

**North Yorkshire County Council**

**21 July 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 14 June 2010**

**Executive Member Update**

The Committee was reassured to hear from County Councillor Les that although the Comprehensive Area Assessment was now abolished this did not mean that the County Council would lose sight of its performance management culture.

County Councillor Les also suggested that the Committee might like to consider a scrutiny review of 'Access to services in rural areas' with the objective of identifying innovative solutions to local problems.

**Corporate Asset Management - Annual report on property performance**

This regular performance monitoring report provides an opportunity for the Committee to comment before it is presented to the Executive. Members heard about how well the property portfolio, property processes and property services are performing. The Committee was pleased to see that the County Council continues to move in the right direction in respect of asset management however Members did express concern over the disparity between available funds and the funding that would be required for all works to be completed. The Committee requested that the Corporate Director Finance and Central Services bring this matter to the attention of the Executive when the report is presented to the Executive meeting.

**Health and Safety**

Members received a report on progress and future actions for 2010/11 with regard to health and safety within the County Council. Referring back to the previous report on Corporate Asset Management, Members were reassured that there was no indication that accidents could be attributed to any poor physical condition in schools. There is a network of 6 officers who liaise between schools and property management and they undertake risk assessments as required.

**Public Liability**

This regular report on public liability claims was the result of a request from the Committee and provides us with an opportunity to analyse any patterns and costs over recent years. Members recognised that without the measures; put in place to prevent incidents occurring in the first place; and records put in place to defend claims when they do occur and learning from claims where the County Council is found negligent the number and costs of public liability claims against the County Council would be much higher.

The Committee also agreed that with the change in the scrutiny structure and the combining of the work programmes of 3 Committees it would be sensible to include the public liability information within the regular health and safety report.

## **Sustainable Procurement**

The Committee are keen to maintain the momentum on sustainable procurement across the County Council and after discussing the achievements for 2009/10 the Committee agreed the areas to be reported on for 2010/11 as:

- \* Adult Social Care Operations (Procurement of electronic monitoring system for in house domiciliary care.)
- \* Commissioning and Partnerships (Housing related support)
- \* Library and information services (Radio frequency identification)
- \* Highways & Transportation (Highways Management Contract 2012)
- \* Economic & Rural services (Public Rights of Way structures & general contracting & material supplies.
- \* Integrated Passenger Transport (Vehicle Procurement)
- \* Schools ICT (Equipment)
- \* 14-19 year old unit (Provision of work related training services to schools)
- \* Children's social care (Provision of specialist daycare to disabled children and young people)
- \* Children's social care (Independent fostering agreement)
- \* Quality & improvement (North Yorks venues for training and events)

## **Price Waterhouse Cooper Diagnostic Report – Follow up on action plans**

We also received a report that updated us on the actions taken following a procurement diagnostic review undertaken by Pricewaterhousecoopers in the Autumn of 2008. Members were reassured to see that most of the planned action had already been completed and any outstanding areas of work were planned for this financial year or already nearing completion. The Committee agreed that it would be useful to combine this report and the previous one (Sustainable Procurement) and in the future have an annual procurement report.

## **E-readers**

Following a request from the Executive Member the Committee considered the use of E-readers as a possible replacement for paper reports and agendas for formal committee meetings. We concluded that technology had some way to go before E-readers could be seen as a replacement for the paper agenda and that we would keep a watching brief for developments in the future.

## **Equality Framework**

We did it!! The County Council has reached 'achieving' on the Equality Framework for Local Government.

One of the key recommendations from the peer challenge team was to implement mandatory training for Members so that we fully understand the equality agenda. The Committee went on to discuss this recommendation and suggested that rather than requiring training to be mandatory it would be helpful if the issues surrounding equality could be 'made real' within the context of Area Committees. This could be tailored so that the relevant information about local communities was available and would assist us in our community leadership role.

### **Work Programme**

With the change to the structure of Overview and Scrutiny and the amalgamation of the Corporate Affairs, Communications and Safe & Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committees the work programme will be taken forward to inform the work of the Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **Remit of the Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Council's corporate organisation and structure, resource allocation, asset management, procurement policy, people strategy, equality and diversity, performance management, communications and access to services.

Partnership working, community development, community engagement, community strategies and community safety (the designated Crime and Disorder Committee).

### **Final meeting**

This was the final meeting of the Corporate Affairs O&SC and as such this is also my final Chairman's statement as Chairman of that Committee so I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all those Councillors on the Committee, to Lorraine Laverton for all her hard work and support and finally to say that I have greatly enjoyed chairing this Committee.

**County Councillor Liz Casling**

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

July 2010