

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
15 December 2010**

**TRANSPORT, ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Chairman's Statement

1.0 At its last meeting on 24 November 2010 the Committee focussed, not surprisingly, on savings proposals and the impact these will have on services. The agenda for the meeting, which included two statements from members of the public, was as follows.

2.0 Business and Environmental Services Savings Proposals

2.1 The Corporate Director, Business and Environmental Services discussed with us how his directorate proposes to deliver its contribution towards the County Council's required budget savings over the period 2010/11 to 2014/15. Members gave their views and discussed particular aspects of the proposals including the reduction of opening hours of household waste recycling centres and the reduction in funding for theatres.

3.0 Proposed reduction in bus subsidy

3.1 The Committee was asked to comment on the Council's proposals to withdraw funding for some bus services, following the County-wide consultation. There has been a large public response to the proposals and it is clear that people feel strongly about their local bus services.

3.3 Councillors agreed that regrettably savings had to be made and that the bus services that are least used are logically the ones that the County Council can no longer fund. We did however question whether further analysis could be done on day services that carry fewer passengers as funding could possibly be withdrawn from these services rather than evening and weekend services that carry more passengers. We also asked whether using a smaller vehicle on some routes would make it more cost effective.

3.4 In rural areas, the bus service can be vital for people to get to work and for access to services. One councillor said that in his area people would be prepared to pay an increased fare to keep the service going because it is so important to them. We noted that there had been a number of petitions handed in against cutting local bus services, the most recent one being from Whitby.

4.0 Update on economic development

4.1 We heard that the York and North Yorkshire LEP was not amongst the initial 24 LEPs to be officially recognised by the Government, but that the submission was generally well received. Since the submission, private sector engagement in developing the LEP proposal has been strengthened. The first round of bids to the Regional Growth Fund, which amounts to £1.4bn over 3 years, are to be made by 21 January. A draft of the Sub-Regional Strategy was provided for Members to consider.

4.2 We were pleased to hear that, despite the current financial situation, progress is being made and there have been some key achievements within the Economic Development Framework including the Build North Yorkshire initiative, construction training programme; Next Generation Access Broadband roll-out; and Market Towns Initiative investment programme which has safeguarded delivery of a number of local economic development projects.

5.0 Local Transport Plan 3

5.1 Members were informed of the latest details of the potential LTP3 funding situation, although the actual allocation wouldn't be known until December. Members discussed whether community transport could have a greater role and integrate more with public transport, although we recognise that, by its very nature, community transport is locally focussed.

6.0 Highways Maintenance Contract 2012 – Operational Delivery

6.1 We were updated on progress to date on the procurement of a replacement contract for the current highways maintenance contract. The new contract is due to be awarded in September 2011 and will commence in April 2012. Some Members commented that in certain areas, they felt there is room for improvement in the current service; however, other Members said they had been pleased with maintenance work carried out in their own local area.

7.0 Scrutiny of flood and coastal erosion risk management

7.1 The Committee's terms of reference will be changed to include new powers to scrutinise risk management authorities as to the exercise of their flood and coastal erosion risk management functions. The new powers give risk management authorities a duty to comply with requests for information, or responses to reports, from the overview and scrutiny committee. Risk management authorities include the Environment Agency, district councils and water companies.

8.0 Future work planning – Working Group on Street Lighting

8.1 The Committee agreed to set up a working group to consider the options for reducing street lighting in order to achieve savings in energy and costs. Cllrs Michael Heseltine, Robert Heseltine, John Savage, Cliff Trotter and myself will serve on the working group, and we will report back to the scrutiny committee in March.

9.0 The provisional agenda for the **next meeting of the Committee, on 26 January 2011**, includes reports on the following:

- a) A presentation by the North Yorkshire Business Education Partnership
- b) A verbal report by Cllrs John Watson and Carl Les on high speed broadband provision in North Yorkshire
- c) 95 Alive (York and North Yorkshire Road Safety Partnership) report

County Councillor David Jeffels
6 December 2010