

# NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

10<sup>th</sup> October 2007

## CORPORATE AFFAIRS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Corporate Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee has met once since the last full Council meeting. The following items were considered:

#### Committee Meeting – 10<sup>th</sup> September 2007

##### Progress Monitoring Reports

#### **1. Executive Members update**

The report highlighted recent relevant issues considered by the Executive since the Committee last met and identified key priorities for the coming months. As we discussed matters Councillor Les agreed with us that there was a role for the Committee in over-seeing the County Council's plans to progress enhanced two-tier working. We appreciate however that any arrangements for working with district and borough councils should be inclusive and we hope to work with them so that this is not seen as an infringement. To progress this I am extremely pleased that both the Leader of the County Council and the Chief Executive are available to attend the next Committee meeting and hope that discussions around any plans for enhanced two tier working in the future will be helpful.

#### **2. Equality Standard**

The Committee received an overview report of the Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service (as Director with corporate responsibility for equalities) on corporate equality and diversity developments and progress made by the County Council towards achieving Level 3 Equality Standard for Local Government (BVPI 2a).

We noted that due to there being a 'moving of goal posts' there would be a delay until September 2008 for North Yorkshire County Council to achieve Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG). This is due to revised ESLG requirements including:

- the development of a participation scheme/strategy;
- the requirement for external assessment at level 3 (rather than self assessment);
- the inclusion of three additional strands age, religion/belief and sexual orientation by March 2009.

#### **3. Use of resources**

The report of the Corporate Director – Finance and Central Services giving details of the latest position on the use of resources component of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

We are keen for the County Council to retain its current level three score achieved in 2006 and asked what were the chances of the County Council's score improving in 2007. The Corporate Director – Finance and Central Services informed us that the criteria for assessment results were currently under review. If a level three score was to be maintained in 2007 then the work being done with the Audit Committee to maximise Risk and Asset Management must be completed.

#### **4. Sustainable procurement**

As a result of the work of a joint scrutiny task group looking at Sustainable Procurement the Committee received a report of the Corporate Director – Finance and Central Services providing Members with a list of major procurements which contribute to the County Council's sustainable development objectives due to be undertaken in 2007/08.

After discussion around each of the major procurements the Committee chose contracts that we would like included in an outturn report which will be referred to the Committee in June 2008 and then on an annual basis. We will then look at actual achievement in terms of sustainability. The major procurements included are:

##### Business and Environmental Services

Vehicle Procurement

##### Children and Young People's Services

Venues, Hotel and Conference facilities

Fruit and Vegetables

Schools' ICT.

##### Finance and Central Services

Lighting Upgrade Programme

Building Insulation.

We have also requested that a representative from Adult and Community Services (ACS) attend our next meeting to give them an opportunity to comment on the sustainability of major goods and services procurement in the ACS Directorate as they had not provided comments to the original report.

#### **In-depth Scrutiny Review**

##### **5. Final report of the Member Task Group on Use of relief and agency staff**

The Committee received the final report of the Task and Finish group looking at the use of agency and relief staff. Councillors Liz Casling (the Chairman for the Task Group), John Savage and Mark Wheeler have worked hard to try and make sense of a difficult issue. The Task Group have worked well together with the Executive Member and the Assistant Chief Executive Human Resources and Organisation Development to highlight innovative ways of dealing with workload peaks and staffing troughs. The Task Group have handed over all the information they have collected to the Human Resources Team so that comprehensive comparisons between an IT solution called 'Slivers of Time' and possible alternatives can be undertaken.

##### **6. Next in-depth review – Succession Planning**

As one in-depth scrutiny review ends so another one begins! I look forward to working with Councillors Liz Casling and John Blackburn as the Task and Finish Scrutiny Working Group along with the Executive Member and Assistant Chief Executive Human Resources and Organisation Development on this important piece of proactive work looking at succession planning within the County Council.

**County Councillor Margaret-Ann de Courcey-Bayley**  
**Chairman – Corporate Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

September 2007