

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

23 JULY 2008

TRANSPORT AND TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Transport and Telecommunication Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee has met twice since the last full Council meeting. The Committee held a special meeting on the 23rd June 2008 to consider and agree the final report of the Winter Maintenance Scrutiny Task Group. The Committee also held its scheduled meeting on the 9th July 2008.

Committee Meeting – 23rd June 2008

Winter Maintenance Scrutiny Task Group – Final Report

On the 16 October 2007 the North Yorkshire County Council Executive set us the task of scrutinising the proposals put forward by the Corporate Director Business and Environmental Services and we have done our best to consult with as broad a range of people as possible. We have had a period of nine months to undertake this scrutiny review and feel that we have done all we could in that time to seek their views. The Task Group presented its draft report to the Committee on the 23rd June 2008 and it was agreed unchanged.

This work has taken nine months to complete and is the first 'root and branch' look at winter maintenance that the County Council has undertaken since 1974. This has been an exciting and rewarding scrutiny review for all those Members involved and I think can be seen as an excellent example of overview and scrutiny adding value to the work of the County Council. Thank you to all those involved in the review and thank you also to all those people who took the time to give us their views.

On the 8th July 2008 the final report was presented to the Executive for their consideration and we were thrilled to see our conclusions and recommendations welcomed. Some of the comments from the Executive included:

'It was a really interesting report.'

'Excellent report reflecting a very substantial amount of hard work'

'It was clear that they (the Task Group) had really listened to members of the public.'

The Executive resolved *'That the report of the Transport & Telecommunication Services O&SC on Winter Maintenance Scrutiny Review be noted and that the two Executive Members for Business and Environmental Services be asked to consider the recommendations in detail and to report back on any proposals to the Executive.'*

We look forward to the feedback from the Executive Members and hope to see our recommendations taken forward.

Committee Meeting – 9 July 2008

Corporate Director Business & Environmental Services Presentation from Richard Flinton

The Committee received an excellent presentation which included an overview of the priorities for the Directorate for 2008 / 2009.

Of particular interest to the Committee is the Local Area Agreement target for driving down the numbers of killed and seriously injured on our roads and this is something we are planning to look at in more detail later in the year.

Members were also interested to hear about City Regions and were reminded that this is just one of the many initiatives that the County Council is working with. The complexity of the economic influences on the County were highlighted that include for example the thirty market towns and the National Parks and we must be sure to recognise that the City Regions make up just one part of this economic picture.

National Express Trains and Network Rail – Presentations

It proved to be a busy but extremely informative meeting as we received presentations from both National Express Trains and Network Rail. We were impressed with their willingness to engage with us and answer our questions candidly. Their presentations gave a general overview of their business and also focussed on the Yorkshire area. We were told that passenger numbers for rail travel are predicted to double from 15 to 30 million over the coming years.

School to School Transport

Our next piece of scrutiny work will be undertaken as a joint Task Group with members of the Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

We were told that the Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a presentation and briefing on the 11-19 Strategy at a meeting of their Committee. This presentation confirmed that by 2013, every young person aged 14-19 has the right to choose from 17 different diplomas at 3 different levels; they must also have the choice to sign up to an apprenticeship at the age of 16 if they so wish.

No single school or Further Education College can provide the entitlement outlined above: it requires excellent collaboration between neighbouring schools, colleges and employers.

There are a number of challenges facing North Yorkshire but in particular the issue of School to School Transport has been raised. We agreed with the Chairman of Young Peoples O&SC County Councillor Heather Garnett that a joint scrutiny review would benefit from the close involvement of both the Young People and the Transport & Telecommunication Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee's who could explore the issues to be faced.

At our meeting on the 9th July 2008 the members (from the Transport & telecom O&SC) of this joint Task Group were identified as: County Councillors Eric Broadbent, Michael Heseltine, Chris Pearson and Bill Hault. We look forward to working together on this extremely important scrutiny review.

County Councillor Eric Broadbent

Chairman

Transport and Telecommunication Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

July 2008