

North Yorkshire County Council

Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 25 June 2021 at 10am.

Present: County Councillor Janet Jefferson in the Chair.

County Councillors: Val Arnold, Stephanie Duckett, Cliff Lunn, Stuart Martin MBE, Joe Plant, Gillian Quinn and Annabel Wilkinson.

Co-opted Members: David Sharp (North Yorkshire Youth), and David Watson (North Yorkshire Sport) Tom Cavell-Taylor (Governor representative)

Portfolio Holder: Janet Sanderson.

Officers: Ray Busby (Principal Scrutiny Officer (Central Services)), Tracey Lambert, Project Manager, Technology & Change (CSD), Amanda Newbold, Assistant Director Education and Skills, Education and Skills, Chris Reynolds (Head of SEND Strategic Planning and Resources, Inclusion (CYPS)) and Jane le Sage (Assistant Director Inclusion, Inclusion (CYPS))

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lindsay Burr MBE, John Mann, Zoe Metcalfe and Richard Musgrave
Ross Strachan (Secondary Teacher Representative), Stephen Maltby (Primary Teacher Representative)

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Patrick Mulligan.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

216. Minutes

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2021 having been printed and circulated be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of a reference to the fact that the co-opted Member, David Sharp, declared an interest during consideration at the previous meeting of the item on Outdoor Learning provision.

217. Any Declarations of Interest

David Sharp declared an interest in relation to item 6 on the agenda relating to Outdoor Learning Provision.

218. Public Questions

There were no public questions or statements

219. Chairman's Remarks

The Chair advised that the Portfolio Holder was unable to attend. It was hoped that Cllr Mulligan's update on educational issues facing the local authority could be deferred to the next Mid Cycle Briefing and a decision taken then on whether an item to the next full committee meeting would be in order. The Chair had also invited Portfolio Holder, Cllr Janet Sanderson to give an update at the September in relation to her area of responsibility.

Resolved –

That the report be received.

220. Outdoor Learning Service: Review

Amanda Newbold, Assistant Director Education and Skills, Education and Skills, introduced the presentation. She was joined by Tracey Lambert, Project Manager, Technology & Change (CSD).

Cllr Sanderson declared an interest in relation to her involvement in North Yorkshire Youth.

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

The presentation covered the first stages of the strategic review of the service since the report to the last meeting. The ambition is to ensure a long-term sustainable operating model is developed and established, subject to detailed consideration and approval of a business case by the Executive later in 2021.

Amanda explained that the project to ensure a long-term sustainable operating model inevitably started with a comprehensive assessment of those two key properties. Progress has also been made in consulting with young people, schools, users and staff local representatives. Many individual conversations and meetings have been held with staff groups, NY Sport, Head Teacher Network and School Governors.

Members agreed that there has been an effective data gathering exercise, assessing the customer base, use of the service, activities offered and costings.

Schools were the primary customers of both sites - 80% from North Yorkshire 20% outside the areas, comprising about 7000 children per year. Having ceased trading during 2020/21 due to COVID, the centres were able to start to accept some day trips during the summer term 2021, with the aim of continuing with these in September.

Cllr Plant asked that information be made available to members on the level of asbestos at the East Barnby site and how that might affect progress going forward.

In response to a question, Amanda confirmed that at the core of the review was the acknowledgment of the many benefits the service has in terms of levelling up, building confidence and resilience - all of those wider learning skills within the context of a residential experience.

Whilst the committee has not pressed for involvement in the next steps - Modelling of options and Preparation of the Outline Business Case, the Chair suggested that the committee formally reaffirm its commitment to scrutinise proposals as they emerge in September this year before the Executive decides the future of the service. This might require a special meeting in September.

Resolved –

That the information given be noted

221. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy: Update

Considered –

Presentation covering the trends in numbers and type of SEND, how the locality based infrastructure was settling in, and, more broadly, the means by which the SEND Strategic Plan was being implemented.

Jane le Sage (Assistant Director Inclusion, Inclusion (CYPS)) and Chris Reynolds (Head of SEND Strategic Planning and Resources, Inclusion (CYPS)) introduced the presentation.

The increase in numbers is dramatic. As of the end of March 2021, there were 3574 EHC plans funded by North Yorkshire. This is a 102% increase on the same point in 2015. Total EHC plans funded by North Yorkshire have increase two-fold between 2015 and 2021.

The percentage of children with EHC plans in schools in North Yorkshire has historically been lower than the national rate. In 2020, 1.5% of children in mainstream schools in North Yorkshire had an EHC plan, the rate nationally was 1.8% (1.7% in Yorkshire and Humber). The rate in North Yorkshire in 2021 is now 1.7%

The percentage of children recorded as SEN Support has also been historically lower, 11.2% in North Yorkshire mainstream schools in 2020 compared to 12.1% nationally (11.4% regionally, Yorkshire and Humber). The rate in North Yorkshire in 2021 is now 11.5%.

Fundamental to responding to this increase is the locality based approach. We supported the introduction of SEND hubs when originally proposed in the strategy; we can see now how effective these have been. The approach has resulted in increased support for families - alongside Early Help, Children and Families and NHS colleagues.

The system of locality boards is operating successfully, allowing local leaders to be involved in developments at local level and ensuring 'join up' across education leaders. They are providing the framework to enable dialogue and collective responsibility for performance at local level, sector led improvement and shaping provision and developments in the area on an ongoing basis. It was in this area, Jane believed, that voluntary sector involvement could enhance opportunities and awareness of what was happening in the individual localities.

Locality Inclusion Panels, which take responsibility for oversight of educational provision for vulnerable children at primary and secondary, are progressing well and, as intended, are addressing need directly.

The establishment of Parent Carer Voice in 2019 as the recognised SEND Parent Forum is ensuring a locality-based model of parent/carer groups in partnership with

the local authority. The level of user involvement in key reviews of services e.g. social care support for disabled children, development of the new SEND Local Area strategy, is especially welcome.

The investment in capacity for Specialist Provision will increase Special School places to over 1000 by Sept 2021, representing a 25% increase since 2017. Capital investment has been made creating Mowbray School at Ripon, with Selby Free School now at design phase, and £250k investment in Springwater on track for delivery Sept 21. Councillors local to the area, who were members of the committee, welcomed the development. Officers appreciated the support.

Resolved-

- a) That the report be received
- b) Overall, members were impressed at what has been achieved in developing the continuum of education provision across the county for now and the future.

222. 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 a number of members of this committee serve on the North Yorkshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education. At a recent SACRE meeting, its Annual Report for the School year 2019/20 was agreed for publication.

The SACRE Chair and supporting officers wanted to raise awareness of the work SACRE does. The Annual Report was an ideal starting point and was therefore taken to a members' briefing in May.

Members were in favour of arranging a similar exercise again next year – possibly at a full committee meeting. This would certainly raise awareness and the profile of SACRE, and it should allow for a more in-depth, informal discussion on matters relating to Religious Education. The overriding view was that the investment the council makes in supporting SACRE is good value, especially as RE has a key role to play in encouraging a broad and meaningful understanding of different faiths and views.

The Chair raised the issue of 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. In 2019, the committee concluded that the directorate had a good understanding of the issues associated with EHE, and robust procedures and practices. Since then we have seen a significant rise in the numbers of parents opting for EHE. She has asked that the committee be enabled to review:

- the circumstances around these figures;
- the steps taken to strengthen our capacity to support and assist parents to make an informed choice; and

- known factors behind the notable increases in numbers of parents opting for EHE during the Covid 19 pandemic and the questions that poses for the authority.

The expectation was an initial report would be made to the upcoming Mid Cycle Briefing when group spokespersons would be in a position to determine the level of subsequent committee attention.

Resolved –

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

The meeting concluded at 12:10pm
RB