

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

18 July 2007

COMMUNICATIONS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

1. This is my first statement as the new Chairman of the Communications Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee has met once since the last full Council meeting, on 15 June. At that meeting the following items were discussed.

In-depth topic – Engaging hard-to-reach people

2. Cllr Broadbent gave a presentation on the draft recommendations of the working group. The objective of the group was to identify those local people who, for a variety of reasons, have more difficulty in getting their voices heard, and to look at whether the Council can do more to support them. Members of the group had visited a number of service user group meetings around the county and spoken to Council officers and voluntary sector representatives. Generally speaking, the group found that there is much good practice going on. The group recommends that this practice is shared within the Council and with partners such as the voluntary sector, and that the most is made of new technology to engage with hard-to-reach people. The group also recommends that the procedures for paying expenses to voluntary sector representatives on consultative forums is reviewed so that it promotes equality of access for all.
3. A final version of the report, incorporating comments from interested parties, will be brought back to the Committee's next meeting for approval.
4. The Committee discussed a number of possible subjects for its next in-depth topic, and will agree the topic at its next meeting.

Overview and monitoring

5. Draft Consultation Strategy

The new Strategy and Toolkit were discussed and it was noted that a database was being developed that would be a central source of information about consultation projects that are being planned, underway and completed by the Council. This will help to reduce duplication of effort by sharing information within the Council. Members felt it would be useful for regular reports on the information contained in the database to be brought to scrutiny committees.

6. Draft agenda items for the next meeting on 7 September

At our next meeting, we will receive a progress update on the Contact Centre and on the revised Communications Strategy.

County Councillor Ron Haigh
Chairman – Communications Overview and Scrutiny Committee

9 July 2007