

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

19 DECEMBER 2007

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

COUNTY COUNCILLOR CARL LES

Procurement

Following the successes achieved in establishing a number of corporate contracts for the County Council, work is in hand on a number of initiatives with individual Directorates:

- The model by which ICT Services procures its hardware is being revisited and reshaped with a view to making savings on the current prices of desktop PCs, Laptops and Monitors.
- A closer relationship has been established between Northern Procurement Group and B&ES with an initial project to look at the procurement practices in support of the Public Rights of Way team targeting the achievement of savings in the region of 15%.
- Work is on-going with A&CS to assist with furniture requirements for Extra Care Housing and with the Digital Pens Project, which has links to the corporate contract for mobile phones.
- The Traded Service Panel has fully endorsed a proposal by C&YPS that they should engage Northern Procurement Group to provide a Procurement Service to schools on a subscription basis in keeping with other 'Traded Services'. This Service will provide a full range of support from advice and guidance to full management of procurement projects.
- An innovative approach to competitive tendering is being used in support of the Richmond Building Schools for the Future project. A competition is being run between five Consortia, including YPO, who have access to a portfolio of OJEU compliant contracts that are capable of meeting all the fitting-out requirements of the school for classroom furniture and kitchen units/equipment.

Transformation and Management of restructurings

The Transformation agenda continues and is beginning to pick up pace in terms of initiatives and impact. This months County Talk included in Staffing payslips provides an update for staff on the main initiatives and impact including mobile/flexible working at Thurston Road, skill mix review in ACS, use of new IT developments/processes in CYPS and ACS etc.

As part of the Transformation Agenda there are currently a number of service reviews and restructurings which impact on a large number of staff across directorates and geographic locations. The majority of these are well underway and will conclude April/May 08. In order to safeguard employment for the staff affected suitable vacancies are being held wherever possible and particularly locations beyond Northallerton. Where vacancies have to be filled this is being progressed on a fixed term basis. In addition support is provided to staff affected in the form of additional training and development in order to provide additional skills to support redeployment.

New Look LGPS 2008

After five years of consultation, the New Look LGPS 2008 will be up and running from April 2008. As with the existing scheme, it will offer NYCC employees the opportunity to become members of a first rate, guaranteed benefit and final salary scheme.

Although the structure and bare bones of the New Scheme has been announced, the detail will be rolled out by the DCLG and the LGE over the coming months. For example, in late November 07, the DCLG is due to announce a short consultation exercise on the proposed amendments to ill health retirement provision.

To date, information has been provided to all NYCC employees and members by the North Yorkshire Pension Fund newsletters, by articles included in key messages and through Countytalk (November 07). More details of regulation, protection and potential impact of the new look scheme will be provided between now and April 2008 as and when new announcements are made and in the meantime, the NYPF and the NYCC Pension Liaison Officer are dealing with individual staff queries and arranging briefing sessions.

Learning and sharing – helping our partners

A number of District Councils and North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue have opted to access and use the County Council Learning Zone through tailored front screens and menus purpose built for their needs. Hambleton District Council, Richmond District Council and Selby District Council are scheduled to go live between January and February 2008, with City of York coming on line in July 2008. North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue will confirm their go live shortly. Same existing e-learning products will also be made available to other partner organisations such as Broadacres.

Three primary and two secondary schools have agreed to pilot the learning zone and learning & development services are looking at how school governors may also be able to access the learning zone.

The learning zone will also host the new 'modern councillor' suite of e-learning courses provided by the Learning Pool from the Improvement and Development Agency (iDeA). District Councils are considering how they wish to make this e-learning facility available to their members across the County.

Skills Pledge (Train to Gain)

Learning & development services have registered with the Learning Skills Council (LSC) to begin the process of identifying the service areas that could benefit from staff groups completing level 2 or level 3 funded qualifications through the Train to Gain initiative. Work is now underway with the help of a skills broker to confirm service area, staff groups and assess eligibility to access the LSC funded training from Spring 2008. Priority qualifications at NVQ 2 level have been identified as; Health and Social care, those relating to Childcare, IT, Catering, Customer Care and Business Administration.

IIP (Investors in People)

The County council has completed the IIP reassessment. Feedback is scheduled from late November through December 2007. The early indication is that the County Council will retain its IIP status with a small number of areas to address notably, improving our manager's capacity and skills to manage change well and improved staff engagement. These areas were already identified as requiring further work which is now in progress. The lead IIP external assessor has provided feedback to Management Board.

30 November 2007