

# **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**19 DECEMBER 2007**

## **COMMUNICATIONS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN**

1. The Communications Overview and Scrutiny Committee has met once since the last full Council meeting.

#### **In-depth topics**

##### **Improving Communication with Elected members**

2. A working group comprising Cllr Pearson (Chair), Cllr Broadbent, Cllr Houlton and Cllr Jeffels have now been established to take forward the in-depth review looking at improving communication with members. The group will be working closely with Cllr Les, Justine Brooksbank and the new Head of Communications, when appointed. We have planned a programme of work which commences in the New Year which will include:
  - Mapping and evaluating current communication methods.
  - Researching best practice in other local authorities including a visit to Lancashire County Council to look at a recent communication initiative that they have started.
  - Conducting one to one interviews with officers and members.
  - Conducting a survey amongst members.
  - Jointly running a seminar with Transport and Telecommunications Overview and Scrutiny Committee to look at effective use of IT. You will recall that a questionnaire was circulated at the last full Council meeting and we have received a very positive response from members wishing to attend and will circulate full details once finalised.
3. If any member wishes to speak to us about contributing to the review please contact Jo Broadbent, Scrutiny Support Officer.

#### **Overview and monitoring**

4. At its meeting on 9 November the Committee considered a number of reports including:

##### **An update on internal communication with staff**

5. John Marsden provided an informative presentation outlining progress over the last year on improving communication with staff. The Committee were pleased to note the progress made on this.

### **NY Times update**

6. Members received an update report on the NY Times from its editor Martin Feekin. Feedback from the reader survey of the paper was shared with members and this showed very positive results, with 900 readers responding positively. A citizen's panel questionnaire also showed that the paper was seen as informative and relevant in its coverage of local issues.
7. The Committee also noted the successes that had been achieved on securing advertising, including the Fire Service and Police, and welcomed the progress on this.

### **Website strategy and internet update**

8. The draft website strategy outlining the vision and action to be taken over the next three years on the development of the website was provided for members. This is to be supported by a demonstration to members in the New Year.
9. The Committee thanked Ben Hayes, Head of Communications, for his contribution during his work with the Council and looks forward to working with his successor when appointed.

**County Councillor Ron Haigh**  
**Chairman – Communications Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

5 December 2007