

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 11 December 2020 at 10am.

**Present:** County Councillor Janet Jefferson in the Chair.

County Councillors: Val Arnold, Lindsay Burr MBE, Stephanie Duckett, Cliff Lunn, Zoe Metcalfe, Richard Musgrave, Gillian Quinn, Joe Plant and Annabel Wilkinson.

Co-opted Members: Stephen Maltby (Primary Teacher Representative), David Sharp (North Yorkshire Youth), Ross Strachan (Secondary Teacher Representative) Tom Cavell-Taylor (Governor representative) and David Watson (North Yorkshire Sport)

Portfolio Holders: Cllrs Patrick Mulligan and Janet Sanderson.

Officers: Ray Busby (Principal Scrutiny Officer (Central Services)), Stuart Carlton, Howard Emmett (Assistant Director - Strategic Resources (CYPS) Integrated Finance (CSD)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stuart Martin MBE,

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

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### **201. Minutes**

#### **Resolved –**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2020 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **202. Any Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest to note.

### **203. Public Questions**

There were no public questions or statements

### **204. Covid Winter Grant Scheme - funding allocation for North Yorkshire County Council**

#### **Considered –**

A report of the Corporate Director for Children Services:

- a) responding to the committee's request for information on how the Children and Young Families Service is supporting vulnerable children and families during the Covid pandemic;
- b) setting out the funding allocation for North Yorkshire County Council and the conditions of grant relating to the Covid Winter Grant Scheme; and
- c) setting out the local eligibility framework and the approach which will be deployed for the Covid Winter Grant allocation to support vulnerable households and families with children affected by the pandemic.

The committee noted that the Chief Executive acting under Emergency powers had agreed these proposals.

Howard Emmett and Stuart Carlton explained that, in the autumn, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), announced funding for local authorities to meet this objective. Prompt action was essential if we were to be ready to deliver the scheme by early December 2020.

Howard took members through the details of the scheme and how it would be implemented in North Yorkshire.

Members expressed their support for the principle of a scheme of grant payments to schools and academies, early years' providers and post-16 schools and colleges. Funding allocations will also be made to support eligible Care Leavers and through the North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund (NYLAF).

Members agreed that the framework sets out the conditions very clearly.

#### **Resolved –**

- a) That the report be received.
- b) Members expressed the view that:
  - (i) The eligibility framework agreed would ensure North Yorkshire County Council's allocation of £1,435,400.85 was being deployed wisely and effectively.
  - (ii) The grant will undoubtedly provide support to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic throughout the winter period where alternative sources of assistance may be unavailable.

### **205. Portfolio Holder Statement: Free School Meals and related matters**

#### **Considered –**

Cllr Patrick Mulligan updated the committee on Free School Meals and related matters. He expanded upon the issues covered by the Covid Grant report.

Schools and colleges receiving allocations should organise the purchase and distribution of food vouchers or supermarket vouchers for eligible households and individuals. To enable households and individuals to retain maximum choice in their purchase of food and essential items, those recipients should avoid the purchase and distribution of hampers, without the prior written consent of the Council. To minimise the risk of fraud, recipients should not, under any circumstances disburse the grant as cash payments to households.

All these measures had scrutiny members' support.

**Resolved –**

That the information given be noted

**206. Coastal Opportunities Programme**

**Considered –**

Presentation by Richard Benstead, Programme Director, North Yorkshire Coast Opportunities Area, Education and Skills (CYPS)

Richard explained that the opportunity area has achieved so much since the early successes of the Scarborough Pledge - a £750,000 investment by NYCC to raise aspirations and improve prospects for children and young people. In July 2020, the programme was extended for a further year to August 2021 and an additional £1m was allocated.

The scheme's successes include:

- Raised attainment in In Key Stages 1 and 2 across the borough.
- Improved Behaviour and Exclusion rates.
- Recruitment: Filled 200+ teacher and support role vacancies across 43 schools, bringing 38 teachers and support professionals from outside the area.
- Improved access and provision of speech and language support.
- Initiatives to improve and encourage a love of Maths.
- Initiatives to improve Literacy.

Richard highlighted some of the challenges that remain:

- The programme is currently funded only until August 2021.
- Scarborough remains well below the national average in all indicators of attainment in education. Covid-19 is having a further negative impact on attainment in the area and future social mobility.
- There are a small number of bigger primary schools with high levels of disadvantage and lower levels of attainment –some are maintained schools and others are academies. Attempts to improve these schools have had limited successes.
- Attainment in secondary schools has shown limited improvement. However, this has been a time of considerable change in secondary schools. Those with weaker performance now have stronger leadership and there are signs of further improvement.

Members agreed that clearly much of the success comes down to having a dedicated and significant resource. This has enabled genuinely positive outcomes to be achieved in terms of tackling disadvantage and underachievement.

Recognising, however, that performance has not been consistent across all areas of the county, the Chairman stated that the challenge would be not only to sustain improvements in the medium and longer term but also to spread and share the lessons learned and embed good practice where possible.

### **Resolved-**

- a) That the report be received.
- b) The Committee review again next year the continuing benefits and learning from the Coastal Opportunities programme

## **207. Impact of Covid on Youth Organisations**

The committee discussed the Impact of Covid on Youth Organisations. The two co-opted members from the Community and Voluntary sector helped the committee understand the seriousness of the challenges.

Topics and themes covered in discussion included:

- For young people, and especially for vulnerable youth, the COVID-19 crisis poses considerable risks in the fields of education, employment, mental health and disposable income. Evidence shows that young people aged 12–24 years are one of the worst affected groups, particularly in terms of the labour market and mental health outcomes.
- Lockdown has significantly impacted on young people's wider relationships - at such an important time in their lives - the period between 12 and 24 is a critical time for creating and maintaining relationships with family, friends and the wider community.
- There are questions about the worsening impact of Covid upon youth organisations – especially those providers that help vulnerable young people thrive - creative arts, theatre, music, sports, outward leisure centres and what this means for their future operational sustainability.
- Nationally, youth services have taken a significant hit during the pandemic with an estimated one in five youth centres not expected to reopen after lockdown.
- Youth work is a massive community asset that builds confidence and boosts self-esteem. It aids personal relationships and helps young people manage personal and social relationships. These organisations tend to rely on volunteer work and already face major challenges in accessing sustained and flexible funding. Many youth organisations have been able to adapt their physical spaces and their operations, with limited resources, but for how long this can continue is in doubt.

### **Resolved-**

- a) The committee recognised that reduced access to youth work provision, including outdoor activities, safe spaces and contact with trusted professional youth workers may have a significantly adverse effect on upon young people's physical and mental health.
- b) Members agreed to further their interest in this area, especially in relation to the provision of outward bound and leisure provision.

## **208. 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 reported that the Executive forward plan included an item in relation to the Youth Accommodation Pathway. The expected timing was such that, with members' agreement, this subject would be the main item at the next committee meeting. The expectation was that the committee would effectively be a consultee once the proposals were subject to a formal consultation process.

**Resolved –**

Members again confirmed the content of the Work Programme.

The meeting concluded at 12.20pm

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