

North Yorkshire County Council

Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 26 February 2021 at 9.30am.

Present: County Councillor Janet Jefferson in the Chair.

County Councillors: Val Arnold, , Stephanie Duckett, Cliff Lunn, Zoe Metcalfe, Stuart Martin MBE, 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)

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, Amanda Newbold, Assistant Director Education and Skills, Education and Skills,

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lindsay Burr MBE, Tom Cavell-Taylor (Governor representative) and David Watson (North Yorkshire Sport)

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

209. Minutes

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2021 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

210. Any Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to note.

211. Public Questions

There were no public questions or statements

212. Portfolio Holder Statement and Update to Committee - County Councillor Patrick Mulligan

The Chair had invited the Portfolio Holder to give an update on educational issues facing the local authority.

Patrick Mulligan covered general issues around CYPS and schools budget, schools and online learning and the challenges to come around supporting schools to reopen. In particular, he highlighted his views that:

- Schools had adjusted well to the changed definition of the attendance of vulnerable children.
- Placing a requirement upon schools to provide remote learning had improved service across the whole county, especially in remote rural areas.
- It was too early to comment upon the then recently announced £700m package for further elements of the recovery support package so children and young people can catch up on missed learning and development due to the pandemic. In principle, he believed the idea of a Covid recovery grant – one that helps pupils catch up is a welcome approach. The expectation was that funding would go directly through the school route.

Getting the testing regime right would be extremely challenging, especially for secondary schools but, overall, he sensed there was high level of confidence that the return to schools had been prepared for well.

Resolved –

That the report be received.

213. Portfolio Holder Statement and Update to Committee - County Councillor Janet Sanderson

The Chairman had invited the Portfolio Holder to address the committee on the impact of the pandemic on NYCC children's social care.

Janet Sanderson covered the general impact of the pandemic on children's social care - what has been achieved, what has been learned, how we now understand and manage risk. The key priority had to be maintaining delivery of a service rated outstanding. Janet explained how proud she was that officers, given the opportunity to explore innovative service delivery, had done this – at least in part - by constantly adapting to virtual and remote working.

There were many examples of where through innovative and creative working, across boundaries and with partners, we are supporting families and the staff who work with them in a flexible way.

Coping with the demands of the pandemic on children's social care has had significant financial implications, but flexibility of service provision has most likely been crucial in mitigating those effects and managing risk.

Resolved –

That the information given be noted

214. Review of Traded Services in Education and Skills due to Covid-19

Considered –

Report considered by the Executive at its 16 February meeting which sought seek approval to implement immediate short-term solutions to address the financial shortfall facing the Outdoor Learning Service due to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic.

The report raised the prospect of a strategic review of the service with the ambition to ensure a longterm sustainable operating model is developed and established, subject to detailed consideration and approval of a business case by the Executive later in 2021.

Amanda Newbold, Assistant Director Education and Skills, Education and Skills, introduced the report.

The committee supported the Executive's decision that, rather than mothballing, both sites be protected as soon as possible.

Amanda explained that the Executive also approved a strategic review being undertaken; one with the ambition of ensuring a long-term sustainable operating model is developed and established.

Recommendations resulting from the strategic review will be presented to the Executive later in the year.

Resolved-

- a) That the report be received.
- b) Members asked that this committee have the opportunity as early as its June meeting, to understand the key issues that review must address, and how it will go about its work.

215. 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 whilst the Executive forward plan still included an item in relation to the Youth Accommodation Pathway, it was not expected that it would be considered anytime soon. Members reiterated their desire to effectively be a consultee once the proposals were subject to a formal consultation process.

Ray Busby advised that at the next meeting the committee will review progress on the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy.

The Chairman advised of her interest in Elective Home Education (EHE) -the term used by the Department for Education (DfE) to describe parents' decisions to provide education for their children at home instead of sending them to school. She had noted from the Executive Monitoring document Best Start in Life, of the increasing numbers of parents who had opted for EHE. She asked that the committee review the circumstances around these figures.

Resolved –

That subject to the above, Members again confirmed the content of the Work Programme.

The meeting concluded at 11.20pm
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