

## North Yorkshire County Council

### Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

28 February 2020

#### Work Programme

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report invites Members to consider the committee's work programme for 2020/21, taking into account the outcome of discussions on previous agenda items and any other developments taking place across the county.
- 1.2 The work programme schedule is attached at Appendix 1.

#### **2.0 Scheduled Committee dates/Mid-Cycle Briefing dates**

##### 2.1 Committee Meetings

- Friday 26 June 2020 at 10am
- Friday 4 September 2020 at 10am
- Friday 11 December 2020 at 10am
- Friday 26 February 2021 at 10am

##### 2.2 Mid Cycle Briefing Dates

- Friday 3 April 2020 at 10am
- Friday 29 May 2020 at 10am
- Friday 24 July 2020 at 10am
- Friday 16 October 2020 at 10am

#### **3.0 Small School closures**

- 3.1 In June last year you learned that finances remain challenging for a number of North Yorkshire's schools (an update is before this committee meeting). Then, members noted the number of small schools, especially those in rural areas, which were finding it difficult to manage the financial pressures. A discussion followed about those that appear to have no alternative but to consider closure – rather than, for example, confederation or collaborative arrangements.
- 3.2 You speculated that falling school rolls are often caused by changes in the makeup of the local area – limited job opportunities, local shops failing, and so on.
- 3.3 At the recent mid cycle briefing, members examined recent cases of local authority maintained schools which had proceeded to full closure. Some themes stood out:

- i. **Low pupil numbers** - A drop in numbers increases concern around the financial sustainability of the school and its ability to provide good quality education.
  - ii. **Breadth of curriculum** - Small school with declining numbers on roll limits the range of personal and academic challenges.
  - iii. **Adverse Financial position** - Pupil numbers determine a school's budget. A number of schools had an in-year deficit position. *"The local authority's ability to support schools experiencing financial difficulties is now limited and small schools became vulnerable following the introduction of a national funding formula which is largely driven by pupil numbers"*.
  - iv. **Leadership** – problems recruiting leadership teaching staff.
- 3.4 Members were pleased that the directorate had set out the position clearly and appropriately. In the light of information given and the evidence in front of them, those who attended believed that the directorate had demonstrated a clear understanding of the issues founded on robust information and data, with procedures and practices being well thought through and carried out effectively.
- 3.5 The consensus was that there was no advantage, in terms of scrutiny, in committing to any further work, but group spokespersons agreed to keep a weather eye over the topic - perhaps by looking occasionally at "live" cases - and bring it to your attention when that would be useful.
- 3.6 One of the elements in this discussion – Teacher Recruitment - is a topic at your meeting.

#### **4.0 Annual Report of the Looked After Children's Group**

- 4.1 This has now been deferred to your June committee meeting.

#### **5.0 Working with Academies**

- 5.1 At your June 2019 meeting, you agreed to review the relationship between Multi Academy Trusts and the local communities served by schools under Trust management.
- 5.2 The mid cycle briefing looked at the council's relationship with Academies and the breakdown of responsibilities between the two bodies. Much of this relationship is governed by stature, is prescriptive and is comprehensively documented. There was no immediate future benefit, members concluded, in planning for a thematic review of how local authorities and academies /MATS work together.
- 5.3 A more fruitful approach would be to continue to factor in the significance of how this relationship works in practice when topics fall to be scrutinised - like SEND, exclusions, attainment, admissions, and so on.
- 5.4 Having said that, members did weigh up the merits of doing a piece of work around the central place schools have in their community. It is well known that

what happens in school has a massive impact on its community for generations to come – yet schools can sometimes be insular and isolated from the outside community.

5.5 Strong links with the community can make a particular contribution to the work of schools serving disadvantaged communities. They have been shown to help raise educational standards and close the achievement gap between rich and poor children. In such contexts schools are often keen to raise aspirations of their children and parents, which can work when you take a 'neighbourhood' approach.

5.6 Early thoughts on what would be a useful line of enquiry included:

*How do schools and Trusts relate to the communities they serve.*

- Does the board of trustees have an outward focus, is it set up and encouraged to do so?
- Are effective and meaningful arrangements in place to engage with parents and the wider community to seek their views and feedback, which in turn informs the scrutiny provided by trustees and supports greater accountability.
- What resources are being tapped into?
- What are schools/trusts doing already?
- What new partnerships could be forged?
- What are schools/Trusts doing to help build the capacity of the local community?
- Are academies seen as a good neighbour in the community?
- Does the geographical spread of schools in MATs make sense? Does it avoid geographical isolation? Do trusts have a local focus, or a series of hubs which facilitate the sharing of good practice.

5.7 Work on this scale would not be a light undertaking. In terms of method, it could lend itself to an initial call for evidence being sent out, followed up by a series of conversations with schools – whatever their governance arrangements - to establish why some schools have a strong track record; what are they doing which others might find helpful to emulate.

5.8 The Chairman and I are giving this further consideration and will come forward with our thoughts and options.

## **6.0 Next committee items**

6.1 Your June committee meeting will receive an update on the authority's offer to special educational needs and disabilities in children and young people. Given this is such a wide ranging subject, members may wish to give notice of elements they would want officers to cover.

6.2 At the same meeting, the Chairman has also agreed to take an update report on the North Yorkshire Coast Opportunity Area Programme, and has added the "Annual Attainment Report "Education is Our Greatest Liberator"" to the agenda business.

6.3 Having seen the last Executive Performance information and data, the Chairman is minded to look at the continued challenges within Key Stage 2 in certain areas of our North Yorkshire schools especially within Reading, Writing and Math's. The committee could consider what support it can give.

## **7.0 Recommendation**

7.1 The Committee is asked to confirm, comment or add to the areas of work listed in the Work Programme schedule.

DANIEL HARRY  
SCRUTINY TEAM LEADER  
County Hall,  
Northallerton

Author and Presenter of Report: Ray Busby  
Contact Details: Tel: 01609 532655  
E-mail: [ray.busby@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:ray.busby@northyorks.gov.uk)

19 February 2020  
Background Documents Nil

## YOUNG PEOPLES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Scope**

The interests of young people, including education, care and protection and family support.

**Meeting Details**

Committee Meetings	Friday 28 February 2020 at 10am
	Friday 4 September 2020 at 10am
	Friday 11 December 2020 at 10am
	Friday 26 February 2021 at 10am

**Programme**

<b>Friday 28 February 2020 Committee Meeting at 10am</b>			
TOPIC	CONTENT	APPROACH	LEAD
Teacher recruitment - the Rural Challenge	The challenges faced by schools, especially those in rural areas, in recruiting teaching staff.	Report and Presentation	Judith Kirk
School deficits and Financial Pressures	Update on position and action undertaken	Analysis report	Howard Emmett
<b>Friday 26 June 2020 Committee Meeting at 10am</b>			
TOPIC	CONTENT	APPROACH	LEAD
Report of the Young Peoples Champion	Account of Activity over the past year. Discussion of Issues and challenges – especially connected with inclusion and engagement of young people.	Consideration of report.	Cllr Annabel Wilkinson
SEND Strategy	Update on Progress against Strategic Plan	Report and presentation	Jane le Sage
Education is Our Greatest Liberator	Annual Update Report		

LAC Annual Report	Account of LAC members activity over the last 12-18 months	Report and presentation	Annabel Wilkinson assisted by Julie Bunn and Vicky Metheringham
North Yorkshire Coast Opportunity Area Programme	Update on Progress	Report and presentation	Richard Benstead
<b>Friday 4 September 2020 Committee Meeting at 10am</b>			
<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>CONTENT</b>	<b>APPROACH</b>	<b>LEAD</b>
Adoption procedures	An overview of Adoption arrangements, including planned work on the directorate's policies and procedures in relation to adoption.		Martin Kelly and Mel Hutchinson
Young people and Sex Education; Managing Risk and Safeguarding	How young people are helped to learn about the emotional, social and physical aspects of growing up. How we support schools to equip young people with the information, skills and values to have safe, fulfilling and enjoyable relationships and to take responsibility for their sexual-health and well-being.	Linked to Healthy Child Programme changes	
Children, Adolescents and the Media (online networks, social inclusion and bullying)	The challenging social and health issues that online youth experience. Benefits and Risks of Youth using social media. Examination of the core issues of bullying, popularity and status, depression and social anxiety, risk-taking, and sexual development.	Consideration of Implications. Particular focus on Cyberbullying and Online Harassment. Possible witness sessions.	
Young Carers	Especially those who support adults with mental health issues. The practical and emotional support made available to young people to ensure they enjoy and achieve, just like their peers. How NYCC works in partnership with schools, and GPs to identify young carers, raise much-needed awareness of their situation, and offer the support that they need, when they need it.	Consideration of Briefing Paper	

**Mid Cycle Briefing Items**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Probable Item</b>
3 April 2020	The Citizenship Agenda: Education and Democratic Citizenship Healthy Child Programme – possible briefing on progress of commissioning arrangements