

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

21 February 2007

STATEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER (Children's Services Issues, SEN, Special Schools, Youth Service and Youth Offending Team)

COUNTY COUNCILLOR CAROLINE PATMORE

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The MTFs for the Service reflects a background where the service has much to do to:

- address the Every Child Matters agenda including integrated locality based working, the introduction of the Common Assessment Framework, Information Sharing and above all leading a large Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership;
- address existing 'gaps' in provision for children especially preventative provision;
- continue the ambitious programme of seeking, against the national trend, to reduce spending on Children's Social Care placements – by less use of external provision;
- respond to weaknesses identified in the JAR Inspection report.

These issues are addressed in the very selective priorities included in the funding package as the developments have been financed exclusively from savings within the service. Indeed there is a net saving of £755K excluding inflation and funding charges.

The savings include ambitious targets to reduce administration costs in all parts of the service, reduce the impact of 'market forces' on the procurement of home to school transport and to further reduce the use of external placements for looked after children. The Service will also maximise the use of specific grants to address their intended purpose but, at the same time, achieve the developmental aim set out above.

Members will appreciate the risks in this strategy both in achieving the efficiency savings and in the great uncertainty regarding the availability and level of specific grants beyond 2007/08.

THE GREEN PAPER : CARE MATTERS

In response to the Government's Green Paper Care Matters -Transforming the lives of Children and Young People in Care - a consultation process was co-ordinated by the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership to provide a response to government.

A wide range of different partner agencies, practitioners, managers, elected members and children and young people were consulted to express their views on the Green Paper. Over 150 people were consulted, inter agency workshops were facilitated and a group of Looked After young people and Care Leavers came together to design their response to the governments proposals.

A 7000 word response from the professional community was approved in January by the North Yorkshire Children and Youth People's Strategic Partnership Board alongside a separate response from the children and young people themselves (copies available from Children's Social Care Unit : Paul Nixon, Ext 3569). We are awaiting the Government's response to this consultation report.

YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM (YOT)

North Yorkshire YOT received its final inspection report on 22 December 2006. The YOT scored '2' across all five core areas of work which was judged as 'adequate - meeting minimum requirements.'

A multi-agency stakeholders event was held on 24 January to bring together key partners and young people who have worked with the YOT. The event was designed to examine the report and developing an Action Improvement Plan which must be submitted to the lead inspector by 22 March 2007 and will be monitored by the Youth Justice Board Regional Manager.

The YOT Management Board is currently pursuing inter agency funding commitments for the YOT as the service is poorly funded and badly needs investment to improve capacity. NYCC has made a commitment to increase funding in the YOT in the forthcoming financial year.

County Councillor Caroline Patmore
Executive Member for Children's Services

13 February 2007