

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

Minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2016 at 10.30 am at County Hall, Northallerton.

**Present:** - County Councillor Janet Jefferson in the chair

County Councillors: Eric Broadbent (as substitute for John Ritchie), Lindsay Burr MBE, Liz Casling, Bill Houlton (as substitute for Elizabeth Shields) David Ireton, David Jeffels, Cliff Lunn, Joe Plant, Cliff Trotter and Robert Windass (as substitute for Val Arnold)

Co-opted Members: Mr Graham Richards (Church of England), Mr Paul Bircumshaw (Secondary Teacher representative), Simon Hills and David Sharp (Voluntary Sector).

In attendance: Councillor Janet Sanderson (Executive Member).

Officers: Ray Busby (Corporate Development Officer (Central Services)), Pete Dwyer (Corporate Director of CYPS), Michelle Allison (Head of SEN, Inclusion (CYPS)), Julie Firth (Head of Effective Practice & Quality Assurance, (CYPS)), Emma Thomas (Commissioning Manager Health, Strategy and Commissioning (CYPS))

Apologies for absence were received from: Louise Adler (Primary Teacher representative), County Councillor A Backhouse, Pam Crabtree (Roman Catholic Church representative), Jeremy Noot (Parent Governor Member), County Councillor Elizabeth Shields and Dr Tom Cavell-Taylor (Parent Governor).

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

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**82. Minutes**

**Resolved –**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2015 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**83. Public Questions**

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

**84. Prevention Service Implementation**

Considered -

The report of the Corporate Director - Children and Young People's Service asking the Committee to consider how the new April 2015 Children and Families Service (which incorporated the new Prevention Service and the mainstreaming of our Stronger Families approach) is working in practice and what impact it is making on outcomes.

Members were advised that in April 2015, the Committee reviewed the range of prevention services that had been implemented by the Directorate. Julie Firth explained that the aim of this change programme was to bring together a range of preventative work, but for it to be managed in a different way, thus creating a service

which operates seamlessly throughout the 0-19 age range. The aim was to eliminate duplication and unhelpful transitions for families and reduction of numbers of children and young people requiring more intensive and more costly interventions through Children's Social Care and other services.

One year on, the staffing structure of 12 Area Teams appears to have embedded well and to be achieving better outcomes for children and young people and families, characterised by a seamless service for all children and young people. Evidence was provided of clear and strong signs of: engagement; of practical hands-on support for the whole family approach; of increasingly positive attempts to capture the voice of the child the young person in the family; and of the use of evidence around interventions improving practice generally.

Emma Thomas highlighted the progress on the 5-19 and 0-5 Healthy Child Programme.

Pete Dwyer spoke about the significant budget reductions to prevention and social care - £8m in total – which made the achievements so far, impressive, especially in terms of numbers of referrals to Children's Social Care, and the lowest numbers of looked after children in six years. A 25% reduction in child protection and the lowest numbers of young people in custody are further, pleasing signs that the changes have been a success.

The Committee heard from a Luke Rodgers regarding his looked after experience. After a challenging start in life, characterised by a series of placement breakdowns, Luke has made an inspirational success of being a social entrepreneur as the Founder & Director of Foster Focus. He talked passionately and sensitively about the need for honest communication with young people, especially as part of the fostering process. On so many occasions in the past - in relation to assessments for example - a young person in the care system was, fundamentally, seen as a problem and many authorities' assessments were unhelpfully framed in that way. Luke explained to us that by changing the mind-set and how agencies view a young person, by engaging with them about the care they experience, the statistics for children in care can be dramatically improved. By empowering young people's ideas, we can unlock their potential and create organisational structures that are child focused and better the life chances for children in care

#### **Resolved -**

- a) That the report be noted
- b) That the Chairman as part of her statement to Council, include reference to:
  - The overall assessment of the Committee that the framework of new prevention services, which has been operational for just one year, is already achieving rapid and highly impressive results,
  - Implementation, which involved a complex assimilation and transformation process with many staff moving into the new structure, has been handled efficiently and sensitively.

#### **85. Revised Short Breaks: Consideration of report to be taken by Executive**

##### **Considered -**

The report of the Corporate Director - Children and Young People's Service outlining the Local Authority's statutory responsibilities in relation to the provision of Short

Breaks and seeking approval for the implementation of a revised model for the allocation of the discretionary short break grant with effect from 1 May 2016 following public consultation.

Michelle Allison explained that In April last year the Committee considered a draft strategy to support disabled children and young people and their families which, when implemented, provided an increased focus on light touch interventions for families to meet needs and reduce the number of families who may require access to higher cost statutory services. As part of the change, it was agreed that the proposed budget reduction for discretionary short break grants from £150,000 to £100,000 per annum should be deferred pending consultation. We were interested to see how this would unfold.

The group spokespersons reported that after reviewing the results, they were satisfied that the views expressed during the consultation exercise have been carefully and sensitively crafted into a proposed model which not only combines good practice from other local authorities, but which also devises a system to better manage short break grants against a reducing budget. The introduction of appropriate qualifying criteria will promote better targeting for families who need support the most. The previous system, whilst inclusive, had not required substantial evidence of need. Better management and scrutiny of the current budget will enable appropriate levels of support.

**Resolved -**

- a) That the proposal be supported.
- b) The effect of the introduction of the revised scheme be reviewed in one years' time.

**86. 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.

Ray Busby reported on the planned approach for the meeting to be held on the 15 April regarding the proposal to amalgamate Caedmon College and Eskdale Schools at Whitby.

**Resolved -**

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

In the light of comments made throughout the meeting, the following items be added to the work programme

- Parent Governors and their responsibilities
- A follow up to the work on Voice, Participation and Influence

The meeting concluded at 1pm

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