

North Yorkshire County Council

Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2017 at 10.30am at County Hall, Northallerton.

Present: County Councillor Janet Jefferson in the Chair.

Councillors: Val Arnold, Stephanie Duckett, Keane Duncan, Cliff Lunn, John Mann, Stuart Martin MBE, Zoe Metcalfe, Joe Plant, Gill Quinn and Annabel Wilkinson.

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

In attendance: Executive Member: County Councillor Patrick Mulligan

Officers: Ray Busby (Corporate Development Officer (Central Services)), William Burchill (Admissions Manager, Strategy and Commissioning (CYPS)) Andrew Dixon (Strategic Planning Manager, Education and Skills (CYPS))

Apologies for absence were received from: Louise Alder, Councillor Lindsay Burr MBE, Pam Crabtree, Mel Hobson. David Watson (North Yorkshire Sport).

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

122. Minutes

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2017 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

123. Any Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to note.

124. Public Questions

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

125. School Place Planning – Shaping Future Education Provision

Considered –

Report of the Corporate Director for Childrens Services updating the Committee on the overall picture, both current and forecast, in terms of pupil numbers in North Yorkshire schools and report on the issues and challenges for school place planning in North Yorkshire.

Andrew Dixon explained that despite the current diversity of the school system, including the more recent addition of non-maintained academies and free schools, the council continues to be responsible for ensuring that every child living in North Yorkshire is able to access a school place. However, this duty sits alongside the increasing number of self-governed academies, multi-academy trusts and free schools and therefore the role of the council is to work in partnership with all education providers. In November 2017 there were 351 mainstream Primary or Secondary schools in North Yorkshire. 38 of our 309 Primary schools and 14 of our 42 Secondary schools are academies. The 52 academies are under the control of 20 different Academy Trusts.

The overall goal of the school place planning function is to have North Yorkshire schools in the right place relative to where children and families live, providing high quality education and facilities which keep young people safe and inspire them to learn. In a changing education landscape we cannot deliver it alone; we must work well with partners. Our statutory duty remains very clear – this is to ensure a strong supply of high quality school places, in premises that are fit for purpose.

Andrew explained that:

- the strategy adopted helps us ensure that we meet that duty by commissioning from providers of all kinds the right number of school places in the right locations, at the time they are needed, and having sufficient funding in place to achieve this.
- The LA works closely with the Regional Schools Commissioner to share and shape the issues around school improvement, school organisation and place planning in North Yorkshire. Discussions are regular and ongoing and there is a termly meeting between the RSC and the Corporate Director for CYPS together with their respective senior staff

In response to Members questions, the committee was advised that:

- A large proportion of North Yorkshire's Schools are faith based covered by the 4 different Diocesan Authorities which cover the County. Good liaison arrangements enables a co-ordinated approach to school improvement, school organisation and school place planning for the Diocesan schools.
- We are working closely with District Councils to understand the infrastructure impacts of proposals for housing to ensure that such developments are sustainable.

The situation on pupil numbers especially attracted members' attention in the meeting. A number of local issues were raised. Members heard that North Yorkshire has historically had a significant level of surplus school places in both primary and secondary schools as pupil numbers have fallen. Approximately 13.9% of primary places and 20% of secondary places are currently surplus. These places are distributed unevenly across individual schools and across areas. Many of them are in small rural schools where the younger population is reducing. In other places there are highly successful and popular schools which are at or above capacity and where numbers are growing.

Officers continuously monitor the fluctuating numbers against net capacity within schools in order to identify where shortfalls may be emerging

Resolved –

- a) The committee concluded that:
- in what is always a sensitive area of provision, there are clear, well-though through proposed solutions for meeting the demand in each of the affected areas.
 - Systems for forecasting pupil numbers are robust and effective, county and district-wide pupil forecasts are updated annually. Every term pupil forecasts for each planning area and for individual schools are refreshed. Individual school forecasts take account of the actual numbers of pupils in schools as well as the impact of forecast changes to the birth rate and migration.
- b) The committee asked the Chairman to reflect the discussion and report the committee's findings in her Statement to Council

126. School Admissions

Considered –

- a) Line of Enquiry prepared by the Scrutiny Team Leader setting out an approach for reviewing school admission arrangements in the County.
- b) Report of the Corporate director for Children's Services updating the Committee on school admissions and give an overview of the customer journey.

William Burchill highlighted key features in the report.

In recent legislation and regulation the government has reaffirmed the local authority's duty to ensure fair access to educational provision. The current Admissions code was published on 19 December 2014.

The changing and diverse educational governance of school admissions makes ever more complex the role the authority plays. We continue to work with all schools acting as the admission authority for our community and voluntary controlled schools, and advisor and critical friend to our increasing numbers of academies and voluntary aided schools. Through review of own admission authority policies, coordination of "Bulk" admissions and traded services with schools carrying out the administration of the admissions and appeals process, we work hard to ensure that all schools are compliant with the regulations and Codes.

Resolved –

The committee concluded that:

- Evidence suggests NYCC consults properly and effectively each year on proposed admission arrangements.
 - Our admissions arrangements are clear, compliant and effective:
- c) The committee return to the subject of admissions with a light touch progress review at the conclusion this year's admissions cycle

127. 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.

Resolved -

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

The meeting concluded at 12.30pm

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