

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

20 FEBRUARY 2008

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. It has been agreed to defer the in-depth review on improving communication with elected members as the Committee has been asked to lead on a separate cross committee review detailed at paragraph 4. Instead of undertaking the full review, we are going to focus on what members want from the intranet. We will be working with the officers who are currently developing the intranet to focus on what will be useful for members. One area that we are currently exploring is the development of folders where information for different divisions can be placed enabling members to access what is relevant to their local area.

Members IT seminar

3. Together with the Transport and Telecommunications Committee, we are jointly organising the members IT seminar on 12th March 2008. This will provide an opportunity for members to hear about how the latest in e-governance can help them in their role as community leaders and to identify how to get more out of IT. Invitations will be sent shortly and we hope that you can join this event.

Cross-scrutiny review of the Customer Service Centre and Face to Face Contacts

4. A cross scrutiny working group comprising of members of the Communications, Care and Independence and Young People Scrutiny Committees has been established. In recognition that the programme for delivery of improved access to services is now gathering momentum and the fact that a number of committees have an interest in this, the working group has been established to look at the two key areas of public interest namely the customer service centre and face to face personal caller access. The working group is being chaired by myself and will start work in March. If any member has any concerns or issues about these services that they would like us to consider in the review please contact Jo Broadbent, Scrutiny Support Officer.

Visit to Lancashire County Council

5. A visit to Lancashire County Council has been undertaken by Clrs Melva Steckles, Eric Broadbent and myself. The purpose of the visit was to look at work the council is undertaking on improving communication with members and to learn more about their local area committee structure called Lancashire Locals. The Lancashire Locals concept was very interesting and we have provided information to Cllr Carl Les who will be exploring this in more detail.

Overview and monitoring

6. At its meeting on 11 January the Committee considered a number of reports including:

Internet Demonstration

7. A demonstration on the recently re-launched internet site was given to members and this will be supported by a demonstration on the intranet at a future meeting. The importance of this in relation to the Access to Services strategy was noted.

Access to Services Update

8. An update on progress with implementing the strategy on access to services was given to members covering the website, the customer services centre and face to face personal callers.

Appointment of Head of Communications

9. The Committee was pleased to hear that a new appointment to the post of Head of Communications has been made and Helen Edwards, currently with Leeds City Council will join in April 2008.

County Councillor Ron Haigh
Chairman – Communications Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11 January 2008