

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

18 May 2011

**STATEMENT OF THE CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER
(Corporate Services, Finance, Performance Management and Procurement)****COUNTY COUNCILLOR CARL LES****Workforce Matters**

March and April were busy months in terms of staff changes with the completion of a large number of restructurings linked to savings to be achieved in 2011/12.

By the end of April, 238 posts have been removed as a result of restructuring resulting in 74 compulsory redundancies, although 10 of these worked but a few hours a month. Overall, the reduction in posts by end April was greater at 250 FTE's (305 posts) as a result of vacant posts being removed, hours being reduced, and fixed term contracts not being renewed. This is a 4% reduction of FTE's. Whilst these reductions are across all pay bands, posts in higher pay bands are affected to a greater degree with proportionally more reductions in those pay bands.

Restructurings continue, and whilst a large number have now concluded, there are still some ongoing. This includes libraries and learning disabilities as well as restructurings later in the year as a result of organisational review work and its impact on admin services, customer access roles and management/supervision structures in the main.

In March, the work on reducing terms and conditions to save £2 million was concluded. December, January and early February was taken up with working on a set of proposals, seeking staff views, considering feedback and consulting with UNISON. UNISON balloted their members with the outcome on the 23rd March of majority support for the proposals. These proposals have now been implemented, some from the 1st April 2011 and some from the 1st April 2012 as follows:

- Reduction in the mileage rate from 47p to 40p for the first 10,000 miles (1st April 2011 – saves £0.5m)
- Reduction in home to work mileage protection to 1 year where a member of staff's work location is changed (1st April 2011 - saves £45k and contains further costs)
- Reduction in pay protection to 1 year (1st April 2012 - contains costs)
- Reduce overtime payments to a flat rate (1st April 2012 - saves £0.3m)
- Introduction of two days unpaid leave (1st April 2012 - saves £0.7m)
- Removal of a number of ad hoc rewards schemes such as long service vouchers and attendance award (1st April 2011 - saves £88K)
- Ability to remove the value of one increment from staff at the top of their pay band who do not meet the performance criteria, which includes absence, (1st April 2011 but will not effect staff pay until April 2012 as it is based on the previous 12 months performance - saves £0.3m)

Analysis has been undertaken on how these changes impact on staff and whilst there are some variables based on, for example mileage undertaken, in the main they have an equal impact across pay bands.

These changes are set in the context of a second year of no pay rise for staff, a rise in the cost of living, and imminent increases in employee contributions to the pension scheme. In reality this means that council staff are worse off and in this context they should be applauded for supporting proposals which amount to around 1% pay cut, but which make a significant contribution to improving the councils budget position.

Partnership rationalisation within North Yorkshire

The context for partnership working has changed. Key factors are substantial cuts in public spending, the emerging Localism and Big Society agendas, health and policing reforms, and the removal of much of the top down partnership 'wiring' including Comprehensive Area Assessment and Local Area Agreements. As a result, there is general agreement that partnership structures at all levels in North Yorkshire and York need to be rationalised.

Local Government North Yorkshire and York (LGNYY - the leaders of the nine local authorities and two national park authorities) has undertaken a review and agreed four principles for a new approach to partnerships:

- the minimum number and simplest of partnership structures, consistent with delivering the required outcomes and statutory requirements;
- a North Yorkshire and York approach to county/sub-regional partnership structures as far as possible, recognising that a degree of pragmatism will be required given the different local authority structures in North Yorkshire and York;
- local partnerships, including shared community engagement arrangements, at the most appropriate local level; and
- the use of task and finish groups to deal with particular issues, rather than standing thematic partnerships or sub-groups.

All existing partnership structures have or are being subject to challenge. The North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership (NYSP) and many of its thematic partnerships are being wound up.

Two new partnerships are being created as in line with Government requirements:

- Local Enterprise Partnership, with membership drawn from the business sector and local authorities; and
- Health and Wellbeing Board with a joint duty (with GP commissioning consortia) to prepare and implement a joint health and wellbeing strategy.

LGNYY has established a new Chief Executives' Group to provide leadership and coordination across the partnerships and public services generally, comprising the chief executives or equivalents of the nine local authorities, two national park authorities, Primary Care Trust, police, fire and rescue, plus appropriate representatives of the voluntary and community sector and the business sector.

It is important to stress that rationalising partnership structures is not about stopping partners working together - partnership working should be encouraged, but partnership structures should only exist where they add value and are efficient.

Small steps, big difference

The small steps, big difference internal environmental campaign has been running for the past twelve months and it is encouraging to see that staff and Councillors are really taking on board the message. Whether the motivation is caring about the environment, reducing our carbon footprint or cost savings we all have our part to play.

We are reducing business miles by using Webex, video and telephone conferencing, travelling more by public transport, car sharing and combining meetings into one day to avoid unnecessary travel. Comparing the period January to March 2011 to the same period 2010, non-school business miles have reduced by 418,352 miles, a reduction of 13%, saving 140 tonnes of CO₂ and £192,000.

On 25 March, NYCC held its own 'Earth Hour'. Just by switching off unnecessary lights, our electricity usage at County Hall dropped by 17.5 kilowatt hours (KWH). Maintaining a change like that could save over £4,300 on our electricity bill, £300 on carbon tax and 23 tonnes of CO₂ in a year.

Electricity consumption data is now available on the small steps, big difference intranet page www.northyorks.gov.uk/smallsteps. Currently you can see the electricity usage, the CO₂ and the cost for County Hall, White Rose House and North Yorkshire House. Information about more buildings will be available shortly following the installation of automatic meter reading.

Broadband – “Connecting North Yorkshire”

As Members will be aware, the County was one of just four areas successful in securing funding from government to roll out high speed broadband to rural areas. We are also looking to match this money with European funds whilst £750k has already been allocated from the one-off money that the County Council earned through the Local Area Agreement with local partners. This total funding of up to £30M means that we will be able to make a real impact in the County.

We have now launched a procurement exercise to secure a company to deliver a superfast broadband network across as much of the County (including York). This procurement is likely to take 12 months to complete but in the meantime we will seek to use the £750k to bring broadband to some of our communities who currently miss out by building upon the current network that we have as a result of NYnet.

Discussions are taking place with local partners from both business and the wider community in order to ensure that we pool our resources and avoid unhelpful duplication by creating a team that supports “Connecting North Yorkshire”. This is an area which will provide a massive boost to both residents and business and local communities.

Given the important community role of Members it is vital that all are kept informed. Regular updates will therefore be provided and a Members Seminar will be arranged to provide a more in-depth opportunity to explore the issues and to advise how Members can be further involved.

6 May 2011