

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

16 MAY 2007

STATEMENT OF THE CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER (Corporate Affairs, Performance Management, Procurement, Asset Management and Finance)

COUNTY COUNCILLOR CARL LES

Procurement

- a) Procurement staff have been looking at how we increase the amount of recycled products we buy as part of a Yorkshire-wide project lead by Recycling Action Yorkshire (RAY). We are one of the first organisations to get involved in a new programme to increase the amount of recycled materials purchased.

Our involvement in the project helps to demonstrate our commitment to reduce the impact of our work on the environment.

Recycling Action Yorkshire's (RAY) Buy Recycled project is providing free consultancy support to over 30 organisations across Yorkshire and Humberside, to help them increase the number and volume of recycled products they buy.

RAY is funded by Yorkshire Forward and the Buy Recycled project was set up to increase the amount of recycled-content products bought in this region. We have a large amount of recycling facilities in Yorkshire, including eight of the 14 glass recycling plants in the UK, but glass has to be imported from outside the region to fill their needs.

The RAY programme is designed to stimulate the market for recycled materials throughout the recycling chain from collection and reprocessing, to manufacture and end markets.

We have been involved in the project since March 2007 and have worked with RAY to analyse our procurement spend from the recycling viewpoint. Officers are also attending a Buy Recycled workshop on 16 May 2007 where Leeds and Kirklees Councils will present case studies on their work with RAY.

- b) Three "Meet the Buyer" events are being held across the county next month. Early morning sessions that will last approximately 2 hours have been booked at the following locations: Scotch Corner (13th June), Pickering (14th June) and Harrogate (15th June).

These events are aimed at helping the business community across North Yorkshire and the surrounding area to gain a better understanding of how local authorities procure their goods and services and also to assist the process of doing business with Councils.

Officers from all seven district councils plus City of York Council have been invited to participate and it is hoped that at least two Councils in addition to the County Council will be represented at each event. Each organisation participating will have space for its own stand.

Also in attendance will be representatives from the following organisations:

- Northern Procurement Group Ltd
- Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Centre of Excellence
- Business Link

Members are welcome to come along the events. Further details will be available in the near future.

A new Code of Conduct for Members

There has been a significant development in the ethical framework: a new national model Code of Conduct for Members is now in force. It replaces all previous models and relevant authorities must now make arrangements to adopt the new Code within the next few months. Indeed, the Council is due to consider its new Code later in the agenda.

The Code follows the same broad structure as before:

- general conduct obligations (for example treating others with respect)
- personal and prejudicial interests
- disclosure and participation re interests
- registration of interests

however there are substantial changes in the detail of certain areas, for example the definition of personal interest and relaxations regarding participation in relation to prejudicial interests. Full details are contained in item 9 of the report.

NYnet

The company is now established with offices at Roecliffe, and a CEO has been appointed together with key personnel.

The contract with BT has been signed; the equipment is now being manufactured and shipped, and installation by BT is scheduled to commence next month.

Negotiations with a number of customers are well advanced and enquiries from potential customers are increasing.

The Board (comprising Cllr Watson, the Chief Executive, and the Corporate Director – Finance and Central Services) are currently meeting on a fortnightly basis to ensure the company is successfully launched and that plans are continuing “on track”.

Job Evaluation/Pay and Reward Changes

The changes to the pay and reward arrangements are now complete. The job evaluation schemes were fully implemented as of 1st April. This means that NYCC is one of only 20% of first tier/unitary councils which has complied with the 1997 National Agreement and meet requirements under equal pay legislation.

Inevitably a number of staff were unhappy with the outcome. These staff have access to a review process and to date some 600 staff have met with a member of the job evaluation team to better understand the outcome for them, with more staff requesting meetings on a weekly basis. A proportion of these will no doubt want to go forward to a formal review. These formal reviews have begun and will conclude by October.

There have been difficulties in implementing job evaluation outcomes in a number of schools for various reasons, mainly due to the tight timescales and turn around times for data from schools to go into staff letters. These issues have now been resolved with the appropriate support and apologies.

No staff will actually receive a pay reduction due to job evaluation until April 2009 when the 2 year pay protection period ceases.

In addition there is a variety of support available for staff who have been adversely affected including counselling both personal and financial, learning and development opportunities and prior consideration of posts at their previous salary level.

There are some 70 equal pay claims brought by the no win no fee solicitor Stefan Cross still in the legal process with a tribunal date scheduled for October. Given the job evaluation outcome for the comparator posts detailed in the cases the County Council considers it has a strong defence to these claims.

Learning and Development - Members

There has been a considerable amount of work completed on Member Development which is funded by the Regional Capacity Fund and delivered by the North Yorkshire Improvement Partnership. This means that there will be a programme of training events for members covering topics such as Partnership Cohesion, Engaging Back Benchers, Community Engagement and Media Skills at a variety of locations across the county. Further topics will be available later in the year alongside other learning initiatives for Members.

Apprentices

The final figures for new apprentices numbered 70 by the end of April with recruitment ongoing for further recruits during 07/08. The programme has been well received by managers who are volunteering to convert vacant posts to apprentice posts. In continuing the work to attract younger people to work for the county council a new work experience programme begins in July with some 80 placements across the county in a wide variety of different roles and areas. The recruiting team are working with schools to publicise this and further information can be gained from kate.race@northyorks.gov.uk

Efficiency Savings

The County Council has produced its third Annual Efficiency Statement, for the financial year 2007-08 detailing savings of approximately £7.6 million, taking into account cashable and non-cashable savings. For the third consecutive year this figure exceeds the Central Government target which is based upon 2.5% of the relevant budget headings.

The outturn report on performance in 2006-07 is scheduled for submission to Central Government in July.

3 May 2007