

THE COUNCIL PLAN

2007 - 2010

**North Yorkshire County Council
County Hall
Northallerton
North Yorkshire
DL7 8AD**

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Best Value Performance Plan

This document together with the annex “Best Value Indicators 2006-07” constitutes the County Council’s Best Value Performance Plan for the purpose of the Local Government Act 1999. Available from Colin Andrew, County Hall, Northallerton, DL7 8AD. 01609 780780, colin.andrew@northyorks.gov.uk or on the County Council’s website: www.northyorks.gov.uk

Alternative Formats

We can provide this document in alternative formats on request. Please contact Amanda Hodgson at North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD.

Inne formaty

Na życzenie możemy udostępnić ten dokument w innym formacie. Prosimy o kontakt z Amandą Hodgson w biurze władz lokalnych: North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD.

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FOREWORD

This plan sets out the County Council's vision for North Yorkshire and our aims and objectives up to 2010. Its purpose is to explain our main priorities, how our work is paid for and how we are performing against key targets.

The County Council continued to make good progress in 2006-07. The Audit Commission rated us a 4 star authority (the highest rank attained by only one third of authorities assessed in 2006) and improving well. The Annual Audit and Inspection letter identified an extensive range of significant achievements:

- Children's services perform well with good or very good outcomes across all priorities and significant progress in improving children's social services.
- Adult social care continues to improve, and we have improved social care arrangements for disabled people and have developed a strategy for disabled people. We have continued to deliver more extra care housing for older people.
- Our community engagement, with older people, and younger people, is good and leading to improved services.
- Our excellent record in reducing road casualties continues.
- Our performance is good in waste management, access to services, and community safety and services for children and young people.
- Our continued focus on value for money enables us to sustain a high level of service performance with comparatively low costs.
- We have successfully used the opportunities presented by the negotiation of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) to integrate the aims of the LAA and the Community Strategy into clear action plans.
- Our focus on social inclusion has produced clear benefits for disadvantaged groups.
- We have a strong planning framework, corporately and in partnership with other agencies across the County, based on stronger partnership working.

It is very satisfying to have our efforts recognised in this way. But nothing stands still. Service needs change, challenges to improvement arise in all kinds of ways and we must maintain our focus if we are to maintain and improve these standards and this progress.

This plan sets out how we intend to maintain progress. So this is an important document for anyone wanting to know what the County Council plans to do for the people of North Yorkshire. We hope you will find it useful and interesting.

John Weighell
Leader of the Council

John Marsden
Chief Executive Officer

1. NORTH YORKSHIRE

Introduction

North Yorkshire is England's largest county stretching from Scarborough on the North Sea coast to Bentham in the West, and from the edge of Teesside to south of the M62. It is very diverse socially, geographically and economically. It offers a high quality of life to many but is still a low wage economy, with pockets of serious urban disadvantage and extensive but scattered rural deprivation. Size and diversity constantly shape our responses to improving delivery of public services.

North Yorkshire – our people

With a population of 582,000 across over 3,000 square miles, the County is sparsely populated. The population is increasing and getting older. By 2016 the number of people who are 65 and over will increase from about 110,100 to about 145,900. This represents just under 23% of the total population. By contrast, young people under 19 will account for only 21% of the population.

Although 20% of people live in the two major urban centres – Harrogate and Scarborough – four fifths of North Yorkshire is defined as “super sparse” with fewer than 0.5 people per hectare. Most people live in one of the 28 small market towns and the many small villages and hamlets. This often makes service delivery more difficult and costly, particularly for elderly or disabled people living in rural areas. There are fewer facilities for young people in our rural areas than for their urban colleagues.

The 2001 Census of Population showed that just under 99% of the County's population were white British, with black and ethnic minority (BME) groups making up just 1.1% of the total, although recent in-migration from Eastern Europe is changing this. This and the sparsity of the County can exacerbate issues such as isolation and exclusion from services. The County Council celebrates the diversity of our communities and we are aware of our responsibilities to reach all people who need services.

The population increases substantially through tourism from Easter through to October and we are making efforts to lengthen the tourism season. It is important to us to serve visitors well. Competition for housing from second homeowners and the tourism sector means that affordable housing is a major challenge.

North Yorkshire – geography and heritage

The County includes:

- Two of England's nine national parks;
- A stunning heritage coast;
- Two designated areas of outstanding natural beauty and part of a third;
- 244 sites of special scientific interest;
- Over 12,000 listed buildings and many thousands more monuments and archaeological sites, including Fountains Abbey, a world heritage site;
- Thriving market towns and isolated rural upland;

- A population which places a high value on independence, determination, resourcefulness and a strong sense of community.

The combination of large upland water catchments and extensive flood plains makes the County particularly vulnerable to flooding.

The size of North Yorkshire brings challenges in service delivery. Services must be customised to local need and circumstance and made as local as possible. A good example of this is in Children and Young People's services where the County has 78 schools with fewer than 50 pupils and 168 with fewer than 100 pupils. These small schools avoid longer journeys for young children, but they do have to be supported by more funding to match their higher unit costs. We spent £20.3m on home to school transport in 2006-2007; this is mainly due to the rural nature of the county.

North Yorkshire – the economy

The economy is also very varied. Generally, unemployment is low, and labour market participation rates high. Small businesses dominate with 85% of businesses employing fewer than 10 people. There are high levels of self employment. In the private sector, tourism (around 12% of the workforce) and agriculture (around 3%) are very significant – particularly in the rural uplands where they account for as much as 50% of the workforce. Further diversification and tourism development remains a priority, especially for the North Yorkshire coast which suffers additionally from remoteness from the principal north-south communications routes. The power stations at Drax and Eggborough generate almost 10% of English electricity.

To remain prosperous the County has to adjust from traditional to new business sectors. This means working closely with Yorkshire Forward, the City of York, district councils and businesses to encourage new investment. It is also critically important to continue to extend and improve the broadband infrastructure in North Yorkshire to help maintain and develop business efficiency and competitiveness.

2. OUR VISION AND OBJECTIVES

For our vision and objectives we start with the views of our communities. As explained below, we have a great deal of information about our communities' priorities, from on-going consultations and those of partners. This information was used to develop our vision:-

“A county which provides opportunity, independence and security for all”

Our economy, our schools, our transport system, our heritage, our strong communities and our countryside all ensure that life in North Yorkshire provides us with a wealth of opportunities. These same things help us to live independent and fulfilled lives, though some of us may need special support to help overcome personal difficulties. Being secure means economic as well as personal security and freedom from fear of crime.

The County Council aims to provide good quality local services that support this vision, enabling everyone to fulfil their potential. Our objectives make clearer the kinds of things we need to focus on:-

Our objectives

- **Security for all** – by promoting safe, healthy and sustainable communities.
- **Growing up prepared for the future** – through good education and care and protection when it is needed.
- **Independence** – through employment, opportunity and appropriate support for those that need it.
- **Ensuring good access for all** – with good roads and a safe and reliable transport system as well as providing new ways to interact with, and contact, the services they need.
- **Strengthening our economy** – by supporting business, developing our infrastructure, investing in powerful telecommunications and helping people improve their skills.
- **Looking after our heritage and our environment** – in our countryside and our towns and villages for all to enjoy.
 - **Keeping in touch** – by listening to your views, engaging with you to meet your needs and by letting you know what we are doing.

3. WHAT ARE OUR PRIORITIES?

Our Vision and Objectives are ongoing intentions against which the County Council continues to deliver services. However over the coming year there is a number of specific priorities which we will focus our efforts on. In putting together these priorities we have considered the Community Strategy, the results of our recent Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and Joint Area Review (JAR), the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter which we receive from the Audit Commission, and, importantly, we have talked and listened to communities in North Yorkshire through recent consultation events. Looking at each of these information sources we can identify issues that relate to both frontline service delivery as well as to how we manage ourselves as an organisation.

The community strategy

The North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership (NYSP) is a partnership of public sector, private sector and voluntary sector organisations which have come together to plan how they can work better together to meet the needs of North Yorkshire's communities. Drawing on the district level Local Strategic Partnership community strategies, the NYSP has developed a community strategy which sets out what it is that the partners have agreed they will seek to deliver for local communities. As such, it forms an important part of the context for the County Council's corporate plan which must set out how the County Council will support the delivery of the community strategy through its own efforts and resources. It identifies seven key themes to be addressed by partners:

- **Secure a thriving economy**
- **Provide everyone with the opportunity to develop to their full potential**
- **Help people in need**
- **Promote socially inclusive, safe and sustainable communities**
- **Take care of our heritage, landscape and environment**
- **Ensure access for all, through appropriate transport arrangements and new ways of delivering services**
- **Plan for emergencies and cope with their aftermath**

Making progress in each theme is a mainstream task for many partners including the County Council. We have negotiated a Local Area Agreement (LAA) between ourselves, other local partners and central government, which is an outlines activity that local partners will deliver to meet local needs and priorities. The LAA is the action plan by which the North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership's Community Strategy will be achieved.

These are shared priorities, but the County Council has a role to play in each. Therefore we will ensure that the Council Plan’s vision and objectives support this strategy. The following sections set out our vision and objectives to this end.

How do the Council Plan objectives support the County’s community strategy?

The table below illustrates how the County Council objectives support the priorities of the Community Strategy.

	Community Strategy themes						
Council Plan objectives	Secure a thriving economy	Provide everyone with the opportunity to develop their full potential	Help people in need	Promote socially inclusive, safe and sustainable communities	Take care of our heritage, landscape and environment	Access for all – through appropriate transport and new ways of delivering services	Plan for and deal with emergencies and cope with the aftermath
Security for all			✓	✓			✓
Growing up prepared for the future		✓		✓			
Independence		✓	✓			✓	
Ensuring good access for all	✓					✓	
Strengthening our economy	✓	✓		✓			
Looking after our heritage and our environment		✓		✓	✓		
Keeping in touch				✓		✓	

Consultation

In recent years, the County Council and others have asked North Yorkshire's communities about their priorities. These consultations have underpinned the development of the plans of local authorities, local strategic partnerships' community strategies and the plans of other public sector bodies. Comparing community strategies around the County shows a high degree of consistency in priorities, though often worded differently. These priorities are re-expressed in the priorities of the North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership set out above, and in the County Council's objectives. In 2004, these last were checked with the County Council's Citizens' Panel. 91% of respondents endorsed them as the right priorities.

More recently we have been checking with specific groups of people, including young people, older people, people from black and minority ethnic groups and people with learning difficulties, to see whether they are right for their interests, too. They have all said that these priorities are right for them, too, but have drawn attention to special issues in delivering them.

The concerns of young people are at the heart of the work we have undertaken in developing and delivering the Children and Young People's Plan, which focuses on ensuring that the services of the responsible partners are properly joined up and focussed on young people and on how they want to access them.

Older people are especially concerned to see the commitment to supporting independence delivered – transport and social care are especially important here, as is reducing fear of crime (a very low risk area in North Yorkshire but often not seen as such) – and are concerned about withdrawal of life long learning opportunities in favour of certificated vocational courses.

People from minority ethnic communities also endorse our priorities although wish to see greater recognition of their specific needs. Realising these priorities for people from a minority ethnic group requires greater cultural sensitivity on the behalf of service providers and greater success in preventing the prejudice they can experience.

People with learning difficulties want to see more aspects of life open to them directly rather than provided for them separately. They have special needs for access to information if this is to be achieved. Information about public transport services is a particularly important area. They also suffer harassment and need to see this tackled.

The County Council appreciates all of these issues. Organisations representing these groups value the opportunity to contribute to consultations and welcome being able to raise their issues and concerns. Progress is not always as quick as we would like, sometimes because of competing priorities and sometimes because of the complexity of the issue. We will continue to seek to make progress in these areas, however, and to make sure we understand issues for these groups as they develop and keep them engaged in our work.

Corporate Performance Assessment Annual Audit Letter

Our Annual Audit and Inspection Letter (from the Audit Commission) highlights a number of areas for improvement for the coming year. These have been included into a Performance Improvement Action Plan and include:

- Help more older people to stay at home
- Help more young adults with physical and sensory impairments to live at home
- Address staff turnover and retention in social care
- Improve work to tackle the isolation of black and minority ethnic groups living in remote, predominantly white communities
- Address the diversity of the County Council's workforce to reflect the diversity of the wider community

Local Area Agreement

The Local Area Agreement for the County contains a number of targets which have special significance in that they entail commitment to especially high performance outcomes. The targets highlight the following areas:

- Arrangements to support the independence of older and of disabled people and people at risk from abuse.
- Helping people to lead healthier lives, especially through physical activity, and reducing smoking.
- Ensuring young people have good prospects at 16-18.
- Making sure people are safe by reducing road casualties and violent crime.
- Supporting stronger communities by improving community transport, increasing the availability of affordable housing and increasing volunteering.
- Improving access to services.

Priorities for 2007/08

These considerations mean that, in working to deliver our vision and objectives, we need to focus on certain priorities for 2007-08.

Community Safety through tackling cold calling, reducing road casualties and supporting partnership working to reduce crime and disorder. The Local Area Agreement identifies these issues and the road casualties target is one which is being given high priority. The Government has undertaken a review of the Crime and Disorder Act (CDA) 1998 and the outcomes of that for

improvements in partnership working to reduce crime and disorder will need to be addressed. If we are successful in these areas, we will maintain the low level of cold calling that has been achieved by recent efforts, reduce the numbers killed or seriously injured in road accidents to 660 in 2007 and put in place with our partners arrangements to respond to the Government's requirements following the CDA review. We will publish our response to these issues during 2007/08.

Meeting the needs of minority groups, especially those black or other ethnic minority citizens who find themselves in communities in which they are few in number, which can be an isolating experience and of those who live and work in settled, traditional communities. In addition, we must respond to the needs of the increasing numbers of people from other cultures or who do not have English as a first language. We will work with the North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership (including the voluntary sector and other key public agencies) to ensure that new migrants to the County are helped to adapt to their new home, by supporting the learning of English, and making sure they have access to advice about such things as driving requirements, access to health services and so on. We will also help existing communities to understand the benefits that new workers from overseas are bringing to our communities and services and we will work with our partners to take a strong stand on incidents of racial harassment. Our Social Inclusion Strategy says more about these issues and about how we respond to the needs of other potentially excluded groups.

Ensuring independence, choice and quality of life for those who would be at risk of losing out without appropriate support, especially through increased use of assistive technology, support for carers, giving people more say over how their needs should be met, tackling adult abuse and improving access for disabled people. A number of these outcomes are high priority targets in the local area agreement and as a result we plan to issue 2,184 items of assistive technology equipment during 2007/08. The Council's document "Strategic Commissioning for Independence, Well-being and Choice" explains more about how we will be taking these and other issues about adult social care forward.

Making North Yorkshire a better place for every child. The Council will continue to support schools in improving the educational attainment of young people, but in addition to this, our priority for 2007-8 will be to develop further preventative work with vulnerable children, through local, multi-agency teams. We will achieve this through the continued development of children's centres, extended services in schools and the Youth Service. There will be a specific focus on services for children and young people with learning difficulties or disabilities, including moving towards putting in place the additional local services promised through the SEN/Behaviour Provision Review. To improve services, by April 2008, we will have 29 Children's Centres open, an Integrated Youth Support Service will be in place and an integrated assessment for children with disabilities will be piloted in three localities. Outcomes for children and young people will be improved by a further 1% increase in 16 year olds achieving 5A*-C GCSEs and a further 10% increase in core assessments for children referred to social care. These priorities and all the key objectives for improving outcomes for children and young people in

North Yorkshire can be found in the Children and Young People's Plan 2006-2009.

Continue to improve access to services and opportunities by supporting community transport, developing joint access centres with our partners, implementing our telephone contact centre and through the newly formed company NYNET to improve broadband facilities for our rural communities. NYNET will not only improve access to services but will greatly strengthen the infrastructure supporting business, especially in our rural communities. The County Council's Local Transport Plan will be key to these improvements, focussing as it does both on improved transport but also on working with our partners to improve access to their services, too. If we are successful in our current plans, 160,000 passengers will be carried on community transport mini-buses throughout the County during 2007/08.

Continuing to develop our waste management arrangements jointly with district councils in order to protect the environment, maximise re-use and recycling and protect our services from the high cost of disposal to landfill. While re-cycling rates have improved strongly in recent years, the volume of household waste has continued to increase. We need to work with our partners to tackle this and to maximise re-use, re-cycling, recovery and composting. Our target is that by 2008 households in North Yorkshire will produce less waste per person than the average for England and Wales. Details of our approach to this issue are set out in our document "Lets talk less rubbish" – the municipal waste management strategy for the City of York and North Yorkshire.

Continue to strengthen our partnership working which has improved substantially over the past year, especially to support the delivery of the Local Area Agreement and targets, such as those relating to public health, which depend strongly on good partnership working.

Continue to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our business processes by maximising the use of appropriate technology and increasing the efficiency of our back office functions. For example we will, by engaging with partners, seek to maximise the use of shared services and premises and undertake a rigorous scrutiny of service areas to ensure maximum cost effectiveness of services.

4. THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Corporate strategies and plans, such as the Local Transport Plan and the Children and Young People's Plan, provide an overarching framework to help the development of specific action plans. They are often developed with partners, have regard to the Council Plan and capture and represent local people's needs and requirements.

Using the strategic documents outlined in the above diagram, Service

Performance Plans (SPPs) translate our vision and objectives into day to day service delivery requirements.

SPPs detail how, where and when services will be provided and include service targets. These targets help ensure that the plan is delivered by providing the basis upon which annual staff appraisals and service development discussions are based.

SPPs also identify how each service is to consult with local people and partners to identify and understand how services can continue to meet their needs and requirements. Contact the Corporate Policy Unit on 01609 533492 if you want to know more about plans for the specific service areas.

5. MAKING SURE WE ARE FIT FOR PURPOSE

This plan sets out our ambitions and our wide ranging agenda. Its success depends on the people we employ and how well they can manage resources and give value for money. We have recently been judged to be a 4 star / Excellent authority that is improving well – but that does not mean that further work is not needed. The following section highlights a number of programmes that will ensure we continue to improve. We are striving to improve the management of the Council by investing in the following programmes:

- The **Member Development Programme** is designed to make sure that members are kept abreast of developments in local government and can develop their skills in working with the County Council and representing their communities.
- **Changing and Improving the Way we Deliver Services (“the transformation agenda”)** Within the context of the change and improvement programme, our focus is being directed to programmes / reviews which can:
 - (a) Deliver significantly improved outcomes to North Yorkshire residents
 - (b) Significantly improve access to North Yorkshire services for residents and
 - (c) Significantly improve the cost-effectiveness with which we deliver services.

From this we have identified a set of core / general themes that will help support and underpin improvement.

- (a) using the **Public Access Strategy**, and in particular the **34 Customer Service Centres** that we are developing jointly with partners such as the district councils to deliver information and services locally, making greater use of **e-government** (such as our more interactive website) and the telephone **Contact Centre**, to improve access to and the quality of our services.
 - (b) improving our work processes and support to customers through the use of **Business Process Re-engineering (BPR)** – looking at how we do things and changing if necessary to become more efficient.
 - (c) ensuring that the County Council makes optimal use of its property portfolio through an **Accommodation Review**
 - (d) enhancing the productiveness of our front-line professionals by making **innovative use of ICT**
 - (e) Using a process of **Workforce reform** to test how we work, where we work, when we work, and who is best equipped to do the work.
- The **people strategy** supports the improvement of County Council services by helping employees to perform and fulfil their potential and ensuring the County Council manages its staff effectively to deliver

excellent services. It outlines key work areas and timescales for the next 2 years covering recruitment and resourcing, learning and development, health and safety, pay and reward, and workforce changes.

- **The E-government strategy** aims to maximise the number of our services which can be provided electronically. This will allow greater ease of access to them by residents, businesses and visitors. During the past year we have completed the development of our broadband wide area network and developed a new web site which provides a wide range of facilities to allow the public to do business with us electronically. Our focus now is to maintain and improve these developments, in line with the transformation agenda.
- **The asset management planning framework** helps to ensure that we are making best use of property by planning for the right property to meet the needs of the community of North Yorkshire and by identifying underused and other property that could be better used or released.
- The **risk management strategy** is the means by which we ensure that our performance plans take into account the risks that threaten service delivery. We use a systematic approach to risk assessment to improve service planning and keep down insurance and claims costs. This has won a national award and has been highly commended for a European risk management award.
- The **equalities strategy** to make sure we treat everyone - both customers and staff - fairly, whoever they are. We have achieved the Commission for Racial Equality standard at level 2 and will achieve level 3 during 07/08.
- The **communications strategy and the consultation strategy**, making sure that people know how and why the County Council is using their money; that staff understand our plans and priorities; and that we consult with the public and listen to what you have to say about your needs and our services, to make sure that we reach those who need our services, and improve access to those services.
- **Corporate governance**, maintaining sound decision making. This means keeping our constitution under review and ensuring that our decision making processes conform to statutory requirements and maintain high ethical standards.
- **Working with communities** The County Council, with district, town and parish councils, must approach partnership working at different levels. Within local communities this is achieved through local councillors and by means of community groups. On district boundaries, it is achieved with district councils and with the Local Strategic Partnerships. The Council's area committees provide an important link between the County and communities at the district level.

- **Sustainability** is an important issue for everyone and North Yorkshire County Council is leading by example in working both to ensure that our own activities have a lesser impact on the environment and by promoting sustainable measures to communities to lessen our collective impact on our environment. For example we have recently opened an eco building using the latest technology to harness natural resources and we have a specific programme to work with schools to ensure that school buildings are environmentally friendly and to educate children and young people on leading a more sustainable lifestyle.

The future of the County depends on the people who live here, on the communities in which we live, and on the work of the many businesses and organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors that create jobs and provide the services we need. In addition to providing effective services, the Council has a lead role in ensuring these agencies work effectively together. Over the last year we have had considerable success in strengthening partnership working at the County level and it will be important that we continue to build on this success and the good will of partners that it has engendered.

As well as how we work internally, North Yorkshire County Council works externally with a wide range of partners both within the County and beyond. Many discussions and debates take place at a regional or even national level, and North Yorkshire County Council works hard to represent the views and needs of the County at all these levels. Important policies such as the City Region issue affecting Leeds and Teesside are also important for North Yorkshire as many of our communities are strongly influenced by these large conurbations.

6. PAYING FOR LOCAL SERVICES

Medium term financial strategy

To deliver this Plan over the 3 years, the Council will need to spend over £2.4 billion on revenue items (ie staff, materials, transport etc) and £260m on capital investment. The County Council's net revenue budget – that is excluding specific grants, fees and other local income – is forecast to grow from £295m in 2007/08 to £324m by 2009/10. Approximately three quarters of this is funded by council tax, the remaining quarter coming via government grant. The medium term financial strategy (MTFS) is intended to make sure that sufficient resources are in place to support the delivery of this Council Plan and to enable priorities to be achieved in line with available resources. In addition to supporting the services objectives detailed in this Plan, the objectives of the MTFS are:

- to achieve the effective use of all resources and assets (staff, buildings etc)
- to maintain revenue balances equivalent to 2% of the net revenue budget
- to contain any rise in the council tax to a reasonable level.

The MTFS embraces not only the Revenue Budget but also the Capital Plan as well as the Treasury Management and Efficiency Plans for the County Council – it also has well defined links to the Procurement and Risk Management strategies.

Whilst having a clear broad strategy for resources is essential, we also need to be able to take account of policy changes beyond the County Council's control. For example, the government has announced its intention to introduce grant settlements on a 3 year basis so that councils can plan their budgets and set indicative Council Tax levels for the 2nd and 3rd years ahead alongside the Council Tax for the next year. This has been partially introduced with indicative grant figures for 2008/09 announced at the same time as the actual figures for 2007/08. The Government will extend this approach to 3 years once the results of the Comprehensive Spending Review are announced later in 2007.

The government has also made clear its intention to retain the threat of capping whereby the Council Tax increase of any authority is limited to 5%. For the purposes of the MTFS, the County Council has assumed this government policy will continue into the foreseeable future.

In the meantime however, year on year changes, for example in specific grants or adjustments to the government's funding formula, still have the potential to impact very directly on the County Council's short or medium term financial position.

Revenue resources

Delivering the Council Plan requires some strengthening of budget provision to keep pace with government expectations and to raise standards of delivery in previously underfunded service areas. It will also require a programme of capital investment, the financial costs of which have to be supported through revenue, both to deliver on government expectations and to modernise improving mainstream services in line with County Council policies. The headline figures for the revenue budget in 2007/08 are shown in Table 1 on page xx. The major part of the budget is aimed at maintaining overall service standards and volumes. Roads need to be maintained, vulnerable people need to be cared for, libraries need to be stocked and managed. Waste must be disposed of and although the funding of schools is now via a Direct

Grant, the County Council still has the responsibility to ensure that school students are taught to the appropriate standards. Financial provision also needs to reflect changes in the overall volumes and demand for these types of service. But some of our corporate priorities also give rise to the need to make new or additional provision to raise standards and to respond to new service developments or increased expectations. Full details are available in the published Budget Book.

Whilst the budget for 2007/08 has been balanced the effect of the various pressures referred to above for the years 2008/09 and 2009/10 is to create a net additional year on year requirement that is summarised in Table 2. This Table assumes a level of government grant based on the 2 year grant figures already announced and a Council Tax increase in all three years of 4.9%. However, the budgets are only balanced in these later years by as yet unspecified efficiency savings that will arise from the Transformation Process that was initiated in 2006. This process, which is linked to the plans for the improvement of public access to services will use business process reengineering (BPR) techniques allied to the use of IT to establish flexible working, and the systematic review of all existing office accommodation, to produce efficiency savings of £8m for each of these two future years.

In addition to service pressures there are other risks embedded within the MTFs. In particular:

- (a) under the terms of the national pay agreement in 2004, the County Council is obliged to undertake a County Council-wide programme of job evaluation to form the basis of a new pay and grading structure. Whilst the County Council is confident that its approach, implemented in April 2007, will not generate the substantial costs reported by some authorities it has been necessary to budget for one-off consequential costs of several £m as well as the ongoing financial impact.
- (b) the government continues to set all local authorities the target of achieving annual, year on year, efficiency savings worth 2.5% of their net revenue and capital budgets. Over the 3 years of the MTFs this amounts to efficiency gains of some £25m. When updating the MTFs we identified efficiency improvements worth some £7.5m in 2007/08 and these are set out in the Annual Efficiency Statement submitted to Government in April 2007. This is on top of the £21m of efficiencies already achieved since 2005/06. As indicated above, budget projections for 2008/09 and 2009/10 require further cashable efficiency gains of £8m in these later years. Even with these efficiencies, however, the government's resource distribution formula to local authorities and the consequent grant suggests that further adjustments, service changes or alternative revenue will have to be identified if council tax increases are to be kept down to the level assumed by the Strategy (ie 4.9% per annum).

Capital Plan

In 2004, the County Council undertook a thorough review of its capital investment framework and put in place a 10 year forecast with a 3 year detailed capital plan.

Within this new framework the two main government funded programmes, namely for Education and the Local Transport Plan, are assumed to continue and will be the principal source of capital for schools and highways respectively. Given the shortage of capital resources for other services relative to their significant investment needs local capital resources will mostly be invested in these other service areas. An

indication of these priorities can be seen in Table 3 – scheme by scheme details are available in the Capital Plan section of the Budget Book.

Taken together, these commitments amount to a capital investment programme of over £260m for the next three years which, after some £200m of central government capital grants and borrowing approvals, leaves £60m to be raised by local prudential borrowing or funded from other sources principally capital receipts and revenue contributions.

Table 1
Net Revenue Budget for 2006/07

	£000
Children & Young People's Services:	
Schools Block (funded by Dedicated Schools Grant)	300,499
Local Authority Block	
- Home to School Transport	21,441
- Youth Service	4,997
- Local Authority Services	14,376
Children's Social Care	30,266
Sub Total	371,579
Business & Environmental Services	
Highways maintenance and traffic management	27,064
Waste Management	16,149
Integrated Passenger Transport	3,843
Planning and Countryside Services	2,985
Trading Standards	2,158
Other functions	3,855
Sub Total	56,054
Adult & Community Services	
Care for adults and elderly people	109,553
Support services for vulnerable people	15,566
Library and Information Services	9,077
Other functions	10,106
Specific Grant income	-27,044
Sub Total	117,258
Corporate and support functions, miscellaneous grants, etc	
Financing costs of capital expenditure	29,362
Contingency	2,400
Other (Support Services)	19,642
Sub Total	51,404

Total (including schools)	596,295
- Dedicated Schools Grant	-300,499
Net Total	295,796

**Table 2
Summary Revenue Budget Position**

Item	2007/08 £000s	2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s
Standstill requirement	+11,786	+15,192	+16,368
+ additional service needs	+9,765	+7,857	+7,196
- savings/efficiencies identified	-5,859	-1,472	-280
+/- contribution from balances/reserves	0	+320	-20
- Transformation/efficiencies to be identified	NIL	-8000	-8,200
= Net year on year increase to be met from Grant / Council Tax	+15,692	+13,897	+15,064

Table 3

Service / Programme Area	2006/07 £m	2007/08 £m	2008/09 £m
Children and Young People's Services			
Childrens Centres	7.9	0.0	0.0
Building Schools for the Future	15.8	12.4	2.4
Capital resources for School Use	11.7	11.6	10.6
Schools Modernisation Scheme	0.4	1.6	6.9
School Access Initiative	1.0	1.0	1.0
Major School Projects	8.7	2.5	1.1
Other Maintenance and Improvements	2.0	0.8	2.3
Service Total	47.5	29.9	24.3
Business and Environmental Services			
New and Replacement Road Lighting	1.9	1.9	1.9

Rationalisation of Highways Depots	4.9	4.3	0.0
Waste Disposal/Recycling	1.8	0.0	0.0
Scarborough Integrated Transport Scheme	17.4	4.2	0.0
Reighton Bypass	1.8	0.0	0.0
Local Transport Plan	27.8	26.6	26.6
Economic Development Grants	1.4	0.8	0.0
Service Total	57.0	37.8	28.5
Adult and Community Services			
Extra Care Residential Schemes/Resource Centres	1.4	5.1	5.1
Day Service Provision	0.7	1.0	0.8
Community Resource Centres	1.3	0.0	0.0
Disability Respite Centre, Skipton	0.8	0.0	0.0
Other	2.1	0.7	0.4
Service Total	6.3	6.8	6.3
Joint Service Provision			
Affordable Housing Fund	1.2	0.8	0.5
New Office Accommodation	2.0	0.0	0.0
Purchase of Vehicles	0.8	0.8	0.8
Loans to Limited Companies (Yorwaste/NYnet)	4.0	3.0	0.0
Access to Services/SDT/WAN	0.8	0.3	0.0
Other	2.0	0.8	0.6
Service Total	10.8	5.7	1.9
OVERALL TOTAL	121.6	80.2	61.0

7. PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

The Audit Commission assesses local authorities using its comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) and publishes the result using its CPA Scorecard. The most recent judgement, published in February 2007, shows that the County Council is a four star top rated authority that is improving well. We intend to maintain our progress and improve further, particularly in our priority areas.

We aim for excellence across the full range of services. This plan explains that we give priority to improving services which need development. It aims to maintain standards in services which have always been strong, such as education, social services and trading standards. It recognises the importance of our environment and heritage, both to the environment and the economy, not least through a joint approach to waste management. It shows how the County Council will contribute to delivering the community strategy through the Local Area Agreement (LAA) for North Yorkshire along with partners.

We are determined to get Best Value for money for the people of North Yorkshire. This means we are committed to continuous improvement and being as efficient as possible. In order to improve services and raise standards we must continue to monitor performance and understand how to achieve better results. To this end, we have a comprehensive improvement programme with three main components.

1. Performance management and improvement framework

The County Council wide performance management and improvement framework is well established. It enables members and managers to track County Council performance against key indicators, with a mix of national and local targets. Performance is monitored continually by service managers and on a quarterly basis jointly by our Executive and Scrutiny Board. Performance and cost information are looked at together in our service and financial planning process.

2. Local area agreement

The Local Area Agreement between the County Council and its partners and the government was signed in March 2007. It will run for three years and includes targets for improved outcomes to be delivered through more effective partnership working. Performance reward grant of up to £16 million will be payable for success in meeting particular 'stretch' targets. A performance management framework agreed with partners is in place to ensure delivery of the agreement.

3. Performance improvement

As explained in the 'making sure we are fit for purpose' section we have a number of transformational programmes in place to achieve real improvements in efficiency and effectiveness.

We have developed a programme of reviews undertaken by our overview and scrutiny committees looking at both individual services and at areas of joint working. In 2007/08 these will include areas such as supporting the rural economy and assisting farmers to diversify; sports provision for children; the role of community hospitals; direct payments for people needing social care support; engaging with hard to reach groups; and the use of agency and relief staff.

8. OUR VALUES

In order to deliver this vision and to fulfil this role we recognise that we must:

- Be focussed on the **needs of customers and communities**, facilitating their involvement in policy and service development and listening to and valuing what they tell us.
- Be committed to **equal opportunity** for all. Opposing all forms of unfair discrimination which puts a person at a disadvantage, treating people with dignity and respect and valuing the diversity of people and of communities;
- Work to promote **social inclusion and social cohesion**;
- Deliver **high quality and efficient services** that are responsive to users' needs, seek constantly to improve how we do things and ensure value for money in the use of public funds;
- **Show leadership and promote partnership** between the diversity of agencies and interests that work to promote community wellbeing;
- Secure effective democratic processes by placing a high value on **accountability and accessibility**, both through elected members themselves and through the openness of its processes and availability of information about them and about the Council's decisions;
- Maintain high standards of **integrity and honesty** in our dealings with the public and staff and in the management of resources;
- **Support our staff**, our most important asset, through effective management which supports them in taking ownership of their responsibilities, through openness and honesty, through appropriate training and development and through effective staff health and wellbeing arrangements; and
- Ensure that, in meeting the needs of today, we do not compromise **the ability of future generations to meet their needs**.

9. STATEMENT ON CONTRACTS

"We hereby state and certify that all contracts awarded during the past year which involved a transfer of staff comply with the requirements in the code of practice on workforce matters in local authority service contracts."