

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

17 December 2008

STATEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER (Children's Services Issues, SEN, Special Schools, Youth Service and Youth Offending Team)

COUNTY COUNCILLOR CAROLINE PATMORE

Review of SEN/BESD (Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties)

Implementation of Phase 1 of the Review continues with preparation for opening a number of new specialist mainstream provisions in 2009. Initially these enhanced schools will provide outreach support to local schools in their area. Once necessary building adaptations have been made and the schools are comfortable with their outreach role they will also make provision on site for some pupils with high needs. Recruitment to senior posts in the Local Authority to lead and co-ordinate the new SEN and BESD Networks, in which the enhanced schools will participate, is also underway.

Planning permission is being sought to secure an existing defence establishment site in the Harrogate area (Forest Moor, Menwith Hill) to become the special school for BESD in the west of the county to replace Baliol School. The Local Authority is not alone in seeking to secure the site, and neither is a successful planning application guaranteed, so acquisition is by no means certain. The planning application should be determined by the Council in March 2009.

The Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) in the North and Craven (Northallerton and Skipton) are scheduled to open in September 2009. The Northallerton PRU will additionally make some Youth provision; the Skipton PRU will contribute to local 14-19 provision. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has provided an additional £1m of targeted capital in acknowledgement of the extended role of the two PRUs.

Work is ongoing to locate a site for the PRU in Selby. A link with the District Council and the My Place bid from the Youth Service is currently being actively explored as an option.

Use of Sure Start Grant (BJ/GCB)

In recent years the Capital Grants made available for the development of Children's Centres have, of necessity, had to be funded from resources provided by the Council which have been mainly achieved from planned savings on revenue expenditure. One of the main reasons that the savings on revenue were possible was the availability of Sure Start Revenue Grant to fund, for a temporary period, activities which are normally funded from the Council's revenue budgets.

In 2008/09 – 2010/11 the current indications are that the various grants made available to complete the programme of Children's Centres and develop Extended School facilities should be sufficient to fund the remaining projects within the programme.

In relation to revenue Sure Start Grants the plans for the use of resources, including some redeployment of resources between financial years, are currently being revised which should enable a greater investment in the Parent Support Advisers attached to Children's Centres. This Group work closely with children up to the age of five and it is also proposed to increase the number of Family Support Workers who support children of all age ranges.

Youth Offending Team Inspection

North Yorkshire Youth Offending Team (YOT) has received feedback from the Youth Justice Board following validation of its Youth Justice (Capacity & Capability) Plan, submitted in August. The YOT has been judged as 'performing well' and to have made "considerable progress since being inspected in 2006". Having been under-resourced for many years, there has been significant new investment and renewed support from partners, and overall performance has risen from level 2 to level 4 in the past 12 months.

The YOT has a range of medium and long term strategies in place to address, in particular, the two key improvement targets to reduce re-offending rates and to improve the percentage of young people who offend who are in full-time Education, Training and Employment.

Copies of the Youth Justice (Capacity & Capability) Plan 2008-11 and the Youth Justice Board validation report are available from Lesley Ingleson, YOT Manager.

Youth Service Review in Scarborough

On 1 August 2008, Executive Members received, and approved for consultation, proposals to re-structure and improve the youth service's delivery model in the Scarborough Area. A meeting was held at Scalby School on 15 September where the proposals were presented to the Scarborough Urban and Rural youth work teams and Trades Unions. This meeting was the start of a process of informing and consulting with the local area staff teams about the proposals, the thinking behind them and the arrangements for implementation and assimilation of staff.

The 30 day period of formal consultation officially began on 21 September when a Section 118 Notice and accompanying restructure documents were given to the Unions. The consultation period ended on 21 October and during this time all staff were given an opportunity to comment on and ask questions about the proposals, to offer alternative models/suggestions and to clarify details of the restructure process itself and how the proposals may or may not affect individuals.

On 13 November 2008, the Children and Young People's Leadership Team received a report on the outcome of the consultation process including some changes that were being proposed as a result of it. Approval to proceed with the implementation of the re-structure was given under delegated powers. Assimilation of staff into the new structure commenced on 17 November, and will continue until the end of December.

It is envisaged that most posts will be filled through slotting in, preferencing, and/or interview. The period January to April will be used to move towards the new staffing and delivery structure. The expected outcome is that the whole new structure will begin to take effect from 1 April 2009.

Restorative Practice

Restorative Practices are being implemented effectively, with very good results, in Children's Social Care residential settings to manage conflict and tackle challenging behaviour. Interest in this style of work is growing within other service areas such as schools, police and YOT. Following a multi agency consultation and training event an agreement was reached to pilot the use of Restorative Practices in the Colburn area across all agency groups. This approach has been agreed at the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board.

County Councillor Caroline Patmore
Executive Member for Children's Services