylor, David Sharp (North Yorkshire Youth) and David Watson

In attendance. County Councillors Patrick Mulligan (Executive Member)

Officers: Ray Busby (Scrutiny Officer (Central Services)), Stuart Carlton (Corporate Director Children and Young Peoples Services), Howard Emmett (Assistant Director - Strategic Resources (CYPS), Integrated Finance (CSD)), Judith Kirk, Assistant Director Education and Skills, Education and Skills

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors John Mann, Stuart Martin MBE and Joe Plant

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

163. Minutes

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2019 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

164. Any Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to note.

165. Public Questions

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

166. School Attainment

Considered –

Published report “Education as our greatest liberator – 208 Attainment” presented by Judith Kirk.

Judith explained that the 2018 Attainment results demonstrated that North Yorkshire children are on the whole achieving well in reading, writing and maths. We have much to be proud of. Results in Key Stage 4 in particular stand out as a success story.

The strong improvement in attainment for children receiving SEN support at primary school is welcome. Performance for children with Education, Health and Care Plans is broadly in line with benchmarks at early years and primary, and above benchmarks at Key Stage 4. In the light of the known, significant budget pressures associated with these areas (both are significant contributors to the previously reported overspend), the committee had already decided to look at how the directorate is working to ensure these pupils, and other disadvantaged students, are receiving the appropriate support.

Members commented that despite the identifiable improvement over the previous year, some areas are manifestly a challenge. Results in Key Stage 2, although improved, show levels of attainment in maths stubbornly resistant to the levels of improvement we all want to see. School standards in the coast remain an issue for the committee, although it is reassuring that the Coastal Opportunity Area should help to redress the imbalance.

Judith advised that long standing performance challenges around children eligible for free school meals remain, with this cohort above national benchmarks for school absence and over-represented in terms of exclusions.

The Chairman commented that these are all areas which have consistently featured prominently in our work programme and, in the light of the report, will do so over the next year.

Resolved –

That the report be received

167. School Improvement: Supporting Underperforming Schools

Considered –

Report of the Assistant Director: Education and Skills on:

- a) Support for underperforming primary, secondary, special and PRUs according to the school improvement strategy prioritisation categories
- b) the current position in April 2019
- c) North Yorkshire area profile: underperforming schools in the four locality areas

Judith Kirk explained that The School Improvement Strategy 2019-21 recognises that it is the responsibility of school leaders to secure improvement in their schools. As part of the working partnership with schools, the local authority will act as champions of educational excellence for children and young people, working with early years settings, maintained schools, academies, free and independent schools to forge strong professional relationships through school networks and teaching school alliances.

Members liked the way the quality assurance role was being exercised, effectively monitored and challenged across all schools regardless of whether they were LA maintained or academies. In members' opinion, the four prioritisation categories adopted to judge and assess the risk in the quality of education being provided and

where necessary respond to these risks, were found to be transparent, practical and effective. This clearly assists the directorate to reach an agreement about the intervention required, enabling the local authority to deliver its statutory functions, manage risks, target appropriate interventions and help those schools and institutions who are causing concern.

Members acknowledged that the numbers of schools deemed to be in a position where intervention is necessary (priorities 3 and 4) is relatively small. Judith reassured the committee that there is a well-established process for identifying schools causing concern and clear arrangements for focussed and timely interventions in those schools with a range of options being used and/or available .

Resolved –

That the report be received

168. School Governance

Considered -

Report by Stuart Boothman, Lead Adviser, on Governance – particularly the extent to which schools are transparent and open about their decision making. The report also focused on (the changing) Roles and Responsibilities of Parent Governors.

The report attracted a good deal of discussion on how the traditional role of school governors changes significantly when a school becomes an Academy.

For members, this report highlighted, yet again, an important discussion the committee has not yet had: the relationship between Multi Academy Trusts and the local communities served by schools under Trust management. Members were of a mind to take this further, but believed more thought is needed on how we should best approach such a complex topic.

Resolved –

- a) That the report be received
- b) That consideration be given at a future meeting as to what scrutiny could achieve by reviewing the relationship between Multi Academy Trusts and the local communities served by schools under Trust management,

169. 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 Chairman reminded the committee that in December 2018 members had looked at the prevalence and experience of North Yorkshire children of compulsory school age whose parents opt, as is their right in law, to educate their child at home instead of sending them to school - referred to as Elective Home Education (EHE). In the light of guidance published last month which reflects legal advice received by the Government indicating that local authorities' powers in relation to home education often go further than was previously thought, she was minded to hold another more detailed session to examine the topic further.

Resolved –

- a) Members again confirmed that the content of the Work Programme report and the Work Programme schedule are noted.
- b) It was agreed that the committee review:
 - Disabled Children Service - Current challenges, priorities activity, covering how we are meeting needs in more inclusive and enabling ways.
 - Young People with additional needs Transitioning to Adulthood - How NYCC supports and offers guidance to a young person aged 14 to 25 with special educational needs or a disability. Including access to education, training and employment, and to live as independently as possible. This may be best tackled in a joint informal session with Care and Independence Scrutiny Committee.
 - School deficits and overspend programme of action: progress.
 - Annual Report/Update on Children Safeguarding Board.
 - Supporting children in and out of education who have medical condition, especially a chronic (life threatening) illness.

The meeting concluded at 12.45pm
RB