

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

21 FEBRUARY 2024

STATEMENT OF CHAIR

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Feedback from the Executive on 28 November 2023

I informed Members of the matters that I had raised at the above meeting and the responses to these from the Executive Members and the Corporate Director.

Special Educational Needs and Disability Provision in the Scarborough and Whitby Area – Report of the Task and Finish Group

Councillor Liz Colling, who chaired the Task and Finish Group, presented its report. It is available to view [here](#)

Councillor Colling outlined the background; the scope; and how the Group had gone about its work.

The twelve suggested actions were in four categories:

- Schools
- External communication
- Internal processes and liaison with partners
- Wider working with the third sector

The Corporate Director for Children and Young People's Service thanked Members of the Task and Finish Group. He was pleased that the range of complex issues had come through. He accepted the findings, which did not contain anything that the Directorate is not aware of.

Members felt that this had been a good piece of scrutiny and a good report and supported the recommendations which will now be considered by Scarborough and Whitby Area Constituency Committee and the Executive at meetings on 22 March and 16 April 2024, respectively.

Children and Young People's Mental Health

We considered a presentation and report by Dr. Gill Kelly, Public Health Consultant, and colleagues.

The report and presentation are available [here](#) and comprised three principal elements:-

- The impact of social isolation and disruption to education on children and young people's mental health (particularly around the on-going legacy effect of pandemic isolation and disruption).
- The level of that impact – is it primarily low level anxiety, or more profound?
- An update on demand pressures and unmet need.

Dr. Kelly outlined the challenges faced, together with the services available to help children and young people. These challenges include the fact that the whole population has become less resilient in recent times and a shortage of staff.

She advised that the role of professionals is to focus on prevention, resilience, wellbeing and providing additional support as required. Our message to children and young people is: *It is OK not to feel happy all of the time*. It is perfectly normal. It is alright to have worries – the key thing is to have people to talk to.

Dr. Kelly concluded that children are amazing and there is a dedicated and professional workforce.

Officers responded to a number of questions from Members including:-

- Whether rurality accounts for any significant differences in people's mental health.
- The variance in waiting times between areas.
- How services strike the right balance between being proactive and reactive.

North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2022/2023

Heather Pearson, Executive Chair and Independent Scrutineer of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP) delivered a presentation, which included the Annual Report. The documents are available to view [here](#).

Among the points she highlighted were:-

- There has been good progress against the priorities in each of the themes in Being Young in North Yorkshire 2021-2024 – the NYSCP Strategy for children and young people living in North Yorkshire.
- Challenges include the increase (11%) in the number of children being electively home educated and making online activities as safe as possible.
- Capturing the voice of the child is paramount to partners. There are a number of ways in which this occurs such as The Youth Commission.

Officers responded to a number of questions from Members including:-

- Whether there has been any discussion to extend the age range to 25, to match the age for which the Council is responsible to young people, as corporate parents
- Whether there is a mechanism for asking the Voluntary Sector how it has contributed to the four themes in Being Young in North Yorkshire

Looking ahead

We have a very full Agenda for our next meeting on 28 February but we decided that we would run with all of the Items as that means we will have covered everything that we had intended to during 2023/2024. The Items due for consideration are-

- Schools Update
- Transitions
- Healthy Child Programme
- North Yorkshire Substance Use Strategy
- Director of Public Health – Annual Report 2023

COUNCILLOR BARBARA BRODIGAN

19 JANUARY 2024