

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

18 July 2007

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The main areas of the Committee's work that I would like to highlight are set out below.

Scrutiny Project: Supporting the Rural Economy and Diversification in Agriculture

1. The objective of our meeting on 22 June was to explore how business advice is provided to farmers. We received presentations from:
 - ❖ Helen West OBE, Chief Executive, Business Link York and North Yorkshire.
 - ❖ Alan Hayes, Chief Executive, Business Support and Development Limited (Hambleton and Richmondshire).
 - ❖ Phil Lythe, Farm Conservation Adviser, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Service.
2. Members were impressed with work of all three organisations. We heard how Yorkshire Forward is currently re-tendering for new business advice services in the region and we will be inviting a representative to brief the Committee as to how this work is progressing.

Adult Learning Service – Development Plan 2007/08

3. At the final meeting of the joint task group drawn from the Young People and Economic Development O&SCs on 22 March 2007 it was agreed that the joint task group would be disbanded and each O&SC would focus on that part of the former Community Education Service that falls within their respective remits. In the case of the ED&R O&SC that is Adult Education.
4. The ED&R Members (Councillors Les Parkes, Jim Snowball and John Blackie) who were part of the former joint task group met with senior managers from the Children and Young People Service on 4 July to consider the draft Adult Learning Development Plan 2007/08. Unfortunately I was unable to attend. At the meeting Members were also provided with a copy of the Ofsted report on the Adult Learning Service. Members noted that the service was assessed as "good" in 11 out of 12 grades and satisfactory on the remaining one – an excellent achievement.
5. Members supported the ALP and particularly welcomed proposals for expanding non-accredited courses and Adult Learning Clubs. These clubs would provide opportunities for learning, but also opportunities for social networking, which are important in terms of combating social exclusion and promoting good health.
6. The comments from the group are currently being finalised and will be fed through to the Executive on 24 July 2007.

Vocational Training and Education for Young People aged 14-19

7. The Committee was first involved in this subject in 2005 and reported to the Executive at that time. Since then we have continued to monitor the situation. We received our last briefing at our meeting on 16 March 2007 which led to the setting up of a Member task group. The task group will look at a number of aspects of the service in more detail, including the % of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), the curriculum “offer”, partnership working and engagement with employers. The objective of the task group is to advise the rest of the Committee as to whether or not the Committee could make a positive contribution to the service by looking at a particular issue in detail.

8. The task group had a preliminary meeting on 21 May 2007 and met for a second time with senior managers from Children and Young Peoples Service on Monday 9 July 2007. At this second meeting Councillors Blackie, Barker and myself heard how consultation is currently taking place on “Putting the Learner First – The North Yorkshire 14-19 Strategy 2007-2010” and also how the Strategy will be monitored. A report summarising achievement against the key performance indicators will be coming back to overview and scrutiny towards the end of this year.

County Councillor John Savage

Chairman - Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

09 July 2007