

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

17 DECEMBER 2008

STATEMENT OF THE CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER (Corporate Affairs, Performance Management, Procurement, Asset Management and Finance)

COUNTY COUNCILLOR CARL LES

Pay Award Progress Update

There is still a failure to settle at National level on this years' pay award for the majority of Council staff. However it has been agreed nationally that authorities will pay the offer of 2.45% to staff in advance of a formal settlement. This has been actioned and will be in staff pay salaries this month.

The trade unions nationally have already begun positioning themselves and lobbying authorities in relation to next year's pay settlement. They are asking all authorities to set aside funding for a larger pay settlement in 09-10.

Intranet

The new intranet was launched on Monday 17th November and one of the most important aspects of this project is that, for the first time, the intranet is available to all members of staff via the internet. With this in mind, it will become the focus for our wider communications plans. Information will be much easier to find, processes will be more efficient and communication will be more timely and effective.

The new intranet has a number of new features including:

- A corporate news section with information and messages relevant for all staff and specific information for managers.
- Up to date contacts and service information for all Directorates, making it easier to understand what colleagues across the authority do and how to reach them.
- An improved search function.
- Detailed information about council office locations across the county.

This is just the beginning for the new intranet and more improvements and developments are planned for the future, which will make it easier and quicker for staff to communicate and collaborate with one another, as well as delivering efficiencies as many internal paper processes move online.

Executive Review of Performance

As part of the overall budget process the Executive has reviewed the key performance challenges for each of the Directorates. The aim of the sessions has been to identify the key challenges; explore the nature of the challenge; and identify actions in order to ensure that the County Council's performance is maximised. Whilst it is recognised that the County Council is a high performing Authority, as recognised by the 4 star rating from the

Audit Commission, it is important that the County Council does not become complacent and constantly strives to improve performance. These sessions have therefore been extremely useful in ensuring that continuous improvement is at the heart of the County Council.

Further information will be provided as part of a performance commentary which will be included alongside a review of the Council Plan and the revised Medium Term Financial Strategy which will be considered by the full County Council on 18 February 2009.

Council Plan

As identified above, the Council Plan is currently being reviewed and it is intended that the new Plan will be considered alongside the Medium Term Financial Strategy in order to ensure that there is alignment between priorities and resources. It is recognised that there have been notable changes within the County Council and externally in recent times. In addition, the County Council as a key partner within the NYSP, has approved the Sustainable Community Strategy and it is therefore important that there is clear alignment with the Council Plan. The revised Council Plan will therefore clarify the objectives, priorities and values of the Council for the next 3 year period.

A small group of Executive Members are working with Officers in order to review the Council Plan which will be considered by the full County Council on 18 February 2009.

Budget Consultation

The County Council is currently asking the public and key partner agencies about the priorities of the County Council, its budget plans and proposals in relation to council tax. The Citizens' Panel have been consulted and the wider public have been invited to offer their views through articles in the NY times and the website.

Key partner agencies have also been invited to offer their views. As Members will be aware, Parish and Town Councils have also been contacted and encouraged to offer their views, either directly, or via their local Member. The Parish and Town Councils have been invited to attend the relevant Area Committees when the Leader, the Chief Executive and the Corporate Director - Finance and Central Services will be consulting on the budget proposals.

It is hoped that the wider public, key partner agencies (including the Parish and Town Councils) will take this opportunity to offer their views on the priorities and the budget process which will be used to inform production of the Council Plan and the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Clearly, given the currently economic situation, it becomes all the more important that people feel equipped to share their views.

County Hall Catering Contract

The existing contract with Sodexo for the provision of the staff restaurant, corporate hospitality and vending at County Hall is due to terminate on 31st March 2009. A procurement exercise has commenced to determine a suitable provider to carry out these services after that date.

The contract has been advertised and expressions of interest have been received, these have undergone an initial evaluation and a shortlist of 8 companies have been invited to tender.

Tenders are due back on 16th December and it is intended the Members of the County Hall Member's Group will be invited to participate in the final evaluation.

All Members will be informed of the outcome of the tender process when the contract has been awarded - this is likely to be in Mid January 2009.

Data Security

In view of the national prominence of this issue, it is appropriate to provide a summary of incidents affecting County Council data.

During the last 12 months:

- 7 laptops have been lost or stolen out of a total estate County-wide of nearly 2000. 5 of the devices were fully encrypted and the others contained no sensitive or personal data. Although the Police were made aware of all the events, only one laptop has been recovered. All were asset tagged, marked fluorescently and had a microdot attached.
- An average of 3 Mobile Phones per month go missing across the County out of a total current estate of 2080. When notified the devices will be immediately disabled.
- 2 Blackberrys have been lost. These devices are password protected and fully encrypted. The facility exists to disable and remotely clear any lost data.
- No accurate information is available on the numbers of data memory sticks being used or the level of vulnerability. Because of this, high priority is being given to introducing, by end of March 2009, a facility whereby only encrypted memory sticks can be used to either download, or upload information onto the County Council's computers and networks.
- As part of the same initiative, a wider programme of security measures is being introduced to the same timescale. These controls will significantly reduce the exposure of the Council and provide greater facilities for central control, monitoring and policing, ensuring that data loss is further reduced. The initiatives include:
 - A recall and encryption of nearly 2000 laptops
 - Asset tracking and encryption of data memory sticks (as noted above), CD and DVD writers
 - Tighter controls on transmission of emails
 - Tighter controls on the transport of data around the County

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