

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

18 July 2007

SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Protection of Vulnerable Groups in the Community

1. Community Cohesion has been much talked about recently both locally and nationally. It is a thread which runs through a good deal of the Committee's work, especially as we look at efforts to combat bullying, harassment and hate crime to people with learning disabilities in the community. This will be the subject of a presentation and extended discussion with some service users and representatives of the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board from Hambleton.

Injury Minimisation Programme for Schools

2. My last report focussed on the work we had undertaken to assess how a Councillor can be better supported in the community to pursue projects through the local Crime and Disorder Reduction and Local Strategic Partnerships. We used the Injury Minimisation Project for Schools Scheme (IMPS) in the Scarborough/Rydale areas as an exemplar to provide a number of insights.
3. The outcome of our interest has been that, prompted by Councillors in Scarborough and Rydale, two Area Committees have committed monies to enable the scheme to continue for one more year. The Committee will now assess other options for sustainable funding and wider coverage across the county.
4. In a wider context, this study has highlighted some important issues about how a local Member can be an effective bridge that links community needs, operational and political structures. Arguably there is much to be done to assist local Councillors to engage, connect and influence local partnership groups such as CDRP's.
5. The view held by Members, especially those not directly involved in CDRP's and Local Strategic Partnership activity was that the relationship with elected representatives in governance terms can be a confusing picture at times. It was questionable whether the options for influencing the priorities of such partnerships were fully understood.
6. That then begged the question, if community leaders are to bridge the gap that links community needs and decisions made about them, how do we raise awareness of what support they need to be effective.
7. Members saw clear parallels between this exercise and proposals around Community Calls for Action (CCfA). CCfAs were originally developed in the Safer Communities Bill and concern community safety issues. Similar proposals can now be found in the Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper (known as (GCCAs).

8. The development of two almost identical mechanisms at the same time by two different Government departments has already caused confusion. However, there are subtle differences between the two processes – which largely concentrate on the role of the local councillor and the scope of the Scrutiny Committee – which could potentially see the development of two separate yet almost indistinct processes.
9. These are the issues that will have been considered by the Committee by the time the County Council has met. I can update the County Council as appropriate.

PAUL RICHARDSON
Chairman, Safe and Sustainable Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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10 July 2007