

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

10 OCTOBER 2007

STATEMENT OF THE CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER (Corporate Affairs, Performance Management, Procurement, Asset Management and Finance)

COUNTY COUNCILLOR CARL LES

Recruitment Initiatives

Website developments

The North Yorkshire public sector website oneplacenorthyorks.com led by NYCC continues to go from strength to strength. Recent developments include:

- a “new to the UK” microsite accessed through the main site or directly through newtotheUK.co.uk. This is the first of its kind for a northern council and gives details of living and working in the UK and the region, with some of the content in a variety of different languages matching those of the current migrant worker populations.
- a microsite for the Children’s services workforce across all partners which outlines jobs and careers with children and young people across the county including schools, health service, early years etc.

This site continues to be popular with some 13000 visitors per month. It links directly to NYCC’s jobsite which itself receives on average 30000 visitors a month. The increased use of these sites alongside the effective use of NY Times has meant that spend on adverts continues to reduce and is now at a all time low whilst successful appointments continue to increase.

Recruitment of Young People

The recruitment of apprentices continues with a change in process. From now on any vacancy at the first few salary bands will be an apprentice post after any interested existing council staff have been considered. This will significantly increase the numbers with an additional 14 apprentices appointed in the last 6 weeks. In October an apprentice pool will be established enabling any interested young people to register, go through a selection process and be available for the next suitable vacancy. This will ensure a continuing supply of suitable apprentices for vacancies as and when they arise. A minimum target of an additional 120 apprentices for 07/08 has been set. This is an important development given the age profile of our workforce and the need to provide young people in the county with good career opportunities.

Another way of attracting young people to work for the county council and in the wider public sector is through work experience. In July the county council ran a new work experience programme with some 78 placements across a wide range of jobs and professions. In previous years we averaged some 27 placements via a relatively unstructured approach which did not present council jobs and careers in the best light. This years new approach was a success with good feedback from participating schools, young people and managers.

An inclusive workforce

It is obviously important that the Council's workforce is representative of and responsive to the communities it serves, in addition to a desire to ensure all local communities are able to access employment and contribute to the economic wellbeing of the county. Recent recruitment work has focused on being more inclusive and accessing suitable candidates who have previously been hard to reach. Developments include;

- A forum to be held in Skipton in November to discuss potential barriers in recruitment selection and training to local BME communities.
- The work experience programme is being extended and opened up to those who are starting work for the first time or returning to employment after time away due to a disability or mental health illness.

IIP (Investors in People)

The County council is in the final stages of its IIP reassessment. This has been an intensive process involving hundreds of staff and managers and the external scrutiny and assessment of how we develop and manage our staff. Whilst inevitably there will be areas identified for further action/development we are confident of a positive result and are keen to receive feedback on how we could further improve in these areas. The outcome will be known in October.

Member Development

The North Yorkshire Improvement Partnership (NYIP) comprising of NYCC, District Councils, York City Council and North Yorkshire Fire Service launched in September a programme of training events held at a variety of locations across the county. Topics include Partnership Cohesion and Community Engagement, with a "coaching skills" workshop to be held in January 2008.

One to one and small group ICT training is now available through NYIP for all councillors. Assessment of ICT training needs and booking ICT training is available through Learning and Development. Lorraine Laverton is also working with members to plan a special ICT event for members "How members can use IT".

Learning and Development will be contacting all members who have yet to complete their Learning Plan to book an individual appointment to agree their plan for the next 12 months to ensure that members tap into the Council and NYIP training resources provided, to full effect.

Thurston Road

The new office facilities at Thurston Road in Northallerton are now operational and will provide a working base for around 240 County Council staff, who are moving from offices and workbases around the Northallerton area. We will be able to dispose of these old offices in due course which will generate capital receipts for the County Council.

This is a key development for the County Council. It provides a modern, fit-for-purpose, working environment and all the teams relocating to the building are reviewing how they operate. We plan that Thurston Road will provide a platform for the Council to review our office accommodation in other areas of the County.

This new building provides over 2,000 sq ft of eco-friendly office accommodation. It will reduce Council bills and carbon emissions will go down by more than 330 tons per year.

Measures to improve the development's use of water, light and heat and an electricity-generating wind turbine ensure that the building is the greenest in the County Council's portfolio.

2006/07 Final Accounts

The final accounts for 2006/07 have been both approved by the Audit Committee and signed off by the Council's external auditors.

The external auditors offered an unqualified opinion on the accounts and effectively their feedback constitutes a clean bill of health.

The Audit Committee wished to congratulate all staff in Finance and Central Services in meeting the tight deadlines for production of final accounts and delivering a high quality service.

28 September 2007