

## North Yorkshire County Council

20 July 2011

### Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee

#### Chairman's Statement

##### One Council

- 1 In my previous statement I briefly mentioned that the Committee would be monitoring the One Council programme, including its nine work-streams.
- 2 The One Council change programme will be key to achieving the Budget 2 savings and it is clear that the impact of the programme will not be confined to staff. Members and the public will see changes too in terms of how the Authority operates.
- 3 The Committee will help to implement and monitor how these changes are being communicated back to Members and the public. Our role in general will be to act as a 'critical friend' to the Programme, including monitoring its progress – looking at the savings and benefits. The high level programme plan will be brought to the September meeting and thereafter there will be regular reporting back to the Committee.

##### Area Committees

- 4 We have fed into the review of Area Committees, which is now being taken forward by the Constitution Members Working Group. The Committee agreed that Area Committees do have value and should be retained but that improvements could be made to the current working arrangements. These centred upon encouraging and enabling wider public engagement, including changing the format of meetings and identifying if there were further opportunities for delegation of decision-making to Area Committees.

##### Council Plan

- 5 The Committee has reviewed the development process for the Council Plan because we wanted to establish when would be the optimum time for us to be able to comment on the draft Council Plan in future years.
- 6 Members will be aware that last year, due to the lateness and complexity of the Government's final settlement figures, the process for producing the Council Plan was different to previous years. For next year the timescale will be aligned to the normal budget setting process. So in light of this we have decided that at our November meeting we will look at the achievements of the past year in relation to

the current Council Plan and make suggestions for future improvements. The latest draft version of the 2012/15 Council Plan will then be brought to the December Mid Cycle meeting for discussion.

### **Scrutiny involvement in the budget process and equalities**

- 7 Earlier this year the Committee looked into how information relating to the 2010/11 budget cycle had been presented to Members. This included looking at the extent to which overview and scrutiny committees had been involved in the budget process, examining what had worked well and what had worked less well. Arising from this we looked at how overview and scrutiny committees could have earlier involvement in the budget setting process in future years. We also wanted to see how Members could be given a clearer picture of the impact of proposed service changes on communities.
- 8 To this end Scrutiny Chairs will be asking their respective committees, when developing work programmes over the next 12 months, to take into account the 2013/14 and 2014/15 savings proposals for services in their remit. Earlier involvement in the process should mean that overview and scrutiny committees are better placed to influence and comment on proposals.
- 9 In connection with this, the Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be taking a practical look at Equality Impact Assessments (EIA). We will be seeing how useful EIAs are as a tool and if they, and their related action plans, are being applied uniformly across the council. We will establish if the 'adverse impacts' identified in an EIA have occurred in practice. Similarly we will look to see if there were any unintended consequences that had arisen as a result of such budget savings. I believe there is also a greater role for Members to feed into the EIA process, utilising their community leadership role and knowledge of their local area.

**County Councillor Liz Casling**  
**Chairman**

Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee

County Hall  
Northallerton  
11 July 2011

Background Documents: Nil