

**Appendix 1 – Executive Report to Council**

# **COUNCIL PLAN**

**2008 - 11**

A responsive County Council providing excellent and efficient local services

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### Best Value Performance Indicators

An annex to this document, 'Best Value Performance Indicators 2007-08', gives information on the County Council's performance, as measured by the Best Value Performance Indicators. This is available from Cathrine Hall, County Hall, Northallerton, DL7 8AD, telephone 0845 8 72 73 74, email [cathrine.hall@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:cathrine.hall@northyorks.gov.uk) , or on the County Council's website [www.northyorks.gov.uk](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk)

### Alternative formats

We can provide this document in alternative formats on request. Please contact Ann Ingram at North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD.

Inne formaty

Na życzenie możemy udostępnić ten dokument w innym formacie. Prosimy o kontakt z Ann Ingram w biurze władz lokalnych: North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD.

Telephone: 0845 8 72 73 74 email: [ann.ingram@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:ann.ingram@northyorks.gov.uk)

### Statement on contracts

We hereby state and certify that all contracts awarded during the past year which involved a transfer of staff, comply with the requirements in the code of practice on workforce matters in local authority service contracts.

## Foreword

This plan sets out the County Council's vision for North Yorkshire and our aims and objectives up to 2011. Its purpose is to explain our main priorities, how our work is paid for and how we are performing against key targets.

The County Council continued to make good progress in 2007-08. The Audit Commission rated us a 4 star authority and improving well, with an extensive range of significant achievements:

- Children's services perform well with good or outstanding outcomes across all priorities and significant progress in improving children's social services.
- Adult Social Care Services continues to show major improvements and is delivering good outcomes for the community by helping more older and disabled people to live independently in their own homes. It is doing this by increasing the number of schemes in the community such as extra care housing, telecare and working with voluntary organisations to help people inappropriately going into care homes or hospitals.
- Our Strategic Commissioning Plan, in response to the 2006 Health and Social Care White Paper, has received national recognition by the Department of Health.
- Our progress in addressing the needs of 'hard to reach' groups has been good.
- Our performance is good in waste management, access to services, community safety, and services for children and young people.
- Environmental Services and the County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) are both recognised as excellent by the Government. The achievements of the County Council have also been recognised in its designation as an LTP Centre of Excellence.
- Good progress continues to be made in conjunction with the 95 Alive Partnership in combating road casualties.
- Our performance in recycling and composting is above target and improving well; it is expected to be marginally below 40% in 2007/08 (an increase of about 10% in two years).
- Our continued focus on value for money enables us to sustain a high level of service performance with comparatively low costs.
- We have successfully used the opportunities presented by the negotiation of the new Local Area Agreement (LAA) to translate the priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategy into clear action plans.
- Our focus on social inclusion has produced clear benefits for disadvantaged groups.
- We have a strong planning framework, corporately and in partnership with other agencies across the County, based on stronger partnership working.
- We have been successful in our application for Big Lottery Funding to develop a state of the art library service in Harrogate. This will develop a ground breaking model for the way in which we will develop future library services in our local communities.

It is very satisfying to have our efforts recognised in this way. But nothing stands still. Service needs change, challenges to improvement arise in all kinds of ways

and we must maintain our focus if we are to maintain and improve these standards and this progress.

This plan sets out how we intend to maintain progress. So this is an important document for anyone wanting to know what the County Council plans to do for the people of North Yorkshire. We hope you will find it useful and interesting.

John Weighell  
Leader of the Council

John Marsden  
Chief Executive

## **North Yorkshire**

### **Introduction**

North Yorkshire is England's largest county stretching from Scarborough on the North Sea coast to Bentham in the West, and from the edge of Teesside to south of the M62. It is very diverse socially, geographically and economically. It offers a high quality of life to many but is still a low wage economy, with pockets of serious urban disadvantage and extensive but scattered rural deprivation. Size and diversity constantly shape our responses to improving delivery of public services.

### **North Yorkshire – our people**

With a population of 591,600 across over 3,000 square miles, the County is sparsely populated. The population is increasing and getting older. By 2019 the number of people who are 65 and over will increase from about 111,700 to about 155,500. This represents just over 24% of the total population. By contrast, young people under 18 account for only 21% of the population.

Although 21% of people live in the two major urban centres - Harrogate and Scarborough, four fifths of North Yorkshire is defined as "super sparse" with fewer than 0.5 people per hectare. Most people live in one of the 28 small market towns and the many small villages and hamlets. This often makes service delivery more difficult and costly, particularly for elderly or disabled people living in rural areas. There are fewer facilities for young people in our rural areas than for their urban counterparts.

The 2001 Census of Population showed that just under 99% of the County's population were white British, with black and ethnic minority (BME) groups making up just 1.1% of the total, although recent in-migration from Eastern Europe is changing this. This and the sparsity of the County can exacerbate issues such as isolation and exclusion from services. The County Council celebrates the diversity of our communities and we are aware of our responsibilities to reach all people who need services.

The population increases substantially through tourism from Easter through to October and we are making efforts to lengthen the tourism season. It is important to us to serve visitors well. Competition for housing from second homeowners and the tourism sector means that affordable housing is a major challenge.

### **North Yorkshire – geography and heritage**

The County includes:-

- two of England's nine national parks;
- a stunning heritage coast;
- two designated areas of outstanding natural beauty and part of a third;

- 244 sites of special scientific interest;
- over 12,000 listed buildings and many thousands more monuments and archaeological sites, including Fountains Abbey, a world heritage site;
- thriving market towns and isolated rural uplands; and
- a population which places a high value on independence, determination, resourcefulness and a strong sense of community.

The combination of large upland water catchments and extensive flood plains makes the County particularly vulnerable to flooding in parts.

The size of North Yorkshire brings challenges in service delivery. Services must be customised to local need and circumstance and made as local as possible. A good example of this is in Children's and Young People's services where the County has 85 schools with fewer than 50 pupils and 180 schools with fewer than 100 pupils. These small schools avoid longer journeys for young children, but they do have to be supported by more funding to match their higher unit costs. We spent £21.4m on home-to-school transport in 2007-08; this is mainly due to the rural nature of the County.

### **North Yorkshire - the economy**

The economy is also very varied. Generally, unemployment is low and labour market participation rates high. Small businesses dominate with 85% of businesses employing between 1 and 10 people. There are high levels of self employment. In the private sector, tourism (around 12% of the workforce) and agriculture (around 3%) are very significant - particularly in the rural uplands where they account for as much as 50% of the workforce. Further diversification and tourism development remains a priority, especially for the North Yorkshire coast which suffers additionally from remoteness from the principal north-south communications routes. The power stations at Drax and Eggborough generate 9% of English electricity.

To remain prosperous, the County has to adjust from traditional to new business sectors. This means working closely with Yorkshire Forward, City of York Council, district and borough councils and businesses to encourage new investment. It has also been critically important to continue to extend and improve the broadband infrastructure in North Yorkshire to help maintain and develop business efficiency and competitiveness.

The Government has recently re-emphasised the importance of the Creative Industries Sector to the economy of the country. In North Yorkshire an independent study carried out in 2006 identified a fast-growing sector that employs 11,600 people and has a particular impact on the rural economy. The study concluded that the sector has the potential to play a key role in developing a sustainable knowledge-based economy and re-branding the sub-region as a cultural tourism destination.

### **Our vision and objectives**

For our vision and objectives we start with the views of our communities. As explained below, we have a great deal of information about our communities' priorities, from on-going consultations and those of partners. This information was used to develop our vision:

**'A County which provides opportunity, independence and security for all.'**

Our economy, our schools, our transport system, our heritage, our strong communities and our countryside all ensure that life in North Yorkshire provides us with a wealth of opportunities. These same things help us to live independent and fulfilled lives, though some of us may need special support to help overcome personal difficulties. Being secure means economic as well as personal security and freedom from fear of crime.

The County Council aims to provide excellent and efficient local services that support this vision, enabling everyone to fulfil their potential. Our objectives make clearer the kinds of things we need to focus on:

**Our objectives**

- **Security for all** – by promoting safe, healthy and sustainable communities.
- **Growing up prepared for the future** – through good education and care and protection when it is needed.
- **Independence** – through employment, opportunity and appropriate support for those that need it.
- **Ensuring good access for all** – with good roads and a safe and reliable transport system, as well as providing new ways to interact with, and contact, the services needed.
- **Strengthening our economy** – by supporting business, developing our infrastructure, investing in powerful telecommunications and helping people improve their skills.
- **Looking after our heritage and our environment** – in our countryside and our towns and villages, for all to enjoy.
- **Keeping in touch** – by listening to your views, engaging with you to meet your needs and by letting you know what we are doing.

**What are our priorities?**

Our vision and objectives are ongoing intentions against which the County Council continues to deliver services. However, over the coming year, there

are a number of specific priorities on which we will focus our efforts. In putting together these priorities we have considered the Sustainable Community Strategy, the results of our recent Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and annual service assessments, the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter which we receive from the Audit Commission, and, importantly, we have talked and listened to communities in North Yorkshire through recent consultation events. Looking at each of these information sources we can identify issues that relate to both frontline service delivery as well as to how we manage ourselves as an organisation.

### **The Sustainable Community Strategy**

The North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership (NYSP) is a partnership of public sector, private sector and voluntary sector organisations which have come together to plan how they can work better together to meet the needs of North Yorkshire's communities. Drawing on the district level Local Strategic Partnerships community strategies, the NYSP has developed a Sustainable Community Strategy which sets out what the partners will seek to deliver for local communities. As such, it forms an important part of the context for the County Council's corporate plan which must set out how the County Council will support the delivery of the community strategy through its own efforts and resources. It identifies ten key themes to be addressed by partners:

- **Access to services and public transport**
- **Affordable housing**
- **Alcohol - reducing the impact on crime, health and anti-social behaviour**
- **Children and young people**
- **Community cohesion – making sure that all sections of the community live and work together well**
- **Community safety**
- **Economy and enterprise**
- **Environment**
- **Health and wellbeing**
- **Older people**

Making progress in each theme is a mainstream task for many partners including the County Council. We have negotiated a new LAA between ourselves, other local partners and central government, which outlines activity that local partners will deliver to meet local needs and priorities. The LAA is the action plan by which the Sustainable Community Strategy will be achieved.



These are shared priorities, but the County Council has a role to play in each. Therefore we will ensure that the Council Plan's vision and objectives support this strategy. The following sections set out our vision and objectives to this end.

### How do the Council Plan objectives support the Sustainable Community Strategy?

The table below illustrates how the County Council objectives support the priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS).

Security for all		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Growing up prepared for the future				<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	
Independence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>							<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensuring good access for all	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strengthening our economy		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>			
Looking after our heritage and our environment					<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>		
Keeping in touch	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>				

### Consultation

In recent years, the County Council and others have asked North Yorkshire's communities about their priorities. These consultations have underpinned the development of the plans of local authorities, local strategic partnerships' community strategies and the plans of other public sector bodies. Comparing

community strategies around the County shows a high degree of consistency in priorities, though often worded differently. These priorities are re-expressed in the priorities of the North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership set out above, and in the County Council's priorities.

The LTP is produced following significant consultation. This includes other local authorities in and around the County, the health sector and transport operators, amongst others. In addition, there is public engagement in order to ensure that the priorities of the LTP are consistent with the aspirations of communities. This involves significant consultation with stakeholder organisations and the wider general public. Additionally, consultation is a key element in the development of Service Centre Transportation Strategies.

We have recently been checking with specific groups of people, including young people, older people, people from black and minority ethnic groups and people with learning difficulties, to see whether the priorities are right for their interests too. They have all said that these priorities are indeed right for them but have drawn attention to special issues in delivering them.

The concerns of young people are at the heart of the work we undertake to develop and deliver the Children and Young People's Plan. This plan ensures that the activities of partner agencies are properly joined-up and focussed on improving access to services and outcomes for children and young people.

Older people are especially concerned to see the commitment to supporting independence delivered – transport and social care are especially important here, as is reducing fear of crime (a very low risk area in North Yorkshire but often not seen as such) – and are concerned about withdrawal of life long learning opportunities in favour of formal certificated vocational courses.

People from minority ethnic communities also endorse our priorities although wish to see greater recognition of their specific needs. Realising these priorities for people from a minority ethnic group requires greater cultural sensitivity on the part of service providers and greater success in preventing the prejudice they can experience. Language can be the biggest barrier and we will work to address this.

People with a learning disability want to be included and involved in all parts of their community, live an active life and be able to access all services which are available, including a range of employment opportunities. Information to help them do this needs to be clear and readily available.

The County Council appreciates all of these issues. Organisations representing these groups value the opportunity to contribute to consultations and welcome being able to raise their issues and concerns. Progress is not always as quick as we would like, sometimes because of competing priorities and sometimes because of the complexity of the issue. We will continue to seek to make progress in these areas, however, and to make sure we understand issues for these groups, as they develop, and keep them engaged in our work.

## **Priorities for 2008-09**

**Community safety:** Working to reduce crime, disorder and substance misuse. The County Council is a proactive member of the locally based Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and the countywide Safer Communities Forum, with both elected members and officers playing active roles. The County Council is a key contributor to many of the work programmes of these partnerships, which are based on community led issues of concern. This year the County Council will focus effort across directorates on common goals and targets agreed as part of the LAA. These targets prioritise road safety, young people (as victims and offenders), domestic abuse, violent crime and persistent offenders.

In these areas the County Council will:

- work to achieve reductions in the number of killed and seriously injured, as part of the County's role in partnership with the 95 Alive road safety campaign;
- work with other agencies to keep victims of domestic abuse in their homes whilst supporting perpetrators through an intensive programme to challenge their behaviour;
- seek to maximise opportunities for all young people, in particular identifying those at risk of becoming offenders, through a range of activities and by ensuring an effective education campaign in schools on the dangers of alcohol and substance misuse.

In addition to working with partner agencies to achieve these aims, the County Council continues to deliver its own mainstream programme of services which include:

- enforcement activities to stop the availability of alcohol to children;
- the introduction and maintenance of no cold calling zones to protect the elderly and vulnerable;
- a scrutiny review examining practises to champion the welfare of children who witness domestic abuse.

**Meeting the needs of minority groups**, especially those black or other minority ethnic citizens and the communities they live in. We recognise that the rurality of the County can exacerbate feelings of isolation, particularly for communities which are few in number. We will support the integration of new arrivals to communities, by understanding and meeting their needs and ensuring they have access to the information they require to become active citizens. We will work with the NYSP (including the voluntary sector and other key public agencies) to harness the positive contribution all citizens can make to the communities in which they live, whatever their background, and we will work with our partners to take a strong stand on incidents of racial harassment. Our Social Inclusion Strategy says more about these issues and about how we respond to the needs of other potentially excluded groups.

**Ensuring independence, choice and quality of life** for those who would be at risk of losing out without appropriate support, especially through increased use of assistive technology, support for carers, giving people more say over how their needs should be met, tackling adult abuse and improving access for

disabled people. The Council's document, 'Strategic Commissioning for Independence, Wellbeing and Choice', explains more about how we will do this. The themes and actions set out in this strategy are reflected in the Government's national landmark agreement, 'Putting People First'. This signals the Government's intention to change completely how adult social care services will be delivered in the future and the Council will be taking this forward with its local partners.

The issue of unmanageable debt and financial exclusion has emerged as a major concern across the United Kingdom. The problem is of particular concern in North Yorkshire: a predominantly rural area with less support mechanisms for people living on low incomes than is available in many more urban areas. In order to tackle this we have joined forces with York Credit Union to enable people living and working in North Yorkshire to join a 'credit union', a not-for-profit alternative to banks, building societies and finance houses, allowing members to save and borrow.

Alongside other partners, the County Council has agreed to commit nearly £200k towards the cost of creating a sustainable credit union for York and North Yorkshire, via the extension of York Credit Union's arrangements to the rest of North Yorkshire.

The size of the County means that in order to ensure that the credit union will become sustainable, a five year roll out programme is envisaged. This will mean that credit union services will be rolled out to certain areas first, particularly those areas of the County where the population density is highest, and the more deprived areas. From day one, however, all areas of the County will have postal access to the credit union.

**Making North Yorkshire a better place for every child:** The Council will continue to support schools in improving the educational attainment of young people, but, in addition to this, our priority for 2008-09 will be to further develop preventative work with vulnerable children through local, integrated multi-agency teams. We will achieve this through the continued development of children's centres, extended services through schools, common assessment processes, and a new integrated youth support service. There will be specific focus on services for children and young people with learning difficulties or disabilities, including putting in place the additional local services promised through the Special Educational Needs/Behaviour Provision Review. Other priority areas of work include more health assessments for looked-after children, shorter waiting times for mental health services, further improving the referral and assessment process in children's social care, reducing rates of re-offending amongst young people, increasing the number of young people participating in out-of-school and community-based activities, and extending choices for learners within education, employment and training. These priorities, and all our key objectives for improving outcomes for children and young people in North Yorkshire, can be found in the Children and Young People's Plan.

**Continue to improve access to services and opportunities** by supporting community transport, developing joint access centres with our partners, developing our telephone contact centre and through the newly formed

company, NYnet, to improve broadband facilities for our rural communities. NYnet will not only improve access to services but will greatly strengthen the infrastructure supporting business, especially in these rural communities. The County Council's LTP will be key to these improvements, focussing, as it does, on improved transport and working with our partners to improve access to their services, too. If we are successful in our current plans, 192,000 passengers will be carried on community transport mini-buses throughout the County during 2008-09.

**Continue to strengthen the economy** by working with a wide range of partners to provide the right environment to stimulate business development and growth. Particular priorities will be to maximise opportunities for European funding and to agree with Yorkshire Forward the management of a programme for North Yorkshire to support the rural economy. New regional delivery structures have been put in place from April 2008 through Business Link Yorkshire to provide business information and advice. The County Council will work to ensure that the needs of North Yorkshire businesses are properly catered for. The County Council will continue to make direct investment in promoting the County to inward investors seeking to relocate from elsewhere within the UK, supporting the regeneration of market towns and developing and promoting the County's cultural and tourism sectors. A new initiative for 2008/09 will be specific funding from the County Council, along with City of York Council, Arts Council England and Yorkshire Culture, to create a specialist team to develop a sub-regional response to 'Yorkshire Gold - Opportunities from the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games'. This investment will begin a process of raising awareness in the sub-region of business opportunities arising from the games and beyond, and of working with businesses and organisations in the creative industry, festivals and events and outdoor adventure sectors to develop new opportunities around the London Olympics.

**Continuing to develop our waste management arrangements** jointly with district and borough councils and the City of York Council as part of the York and North Yorkshire Waste Management Partnership. The aim is to ensure that reuse and recycling are maximised and less waste is sent to landfill. Recycling and composting rates have improved greatly in recent years and targets have been set of 40% by 2010, 45% by 2013 and 50% by 2020. Waste produced, however, remains high and strategies are in place, not least investment in waste treatment facilities, to ensure that the County Council does not face stringent European Union penalties for failing to divert waste away from landfill. The development of the Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework will also play a significant part in ensuring that the County is well placed in order to meet its future waste infrastructure needs. Further details on the County Council's approach to waste management can be found in the document "Let's Talk Less Rubbish" - the Municipal Waste Management Strategy for the City of York and North Yorkshire'.

**Continue to strengthen our partnership working** which has improved substantially over the past year, especially to support the delivery of the LAA targets, such as those relating to public health, which depend strongly on good partnership working. We will particularly ensure that we work more

effectively with the district and borough councils in the County on service delivery.

**Continue to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our business processes** by maximising the use of appropriate technology and increasing the efficiency of our back office functions. For example, we will, by engaging with partners, seek to maximise the use of shared services and premises and undertake a rigorous scrutiny of service areas to ensure maximum cost effectiveness of services.

**Improve communication with, and involvement of, local communities and customers** by working with partner organisations to ensure that we find out from people what they think of our services and how we can improve them. From April 2009, all councils will have a duty to involve their residents more in decision making and service provision and we will work to build on existing practice to ensure we are meeting that duty.

**Continue to reduce carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions** from our buildings, vehicles and services. Working with the Carbon Trust we will continue to reduce energy use, increase our use of renewable energy and investigate the use of bio-fuels.

### **The planning framework**

Corporate strategies and plans, such as the LTP and the Children and Young People's Plan, provide an overarching framework to help the development of specific action plans. They are often developed with partners, have regard to the Council Plan, and capture and represent local people's needs and requirements.

Using the strategic documents outlined in the diagram below, Service Performance Plans (SPPs) translate our vision and objectives into day to day service delivery requirements. SPPs detail how, where and when services will be provided and include service targets. These targets help ensure that the plan is delivered by providing the basis upon which annual staff appraisals and service development discussions are based.

SPPs also identify how each service is to consult with local people and partners to identify and understand how services can continue to meet their needs and requirements. Please contact the Corporate Policy Unit on 01609 532978 if you want to know more about plans for specific service areas.

### **Making sure we are fit for purpose**

This plan sets out our ambitions and our wide ranging agenda. Its success depends on the people we employ and how well they can manage resources and give value for money. We have recently been judged to be a 4 star/Excellent authority that is improving well – but that does not mean that further work is not needed. We are striving to improve the management of the Council by investing in the following programmes:

- The **Member Development Programme** is designed to make sure that members are kept abreast of developments in local government and can develop their skills within the County Council and representing their communities.
- **Changing and improving the way we deliver services.** We are focussing on:
  - (a) delivering improved outcomes to North Yorkshire’s residents;
  - (b) improving access to North Yorkshire services for residents; and
  - (c) improving the cost-effectiveness with which we deliver services.

Within this we have identified a set of core themes that will help support and underpin improvement:

- (1) Using the **Public Access Strategy**, and in particular the **34 customer service centres** that we are developing jointly with partners such as the district and borough councils to deliver information and services locally. These are located in buildings around the County such as libraries and can be used by the public to make contact with a variety of services, not just those of the County Council. We are making greater use of **e-government** (such as our more interactive website) and the telephone contact centre to improve access to, and quality of, our services.
  - (2) Improving our work processes and support to customers through the use of **Business Process Re-engineering (BPR)** – looking at how we do things, and if necessary changing, to become more efficient.
  - (3) Ensuring that the County Council makes optimal use of its property portfolio through an **accommodation review**.
  - (4) Enhancing the productiveness of our front-line professionals by making **innovative use of ICT**.
  - (5) Using a process of **workforce reform** to test how we work, where we work, when we work, and who is best equipped to do the work.
- **The People Strategy** supports the improvement of County Council services by helping employees to perform and fulfil their potential, and ensures the County Council manages its staff effectively to deliver excellent services. It outlines key work areas and timescales for the next two years covering recruitment and resourcing, learning and development, health and safety, pay and reward, and workforce changes.

- **The E-government Strategy** aims to maximise the number of our services which can be provided electronically. This will allow greater ease of access by residents, businesses and visitors. During the past year we have completed the development of our broadband wider area network and developed a new website which provides a wide range of facilities to allow the public to do business with us electronically. Our focus now is to maintain and improve these developments, in line with the transformation agenda.
- **The Asset Management Planning Framework** helps to ensure that we are making best use of County Council property to meet the needs of North Yorkshire's communities and identifies underused and other property that could be better used or released.
- **The Risk Management Strategy** is the means by which we ensure that our performance plans take into account the risks that threaten service delivery. We use a systematic approach to risk assessment to improve service planning and keep down insurance and claims costs. This has won a national award and has been highly commended for a European risk management award.
- **The Equalities Strategy** makes sure we treat everyone - both customers and staff - fairly, whoever they are. We have achieved the Commission for Racial Equality standard at level 2 and are working towards level 3.
- **The Communications and Consultation strategies** make sure that people know how and why the County Council is using their money; that staff understand our plans and priorities; and that we consult with the public and listen to what they have to say about their needs and our services, to make sure that we reach those who need our services, and improve access to those services.
- **Corporate governance and ethical standards** to maintain sound decision making. This means keeping our Constitution and other governance frameworks under review and making sure that our decision making processes conform to statutory requirements and good decision making principles. It also involves ensuring that the Council, its members and officers operate to high ethical standards, and work within a well developed ethical framework which the County Council, its lead members and officers have endorsed.
- **Working with communities.** The County Council, with district, borough, town and parish councils, must approach partnership working at different levels. Within local communities this is achieved through local councillors and by means of community groups. On district boundaries, it is achieved with district and borough councils and with the Local Strategic Partnerships. Our area committees provide an important link between the County Council and communities at district level.



- **Sustainability** is an important issue for everyone and North Yorkshire County Council is leading by example by working to ensure that our own activities have a lesser impact on the environment and by promoting sustainable measures to communities to lessen our collective impact on our environment. For example, we have recently opened an eco building using the latest technology to harness natural resources. We also have a specific programme to work with schools to ensure that school buildings are environmentally friendly and to educate children and young people on leading a more sustainable lifestyle.

The future of the County depends on the people who live here, on the communities in which we live, and on the work of the many businesses and organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors that create jobs and provide the services we need. The Council also has a lead role in ensuring everybody works effectively together. Over the last year we have had considerable success in strengthening partnership working at County level and it will be important that we continue to build on this success, and the good will of partners that it has engendered.

As well as how we work internally, North Yorkshire County Council works externally with a wide range of partners both within the County and beyond. Many discussions and debates take place at a regional and even national level, and North Yorkshire County Council works hard to ensure that the views and needs of the County are represented. Important policies such as the City Region issue affecting Leeds and Teesside are also important for North Yorkshire as many of our communities are strongly influenced by these large conurbations.

## **Paying for local services**

### **Medium Term Financial Strategy**

To deliver the Council Plan over the three years 2008-11, the Council will need to spend over £2.7 billion on revenue items (i.e. staff, materials, transport, etc) and £330m on capital investment. The County Council's annual net Revenue Budget - excluding specific grants, fees and other local income - is forecast to grow from £323m in 2008/09 to £358m by 2010/11. Approximately 70% of this is funded by council tax, the remaining 30% coming via Government grant. The purpose of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is to make sure that sufficient resources are in place to support the delivery of this Council Plan and to enable priorities to be achieved in line with available resources. In addition to supporting the service objectives detailed in this Plan, the objectives of the MTFS are:

- to ensure the effective use of all resources and assets (staff, buildings, etc);
- to maintain revenue balances equivalent to 2% of the net revenue budget; and
- to contain any rise in the council tax to a reasonable level.

The MTFs embraces not only the Revenue Budget and the Capital Plan but also the Treasury Management and Efficiency Plans for the County Council. In addition, it has well defined links to the Procurement, Risk Management and Corporate Governance strategies.

Whilst having a clear broad strategy for resources is essential, we also need to be able to take account of policy changes beyond the County Council's control. For example, the Government recently introduced, for the first time, grant settlements on a three year basis so that councils can now plan their budgets and set indicative Council Tax levels for the second and third years ahead, alongside the Council Tax for the next year.

Based on this greater certainty of revenue funding, the County Council was able to overhaul its MTFs and assess future spending plans in the context of their likely impact on levels of Council Tax increase.

The Government has also made clear its intention to retain the threat of capping whereby the Council Tax increase of any authority is limited to 5%. For the purposes of the MTFs, the County Council has assumed this Government policy will continue into the foreseeable future.

Finally, the Government introduced the Area Based Grant (ABG). This is, in effect, a single Block Grant that represents an amalgamation of over 20 existing and new, specific grants that the County Council can now allocate, as it sees fit, to deliver its priorities, including those included in the LAA (see pXX). For 2008/09, the ABG totals £27m and will increase to over £40m for 2009/10.

## **Revenue resources**

Delivering the Council Plan requires some strengthening of budget provision to keep pace with Government expectations and to raise standards of delivery in previously under-funded service areas. It will also require a programme of capital investment, the financial costs of which have to be supported through revenue, both to deliver on these expectations and to modernise mainstream services in line with the County Council policies. The headline figures for the Revenue Budget in 2008/09 are shown in Table 1 on page XX. The major part of the budget is aimed at maintaining overall service standards and volumes. Roads need to be maintained, vulnerable people need to be cared for, libraries need to be stocked and managed, waste must be disposed of and although the funding of schools is now via a direct grant, the County Council still has responsibility for ensuring that school students are taught to the appropriate standards. Financial provision also needs to reflect changes in the overall volumes and demand for these different services. But some of our corporate priorities also give rise to the need to make new or additional provision to raise standards and to respond to new service developments or increased expectations. Full details are given in the published Budget Book, available on the finance section of the County Council's website [www.northyorks.gov.uk/budgetandcounciltax](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/budgetandcounciltax).

In projecting the three year MTFs, the County Council has to take account of inflationary trends as well as the service pressures referred to above.

Assuming that Government grant is now “fixed”, the remaining key two variables are the Value for Money (VFM) savings and the level of Council Tax increase.

The balance that has been struck in the MTFs between these various items is summarised in Table 2 on page XX. This table contains three key assumptions:

- (a) That VFM savings equivalent to 3% will be made in each of the three years. This equates to approx £10m pa so that over the three years efficiency savings of over £60m will have to be achieved to “balance the books”. Although the County Council is proud of its record as one of the lowest taxing and lowest spending authorities of its type, members believe that every effort must continue to be made to deliver efficiency savings that can either offset Council Tax increases and/or be invested in services. Over £12m of the targeted saving will be achieved by reducing the current headcount of employees (excluding school related) by 9% by March 2011 (equivalent to 300 full-time employees).

Alongside plans to improve public access to services, the County Council will continue to systematically review its property requirements, extend the use of flexible working and other ICT facilities, pursue further procurement efficiencies, as well as examine key business processes to identify opportunities for streamlining and improvement.

- (b) That the level of Council Tax increase, set at 4.75% for 2008/09, has been provisionally set, for planning purposes, at a similar level for the further two years of the plan. Members have, however, reserved the right to review this in the light of any changes to the assumptions used, to calculate the figures shown in Table 2.
- (c) The single biggest service related risk embedded in the MTFs relates to the potential costs arising from the Waste Strategy. Taking into account the impact of the annual increase in Landfill Tax (£1.8m) and potential landfill penalties, together with the increasing costs of recycling and residual waste disposal (as delivered by a PFI scheme currently in procurement), it is anticipated that the costs of this service will increase over the next five years from £16m to over £40m. The MTFs has been prepared on the basis that the County Council must be in a position to fund these additional costs, £14m of which fall after 2010/11.

## Capital Plan

In 2004, the County Council undertook a thorough review of its capital investment framework and put in place a 10 year forecast with a three year detailed capital plan.

Within this new framework, the two main Government funded programmes, namely for education and the LTP, are assumed to continue and will be the

principal source of capital for schools and highways, respectively. Given the shortage of capital resources for other services relative to their significant investment needs, local capital resources will mostly be invested in these other service areas. An indication of these priorities can be seen in Table 3 on page XX – scheme by scheme details are available in the Capital Plan section of the Budget Book.

Taken together, these commitments amount to a capital investment programme of £330m over the next three years which, even after taking into account grants and the income from sales of surplus assets, still requires borrowing of £145m.

**Table 1**

**Net Revenue Budget for 2008-09**

	£000	
<b>Children and Young People's Service</b>		
Schools Block (funded by Dedicated Schools Grant)	310,189	
<b>Local Authority Block</b>		
Home-to-school transport	23,116	
Youth Service	5,967	
Local authority services	15,328	
Children's Social Care	32,649	
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>387,249</b>	
<b>Business and Environmental Services</b>		
Highways maintenance and traffic management	30,240	
Waste Management	18,737	
Integrated Passenger Transport	4,323	
Development and Countryside Services	2,930	
Trading Standards	2,523	
Other services	3,818	
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>62,571</b>	
<b>Adult and Community Services</b>		
Care for adults and elderly people	113,657	
Support services for vulnerable people	18,275	
Library and Information Services	8,984	
Other services	12,362	
Specific Grant income	- 20,966	
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>132,312</b>	
<b>Corporate and support functions, miscellaneous grants, etc</b>		

Financing costs of capital expenditure		30,518	
Levies, provisions for pending issues, etc		3,486	
Support services (Legal, HR, finance, property)		16,723	
<b>Sub-total</b>		<b>50,727</b>	
<b>Total (including schools)</b>		632,859	
<b>Less Dedicated Schools Grant</b>	-	310,189	
<b>Net Total</b>		<b>322,670</b>	
<b>Financed by</b>			
Government Grant		94,660	(29.3%)
Council Tax		228,010	(70.7%)
		<b>322,670</b>	

Table 2

## Summary Revenue Budget Position

		2008-09			2009-10			2010-11		
	Item	£000			£000			£000		
	Standstill requirement									
	→ grant changes		9,846			0			0	
	→ inflation/Landfill Tax, etc		12,938			12,472			12,018	
	<b>+</b> Additional service needs		13,770			14,755			17,142	
	<b>-</b> 3% Value for Money target	<b>-</b>	9,680		<b>-</b>	10,190		<b>-</b>	10,740	
	<b>=</b> Net year-on-year increase		<b>26,874</b>			<b>17,037</b>			<b>18,420</b>	
	<b>-</b> Increase in Government grant	<b>-</b>	14,472		<b>-</b>	4663		<b>-</b>	5032	
	<b>=</b> Additional income required from Council Tax		<b>12,402</b>			<b>12,374</b>			<b>13,388</b>	

**Table 3**  
**Summary Capital Budget Position**

Service / Programme Area	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
	£m	£m	£m
<b>Children and Young People's Service</b>			
Children's Centres	6.8	2.6	1.5
Building Schools for the Future	15.2	13.0	0.0
Information Technology	4.7	4.7	4.2
Special Educational Needs / Behaviour Review	2.4	0.0	0.0
Schools Access Initiative	0.6	1.2	1.2
Major School Projects	3.1	1.8	0.0
Schools Modernisation Scheme	1.9	8.1	8.9
Surestart	0.4	1.2	0.9
Capital Resources for School Use	14.3	12.2	24.1
Other Maintenance and Improvements	6.2	4.8	4.6
<b>Service Total</b>	<b>55.6</b>	<b>49.6</b>	<b>45.4</b>
<b>Business and Environmental Services</b>			
New and Replacement Road Lighting	1.9	1.9	1.8
Rationalisation of Highways Depots	8.0	2.2	0.0
Waste Disposal/Recycling	2.3	10.5	0.0
Scarborough Integrated Transport	10.1	0.1	2.6
Local Transport Plan	30.9	30.8	32.1
Economic Development Grants	1.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Service Total</b>	<b>54.2</b>	<b>45.5</b>	<b>36.5</b>
<b>Adult and Community Services</b>			
Extra Care Residential Schemes / Resource Centres	3.6	6.1	9.1
Day Service Provision	0.5	1.8	0.0
Community Resource Centres	0.4	0.3	0.0
Disability Respite Centre, Skipton	0.9	0.0	0.0
Harrogate Library – Lottery Scheme	0.7	1.7	1.0
Other	1.4	1.1	0.4
<b>Service Total</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>10.5</b>
<b>Other Programme Areas</b>			
Affordable Housing	0.9	1.0	0.0
Purchase of Vehicles and Equipment	1.0	0.9	0.8
Loans to Companies owned by NYCC	4.4	0.0	0.0
Other	1.0	0.6	0.6
<b>Service Total</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>1.4</b>
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>124.6</b>	<b>108.6</b>	<b>93.8</b>
<b>Financed by</b>			
Borrowing	45.4	56.9	42.9
Grants and other Contributions	55.3	41.6	42.0
Revenue Budget contributions	6.8	3.1	3.7
Capital receipts from sale of properties	17.1	7.0	5.2
	<b>124.6</b>	<b>108.6</b>	<b>93.8</b>

## Performance improvement

The Audit Commission assesses local authorities using its comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) and publishes the result using its CPA scorecard. The most recent judgement, published in February 2008, shows that the County Council continues to be a 4 star, top rated authority that is improving well. We intend to build on our progress and improve further, particularly in our priority areas.

We aim for excellence across the full range of services. This plan explains that we give priority to improving services which need development. It aims to maintain standards in services which have always been strong, such as education, social services and trading standards. It recognises the importance of our environment and heritage, both to the environment and the economy, including a joint approach with district and borough councils to waste management. It shows how the County Council will contribute together with its partners, to delivering the sustainable community strategy through the new LAA for North Yorkshire.

We are determined to get best value for money for the people of North Yorkshire. This means we are committed to continuous improvement and being as efficient as possible. In order to improve services and raise standards we must continue to monitor performance and understand how to achieve better results. To this end, we have a comprehensive improvement programme with three main components:

#### 1. Performance management and improvement framework

The County Council wide performance management and improvement framework is well established. It enables members and managers to track County Council performance against key indicators, with a mix of national and local targets. These have been updated in the light of the new National Indicator Set. Performance is monitored continually by service managers and on a quarterly basis jointly by our Executive and Scrutiny Board. It is benchmarked with other similar councils through our membership of the County Council Benchmarking Club. Performance and cost information are looked at together in our service and financial planning process.

#### 2. Local Area Agreement

The first LAA between the County Council and its partners and the Government was signed in March 2007. It runs for three years and includes targets for improved outcomes to be delivered through more effective partnership working. A performance reward grant of up to £16m will be payable for success in meeting particular targets. A new LAA, including all these targets, runs for the three years from April 2008. A performance management framework agreed with partners is in place to ensure delivery of the agreement.

#### 3. Performance improvement



As explained in the 'Making sure we are fit for purpose' section, we have a number of transformational programmes in place to achieve real improvements in efficiency and effectiveness.

We have developed a programme of reviews undertaken by our overview and scrutiny committees, made up of councillors, looking at both individual services and areas of joint working. In 2008/09, these will include areas such as customer services, winter maintenance, reducing emergency hospital admissions, the impact on child witnesses of domestic violence and the use of individual budgets to support self directed adult social care.

## Our values

In order to deliver our vision - '**A County which provides opportunity, independence and security for all**' - and to fulfil this role, we recognise that we must:

- Be focussed on the **needs of customers and communities**, facilitating their involvement in policy and service development and listening to, and valuing, what they tell us.
- Be committed to **equal opportunity** for all. Opposing all forms of unfair discrimination which puts a person at a disadvantage, treating people with dignity and respect, and valuing the diversity of people and communities.
- Work to promote **social inclusion and social cohesion**.
- Deliver **high quality and efficient services** that are responsive to users' needs, seek constantly to improve how we do things and ensure value for money in the use of public funds.
- **Show leadership and promote partnership** between the diversity of agencies and interests that work to promote community wellbeing.
- Secure effective democratic processes by placing a high value on **accountability and accessibility**. We will do this through elected members themselves and through the openness of our processes, ensuring that information about the Council's decisions is readily available.
- Maintain high standards of **integrity and honesty** in our dealings with the public and our staff, and in the management of resources.
- **Support our staff**, our most important asset, through effective management enabling them to take ownership of their responsibilities, through openness and honesty, through appropriate training and development and through effective health and wellbeing arrangements.
- Ensure that, in meeting the needs of today, we do not compromise **the ability of future generations to meet their needs**.
- **Communicate, consult and engage** with our local communities - you, the people we serve.

## Glossary of abbreviations

ABG	Area Based Grant
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment
ICT	Information and communication technology
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LTP	Local Transport Plan
MTFS	Medium Term Financial Strategy
NYSP	North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership
SCS	Sustainable Community Strategy
SPP	Service Performance Plan
VFM	Value for Money

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