

## North Yorkshire County Council

19 May 2010

### Corporate Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee

#### Statement by the Chairman

The Corporate Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee has met once since the last full Council meeting. The following items were considered:

#### **Committee meeting 29 March 2010**

##### **Area Committee Overview Report**

The Committee received a joint report from the Assistant Chief Executive (Policy, Performance & Partnerships) and the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal & Democratic Services) that outlined the background to the current Area Committee structure as well as identifying their role and responsibilities. Discussion centered around the perception that public engagement is the primary role of Area Committees. Members felt there were strengths and weaknesses to the current system and these included:

Strengths – close to the community; arrangements for committee reflecting local need, open, honest debate in a public arena.

Weakness – different arrangements for each committee, timing of meetings if through the day, officers time spent on attending meetings, reports not specific to area, unnecessary duplication, bureaucratic process.

We understand that our deliberations will be fed into the meeting of the Area Committee Chairmen, Vice Chairmen, Local Strategic Partnership and Crime and Disorder Partnership representatives and also the Constitution Working Group and we look forward to an update to our Committee meeting in June 2010.

##### **Human Resources Update Reports**

As the Committee has been involved in a series of in –depth reviews with a focus on Human Resources we are always interested to hear an update on progress and today was no exception. We heard from the Assistant Chief Executive Human Resources and Organisational Development about the repositioning of HR services and e-HR; Casual agency and relief staff project and succession planning.

- **Repositioning of HR Services and e-HR**

We were pleased to hear that the implementation of an Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) telephone system has improved consistency of contact arrangements and that Lagan (the new case management system) will further improve the external customer experience and the ability to better manage workload internally within HR.

We were also advised of a new system to be implemented called Dash Board reporting which will provide live specific management information in graphical and pictorial format that is easy to understand. Members felt it would be useful to have a demonstration of the system so that we could see how it would assist managers in the future.

- **Casual agency and relief staff (CAR) project**

Following the scrutiny review undertaken by this Committee in 2007 we were reassured to see that progress in each of the four workstreams continues. It is important that staff are engaged with the projects and its aims in order to drive forward better more efficient ways of dealing with the use of casual and relief staff.

- **Succession Planning**

We noted the continued progress on the succession planning pilot and the intention to roll out the programme to the middle management tier later this year.

### **Comprehensive Area Assessment Scrutiny Review**

County Councillor John Batt reported back to the Committee on behalf of the Task Group having looked closely at the Comprehensive Area Assessment for 2009. The Task Group had looked in detail at the use of resources assessment, the organisational assessment and the area assessment and concluded that the process involved in preparing them was fit for purpose and delivered positive outcomes. He stressed that although the Task Group recognised that performance monitoring has an important part to play we all agreed that striving for performance ratings should not mean diverting resources away from the delivery of services.

### **Work Programme**

The Committee agreed that the focus of the next in – depth scrutiny review should be undertaken jointly with the Communications O&SC and look at North Yorkshire County Council publications and making them 'Easy Read'. However events have overtaken us and with the proposal to restructure the overview and scrutiny committees we now see this review being firmly within the remit of a new 'Corporate & Partnerships' Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**County Councillor Liz Casling**

**Chairman – Corporate Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

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