

# **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**20 February 2008**

## **SCRUTINY BOARD**

### **STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN**

The Scrutiny Board met on 29 January 2008.

#### Adult and Community Services strategic issues

County Councillor Chris Metcalfe and Derek Law, the Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services, joined the Board to discuss the service's strategic priorities for the next six months.

Issues covered in the discussion included:

- Performance and achievement over the past year including
  - 680 additional older people helped to live at home since April
  - An additional 450 households helped by intensive home care packages
  - Services to carers doubling from 1000 to 2000 people
- The fact that the budget is now stabilised and able to fund preventative initiatives, improving outcomes and serving more people more efficiently
- Future developments and challenges
  - Harrogate Library transformation through the successful Big Lottery bid
  - Opening four more Extra Care schemes in Norton, Brayton, Scarborough and Castleton over the next year
  - Driving through efficiency to modernise services and offset the expected costs of demographic change

#### Local Area Agreement (LAA) and scrutiny of partnership working

The Board agreed that use of the new powers under the Local Government Act should follow the principles proposed by the Scrutiny Board working group, namely:

- To use existing overview and scrutiny arrangements as far as possible.
- All O&S committees to make use of the new powers when appropriate.
- Each committee to look at the outcomes to be delivered via the LAA that are relevant to its remit.
- Establish constructive "critical friend" relationships with the relevant thematic partnerships
- Non executive Members of the County Council to be part of the new NYSP structure.

- One OSC to take an overview of the whole of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the LAA
- Scrutiny Board to “hold the ring” in relation to cross-cutting issues to ensure that there is good co-ordination of scrutiny work and duplication and unnecessary burden is avoided.

It was agreed that it was important for each committee to look at the specific outcomes from partnership working that related to its own terms of reference.

Members were keen to explore opportunities for more joint working with district council members on scrutiny. Members supported the initiative taken by County Councillor De Courcey-Bayley inviting the Leaders and Chief Executives of all the districts to future meetings of the Corporate Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discuss the potential for enhanced two tier working.

#### Scrutiny and Executive working relationship

I reported on my recent meeting with the Leader and Chief Executive at which the we discussed the developing role of scrutiny in looking at the outcomes of partnership working as well as continuing to have a constructive, and when necessary challenging, relationship with the Executive.

#### Consultation on Councillors' Call for Action

The Board considered the most recent consultation document asking for views about what should be in the guidance when it is produced. Board members struggled to see what real difference the new legal power for a councillor to refer a matter to a scrutiny committee would amount to when this entitlement is already in the County Council's Constitution. Members were also concerned that any guidance did not create a bureaucratic paperchase whenever a Member sought to resolve a local issue.

#### Preparing for a Local Involvement Network (LINK) for North Yorkshire

The Board was given an update on the continued progress being made. Four tenders to be the 'host' organisation to set up and support the LINK have been received and are being evaluated. I am pleased to say that the the County Council is still on track to let the contract in March, subject to the regulations being issued by the Government in time.

**County Councillor Paul Richardson**  
**Chairman of Scrutiny Board**  
**8 February 2008**