

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

13 October 2010

### STATEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER

#### COUNTY COUNCILLOR CAROLINE PATMORE

##### Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Children and Young People's Service has developed a Savings and Transformation Strategy to meet its required savings of £14,284K, as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2010-2013 (£11,524K) and the 24% cut in Area Based Grant from Department for Education (£2,762K). In addition further cuts in grants announced by the Secretary of State in June, of the order of £2,462,185, will need to be taken into account.

The Strategy, approved by Members on 23 July 2010, is the basis for further work which needs to be progressed to achieve the savings targets set out in the County Council's MTFs together with those savings required as a result of cuts to central government grants. The Strategy is comprehensive and includes fundamental review of all parts of the service. The two largest budgets are for Children's Social Care and Home to School Transport. Together they are worth about £66 million and make up almost two thirds of the service's expenditure. As both budgets are part of our statutory responsibilities and currently under pressure, it is not feasible to reduce them on a pro rata basis, although they will need to contribute some significant savings. As a result, other parts of the service must necessarily find above pro rata savings, with an average of around 33% which includes reductions of 100% on discretionary services (eg the removal of County Council subsidies for Outdoor Education and Music, plus the withdrawal of the Severance Scheme for School Teachers).

The Savings Strategy comprises 18 projects in which policies, priorities and practice are being reviewed across the service. High priority is being given to protecting front line services as far as possible, and absolute priority is being given to statutory responsibilities. There will be some impact on some front line service users through some reductions in services or increased charges. This is regretted and will be kept to the minimum possible. Inevitably, there will be job losses as a result of several of the savings projects, though it is not possible to give a precise figure at the moment.

More detail is set out below on some of the individual savings projects which contribute to the Strategy. Appropriate communication and formal consultation will be carried out with staff, trade unions, professional associations and key stakeholders and partners throughout.

Project 4 of the Strategy relates to the **Integration of Youth and Youth Support Services** and related changes in the Learning, Youth and Skills Service Group. A total and ongoing saving of £1,350 K is required over the next two and half years. Proposals currently out to formal consultation would:

- reduce the senior management of the Youth Service and IYS from a total of eight posts to four but secure some specialist input around Careers, Education and Guidance;
- remove senior management posts relating to Arts Strategy Development (one post) and Participation, Positive Activities and Play (one post);
- begin a move towards contracting all Careers Education and Guidance with one external provider by re-focussing the current contract and deleting from the establishment the majority of posts working in this area of responsibility which are currently directly employed by NYCC - around 30-35 posts.
- review some smaller contracts for targeted work, the use of some premises and amalgamate some responsibilities for work on Risky Behaviours to achieve the balance of the savings.

The target date for implementation of new arrangements is 1 April 2011.

The **review of Integrated Services** (Project 3 in the savings strategy) is looking at all parts of the support for Extended Schools and for the integrated work which gives preventative help to vulnerable families. The review is a planned post-implementation evaluation after a period of significant development. It will enable us to make significant savings (over £1.3 million). It will also re-allocate resources from management and administration (of which we need much less after the first phase of implementation) into front line staffing, of which we need more as case numbers within the preventative part of the system continue to rise.

## **Safeguarding**

As the current Children and Young People's Plan is coming to an end, and a new one due to be produced next year, a short term Improvement Plan has been developed for Children's Social Care to ensure continued improvement. This Plan includes the few remaining issues from the Post Inspection Safeguarding Action Plan and takes forward specific objectives to further improve the service. These objectives include ensuring greater consistency of service across the county and compliance with policy and good practice; embedding a performance management culture and more accountable financial management; ensuring clarity of levels of need for social care services; full ICS recovery and ensuring effective workforce development plans are in place and implemented.

The new Assistant Director, Children's Social Care, Judith Hay, took up post with effect from 4 October 2010 and will alongside Janet Newton, the new Head of Safeguarding who commenced in August 2010. I would like to take this opportunity to express thanks to Sue Barker, who has acted as the Interim Assistant Director since the postholder's departure in May. Sue has played a major part in taking forward the recommendations of Post Inspection Action Plan and in improving performance across Children's Social Care.

## **Review of Special Educational Needs/Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties Provision**

Twenty three of Enhanced Mainstream Schools are now providing outreach support to local schools. They are now also able to offer in-reach support for a small number of young people with the greatest need. Consultation has commenced to open a further two Enhanced schools by early 2011.

Statutory Notices have been published to secure the closure of Netherside Hall School in July 2012. The Executive will be asked to decide this at the meeting on 19 October 2010.

The new special school for Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties at Forest Moor, Darley (replacing Baliol School) is still on schedule to open in January 2012. Work should start on the site during November 2010.

## **Adult Learning and Skills Service**

The availability of online enrolment for adult learning courses was rolled out to the general public on 9 August 2010. Members of the public are now able to search for a course online and enrol directly onto the vast majority of courses by paying with debit or debit card. The courses that do not allow online enrolment are those which have some form of pre-course assessment whereby it is important to speak to the learner to ensure they are accessing the right course, an example of this would be free numeracy or literacy courses. In August 2010 there was a general increase in the number of people paying for learning using a credit or debit card and this increased to 46% of the overall payments in that month. This means that the service is handling less cash and the process is becoming much more streamlined. To date there are 2,657 enrolments resulting in 2,159 learners, with 224 of these people enrolling online. There have been 14,389 hits on the Course Finder area of the website.

Skills for Life and Family Learning staff have recently been consulted on an informal basis with regard to the management structure for these two curriculum areas. This is currently in excess of any other staffing structure within the service and is an expensive infrastructure which now needs to be reviewed. Proposals are now being developed and a process of formal consultation with affected staff will begin soon.

### **Young People's Council (Looked After Children)**

A very useful and entertaining video has been produced by members of the Young People's Council with the aim of getting greater participation by the looked after young people of North Yorkshire. The video was shown at the recent meeting of the Young People's Council attended by the Lead Member, Young People's Champion and the Chair of the LAC Members Group. The YP Council is trying to find ways of more successfully communicating with all the children and young people and are considering a range of methods such as a web page, using email and use of social networking sites. Funding for participation has been reduced and ways to continue area participation groups are being considered. At the recent LAC Members Group the Voluntary Sector Representative offered help in accessing funding streams from the charitable sector.

### **Youth Council**

There are now 16 Youth Councils in operation in North Yorkshire though these are at varying stages of development. Although supported by 4Youth and, in some cases, District Councils and North Yorkshire Youth, the Councils act as independent bodies and are completely young people led. The Youth Council network is supported by a full time 4Youth worker who also has responsibilities for Keyfund.

The North Yorkshire Youth Council (NYYC) is made up of two representatives elected from each of the area youth councils and meets six times per year. Three NYYC members have been elected by their peers as members of the UK Youth Parliament and as part of their duties will be attending a debate held in the House of Commons in October.

Funding from the Youth Opportunities Fund (YOF) is used to meet the running costs of local youth councils. The YOF programme comes to an end in March 2011 so alternative means of support is currently being explored by Officers.

### **County Councillor Caroline Patmore Executive Member for Children's Services**