

## **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

#### **STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN**

**16 May 2007**

#### **The Protection of Vulnerable Groups in the Community**

1. The Committee is looking for information about how the Authority and its partner agencies work together to protect vulnerable and hard to reach groups.
2. Of great interest is therefore the work done to combat bullying, harassment and hate crime to people with learning disabilities in the community. We will turn to this subject again when we meet representatives and officers of the Hambleton Learning Disabilities Partnership Board who have completed some pioneering work in this area.
3. We have already looked at how Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) people are also more vulnerable to crime and fear of crime and learned of measures being taken to counter racism through partnership working with the Police, District Councils and other partners.

#### **Councillors in their Communities**

4. We are pressing ahead with planned work on how a Councillor is supported to pursue community based interests and projects through their local crime and disorder reduction and local strategic partnerships.
5. We used the Injury Minimisation Programme for Schools scheme in the Scarborough area as an example. The local Primary Care Trust was on the point of withdrawing financial support for this local initiative which looks to raise the awareness of children and young people to injury minimisation. The core element of the programme covers such issues as road safety, leisure safety, pedestrian safety, water safety and safety in the home.
6. The scheme did not attract support when a bid was submitted via the Local Strategic Partnership for the second homes funding. After seeing the scheme in action and meeting the staff involved, a temporary local solution through Members' Area Committee budgets now seems possible. During the course of this exercise however, key questions emerged about supporting local elected representatives when they have issues to pursue which fall within the responsibility of partnership structures, but are not seen as a priority and are therefore ineligible for consideration for funding. This is of course timely bearing in mind the new powers for scrutiny proposed in the Local Government White Paper and the focus on Area based scrutiny.

#### **Social Inclusion Strategy**

7. On behalf of the Executive, my Committee has continued to monitor the progress against the targets and indicators associated with the Social Inclusion strategy. As our recent report to the Executive suggests, progress to date has been good but there can be no slipping up if we mean to retain our status as a four star authority.
8. However monitoring social inclusion is about much more than targets and indicators. This is a living breathing organism, which is why our work programme commits us to some of the general social inclusion themes, such as how we as an authority support and promote a vibrant voluntary and community sector through the compact, how we improve disabled peoples access to community services and facilitate their contribution to making our communities genuinely sustainable, how they and minority and ethnic groups are protected from race hate and harassment.
9. In the future our reports on social inclusion and community cohesion in particular, will reflect this rounded approach.

### **Credit Union**

10. Nationally, the credit union movement is growing and reaching out to more people who need access to low cost credit. Many existing and developing credit unions are merging or contemplating expansion to gain from economies of scale. There are successful credit unions on our county borders and whilst collaborative options have hitherto only been talked about. It is something that the Committee is now actively considering.
11. Because of its proximity, traditional links and close working relationship, NYCC Councillors and officers recently tested again the level of interest with York Credit Union, at least in principle, in working further on this agenda.
12. Early discussions were positive but it was acknowledged that before any developments are contemplated, thorough "business case" should be prepared. We are examining the implications of that.

### **PAUL RICHARDSON**

**Chairman**

**Safe and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

County Hall  
NORTHALLERTON  
16 May 2007  
Background Documents - Nil