

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

16 May 2007

CORPORATE AFFAIRS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Corporate Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee has met once since the last full Council meeting. The following items were considered:

Committee Meeting – 12 March 2007

Overview Reports

1. Update on attendance management

The Committee received a report from the Assistant Chief Executive (Human Resources and Organisation/Development Services) on progress implementing the Attendance Management Reporting and Recording System together with progress towards annual efficiency savings targets, future developments in the recording system and the proactive use of the health and well being team.

We noted that the receipt of absence returns for the period April to December 2006/07 from the Adult and Community Services Directorate was well below the percentage of receipt of returns from other directorates. The Committee was keen to receive an explanation as this lack of absence returns meant that the accuracy of the authority's data was compromised and that this could also mean staff absence was not being managed properly. We had invited the Corporate Director Adult and Community Services to attend the meeting but unfortunately due to a previous commitment he was unable to attend the meeting that day. Arrangements have now been made to allow us to discuss this matter and I will feed back to the Committee at our next meeting.

2. Review of activity relating to the Corporate Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Recruiting young people and apprentices Task Group

It was encouraging to hear the progress that has been made since this Committee's Task Group had undertaken a review of the County Council's approach to recruiting young people. The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Human Resources and Organisation/Development Services) provided us with an update on the initiatives relating to young people within the County Council in accordance with the recommendations of the Task Group.

A particular area for consideration was that of our role as Corporate Parent and the possibility of providing apprenticeships for our looked after young people. We were informed that three looked after young people had expressed an interest in securing an apprenticeship in the previous intake, but we were disappointed that only one had been successful.

Staff in human resources are working closely with staff from the Leaving Care Team and expressions of interest from six looked after young people were received for the current intake. We are keen that vulnerable groups, such as looked after children, be given as much encouragement and support as possible and we suggested that the young person who had successfully been appointed as an apprentice be invited to promote the benefits of the scheme to potential future applicants.

3. Equality: progress report

We received a report from the Assistant Chief Executive (Human Resources and Organisation/Development Services) which provided us with an overview and assessment of progress made across all the directorates towards achieving Level 3 of the Equality Standards for Local Government (BBPI 2a).

Members were pleased to see the progress that had been made and to hear that Officers were confident of achieving Level 3 later in the year.

4. Disability seminar

The Social Model of Disability was our final topic of discussion. It was interesting to hear from Simon Cox of Diverse Matters prompting us to think about how we can make a lasting difference to working lives, community services and product development for those with physical, sensory or learning disabilities.

5. In-depth scrutiny review

Feb – May 2007 The use of agency staff, within NYCC.

The County Council has some 23,000 staff and uses large numbers of relief and agency staff across a range of areas. These areas vary from the need for specialist staff, for example public sector accountants, which are sourced from specialists agencies, to more generic staff such as administrative and clerical staff, and those working in care. The greatest use in terms of costs and hours used relates to the main group of administrative, clerical and care staff.

This review has looked at alternative ways that the County Council can meet its workload peaks and staffing troughs. We look forward to the interim report of the Task Group, which will be presented to this Committee at its 21 May meeting.

County Councillor Margaret-Ann de Courcey-Bayley
Chairman – Corporate Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee

May 2007