

# **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**18 FEBRUARY 2008**

## **COMMUNICATIONS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN**

1. The Communications Overview and Scrutiny Committee has met once since my last report to full Council.

#### **In-depth topics**

#### **Cross-scrutiny review of the Customer Service Centre and Face to Face Contacts**

2. The cross-scrutiny working group comprising of Members of the Communications, Care and Independence and Young People Scrutiny Committees has completed its programme of work for this review. The focus of the review was to look at the provision of services within the Customer Service Centre and at the implementation to date of the Joint Access Centres which provide face to face contact. The review has been comprehensive and has included:
  - Group visits to the customer service centre at County Hall and to Scarborough Customer first Centre and Access Selby
  - Individual visits by members to 13 of the library based Joint Access Centres at a range of locations throughout the county
  - Meetings with each of the Directorates to discuss progress and obtain feedback on services
  - Inclusion of questions in the Citizen's Panel questionnaire.
3. The working group met in January to discuss emerging findings and has now produced a draft report which is out for comment. This report will be presented to each of the three scrutiny committees involved in the review in the next meeting cycle.
4. Implementation of the Access to Services Strategy is a long term evolving process and the working group has been very encouraged by the progress made to date. Considerable progress has been made to date with the transfer of a range of NYCC services into the Customer Service Centre and with the launch of the first of the Joint Access Centres. We have seen evidence of positive change and improvement in customer service.

## **Overview and Monitoring**

5. At its meeting on 12 December the Committee considered a number of reports including:

### **Communications Strategy**

6. Helen Edwards, Head of Communications, presented a paper to committee to give an overview of the issues being considered as part of the update of the Communications Strategy for NYCC. Helen outlined some of the drivers influencing the development of the strategy and these included the focus for communicating a community's 'sense of place' rather than on individual services. In the future any campaigns will need to be assessed according to their impact on the community and this will lead to agreeing a common public service approach with partners. As partnership working becomes increasingly significant, the council will need to have a strategic role in partnership communications. Helen also updated the Committee on communication with residents, colleagues and elected members.
7. The Committee is continuing with its overview of looking at the development of the intranet and the development of member's folders to provide relevant and up to date information for members.

## **COUNTY COUNCILLOR RON HAIGH**

Chairman, Communications Overview and Scrutiny Committee

County Hall  
Northallerton

9 February 2009