

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

19th December 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 – 5th November 2007

Progress Monitoring Reports

Enhanced two-tier working

At our previous meeting we agreed that enhanced two tier working should be a priority for the County, District and Borough Councils in North Yorkshire. We deliberated on how this Committee could support this and so were very pleased to welcome the Leader; Councillor John Weighell and the Chief Executive; John Marsden to our meeting.

We were keen to hear if any work was ongoing and if there was any opportunity for overview and scrutiny to assist.

Councillor Weighell advised us that there are four areas currently being focussed on and these are waste, transport, access to services and housing. With varying degrees of success in each area. He also referred to the importance of the County Council working closely with those organisations which, together with the County Council, provided the majority of public services, eg Police, Fire and the PCT and Members agreed with this.

It was encouraging to hear that John Marsden had written to the Chief Executives of all District Councils to advise that he would be happy to speak to their Management Teams. And had subsequently, attended 3 such meetings and meetings with a further 4 Management Teams have been scheduled.

We have invited them back to our January 2008 meeting and are looking to invite the Chief Executives and Leaders of the District and Borough Councils to our meetings throughout the year to hear their ideas on how can we do things better together for the benefit of the people of North Yorkshire.

Sustainable procurement – adult and community services

The Committee received an oral report from the Strategic Commissioning Manager, Adult and Community Services Directorate identifying two major procurements by the Adult and Community Services Directorate which had contributed to the County Council's sustainable development objectives for 2007/08. Those procurements were: (a) Extra Care Housing which had low energy heating systems, insulation etc; and (b) the purchase of digital pens to be used by staff during single assessments of people with social care needs through which information was transferred electronically to various databases resulting in savings in paper and travel/mileage.

We agreed that these projects should be included in the 2008 outturn report now scheduled for the Committee's meeting on 28 July 2008.

Corporate asset management

Members were pleased to hear about the progress being made on each of the six priority areas and the continued development and implementation of the Asset Management Planning Framework.

Risk management – progress report

The updated (a) Corporate Risk Management Policy and Strategy and (b) Corporate Risk Register were considered by the Committee and after some discussion Members agreed that in the future this Committee would receive an annual report on the Corporate Risk Register but in order to avoid duplication the Management Policy and Strategy would no longer be required as this is considered by the Audit Committee.

Public liability claims

A report on the number of Public Liability claims settled and any emerging accident “trends” was presented to the Committee. We found this most interesting and agreed to receive the report on an annual basis so that we could monitor this year on year.

Overview Reports

Craven Area Committee’s consideration of “green lanes”

This was an item referred to our Committee by Environment & Heritage Overview and Scrutiny Committee and centred around a criticism from a member of the public on Craven Area Committee’s handling of a matter on ‘green lanes’.

County Councillors David Ireton and Mark Wheeler (Craven Area Committee Members) addressed the meeting to emphasise the amount of consideration which Craven Area Committee had given to “green lanes” and highlighting that officers had not acted on the Area Committee’s requests.

Members questioned how the Area Committee had failed to identify that it had not received the further reports it had requested and we were advised that all Area Committees now had Work Programmes which listed previous decisions requesting reports back and therefore the same situation was unlikely to arise now.

We recognised the efforts made by Craven Area Committee to encourage full expression of views about Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads but accepted that, for reasons beyond its control, progress was not made in the manner in which the Area Committee wished.

The Committee recommended that the Portfolio Holder, County Councillor John Fort BEM, instigate a meeting of the Unsurfaced Unclassified Roads (UUR) Liaison Group at the earliest possible opportunity and for progress to be made on this issue.

I have since been informed that arrangements are in hand for a meeting of the UUR Liaison Group.

Draft scrutiny guidance

Members commended the work undertaken to produce the draft scrutiny guidance.

In-depth Scrutiny Review

Succession Planning

The Succession Planning Scrutiny Task Group is comprised of myself (as Chairman of the Task Group) and Councillors Liz Casling and John Blackburn. We have already met with an officer from Newcastle City Council who provided valuable information on their approach to succession planning. We now look forward to a visit to Cambridgeshire County Council to find out about their partnership approach working with Cambridge City Council and Peterborough Council.

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

December 2007