

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

13 SEPTEMBER 2010

STATEMENT OF SCHOOLS PORTFOLIO HOLDER

COUNTY COUNCILLOR JOHN WATSON, OBE

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.

The savings target on **home to school transport** is £1.6 million by 2012/13. Options for public consultation have been agreed in three areas of discretionary provision which will significantly contribute to this:

- charge for and then withdraw denominational transport from 2012/13, except for those who are already provided for under the existing policy
- introduce transport charges for students with special educational needs 16-19
- cease to make "equivalent cost" provision

As well as achieving significant savings these proposals will also bring greater fairness and equity in transport provision, as the current policy gives additional entitlements to some pupils that others do not enjoy.

These revisions to the policy taken together with further procurement efficiencies, will not enable us to make the required savings by 2012/13. We therefore intend to work with other Local Authorities

to seek a change in legislation to enable us to levy on a charge on all pupils who receive transport assistance.

School Results 2010

At present only unvalidated data is available for Early Years Foundation Stage, Key stage 1, Key stage 2 and post-16 whilst only early indications from schools themselves are available for Key stage 4. Results of any remarks and appeals are not yet available.

Early Years Foundation Stage - Pupils' development is assessed at the end of their Reception Year, in schools and settings, against 13 scales. For target setting and monitoring the scales are combined. The EYFS data shows improvement in all areas compared to 2009. In particular the proportion of children scoring 78+ points overall with at least 6 points in all of Communication, Language and Literacy Development (CLLD) and Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) scales rose by just under 1% to 56.5%. (National Indicator 192). The gap between the scores of the lowest 20% of children and the average for all children closed by just under 1% to 30.2% maintaining the trend of closing the gap. (National Indicator 172)

Key stage 1 - Pupils at the end of Year 2 are assessed in Reading, Writing and maths through teacher assessment. Level 2+ is the expected level. The national picture is one of very small year on year change. This year's results show a fall compared to 2009 for all subjects at level 2+ and level 3+ with the exception of Speaking and Listening and Mathematics at level 2+ which rose slightly. Overall the results for North Yorkshire are broadly comparable to the national picture in Reading and Writing and above in Speaking and Listening, Maths and Science and for the second year the overall picture shows a slight fall. Work continues into understanding the reasons behind the fall in the Key stage 1 assessments and in supporting schools.

Key stage 2 - Pupils at the end of year 6 take National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science. Level 4+ is the expected level. The proportion of pupils achieving level 4+ in both English and maths forms National Indicator 173 (NI 173). In 2010 the Key stage 2 national tests in English and maths were boycotted by around 28% of schools both nationally and in North Yorkshire – 88 schools in the LA. The boycott of the test means that some Local Authorities' data has not been published and comparisons with previous years are therefore difficult. From 2010 only a sample of schools' pupils took a test in Science rather than all pupils.

Based on the schools which took the tests, the 2010 unvalidated results suggest that the LA remains in the top 25% of Local Authorities on all indicators. On NI 173 (the combined level 4+ in English and Maths) North Yorkshire improved by 1% and ranks 30th of those LAs for which results have been published. Both nationally, and in the LA, there was a rise of around 1% in level 4+ in English; in maths the LA figure remained unchanged while nationally it rose by 1%.at level 4+. There is confusion over the results in science following the change to the testing regime.

Key stage 4 - The early indications provided by schools present a very positive picture of the GCSE results. The proportion of pupils achieving 5 A*-C grades including English and maths (National Indicator 75) has risen by 3% (compared to 1% in 2008) to almost 62% for mainstream schools. The rise in the 5 A*-C without English and maths is also around 3% taking the results to around 82%. National figures are not yet available but, for a very highly performing Authority, these are strong gains and should at least maintain our position in the top 25 of all LAs.

Key stage 5 (Sixth form) - Performance data is only just becoming available for Key stage 5. The two measures usually quoted are the average points per student and the average points per entry. This year a new A* grade was introduced for A-levels which means that direct comparison with previous years' performance is not possible. Early indications suggest that the average points per student will be 820 and the average points per entry will be 215. This LA ranks in the top 30 LAs on both measures.

Schools Capital

Announcements are expected about future levels of capital funding for schools after the Comprehensive Spending Review later in October. In the meantime, we have reviewed the commitments involved in the Primary Capital Programme and are proceeding with three projects at Hinderwell, Barrowcliff and Friarage schools in Scarborough. The fourth project for Norton Primary is being re-tendered.

School Organisation Reviews

Two major reviews of school provision are underway. In North Craven all the schools in the current three tier system are under review, with a proposed change to a two tier system in which children remain in their primary schools until year six and transfer to a single 11-18 secondary school at the age of eleven, as is the case in most other parts of the County and the country.

In Upper Wharfedale, the review includes the four primary schools at Arncliffe, Kettlewell, Grassington and Threshfield. Various options are being considered which would retain education on a number of the present school sites whilst reducing the number of schools overall.

The reasons for review in both areas are the low and falling pupil numbers. This makes the position across these two areas unsustainable financially, with many of the schools in deficit despite the County's favourable funding formula for smaller schools. In some instances, this also makes schools vulnerable educationally.

Full consultation processes are being undertaken, the outcome of which will be reported fully when decisions are taken.

County Councillor John Watson, OBE
Executive Member for Schools