

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

12 OCTOBER 2011

STATEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER

COUNTY COUNCILLOR CARL LES

Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Statement to Council on 13 October 2010 set out the approach being taken under the Children and Young People's Service Savings and Transformation Strategy which is committed to giving highest priority to frontline services, while acknowledging that the scale of savings needed means that they cannot be protected completely. In 2011-12 the CYPS MTFS target as set by Budgets 1 and 2 is £9.150m. This target has been spread across 18 projects, plus turn-off projects funded by grants which have ended or been reduced.

Overall achievement is well on target at this stage. Indeed, as reported to Executive as part of the Q1 monitoring, it is likely that savings will be accelerated by up to £1m from later years, giving a cash benefit although the overall four year target does not change. The Directorate has set aside a specific MTFS reserve to ensure that cash savings are achieved over the next four years. This is still the intention and these will be used in addition to the acceleration referred to above to ensure the maximum cash benefit for the Council.

This information appears in the Statements to Council for both Executive Members for the Children and Young People's Service as this reflects their joint responsibility for all the relevant resources.

Children and Young People's Plan

The Plan has been devised with partner agencies in the Children's Trust and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to maintain and improve outcomes for children and young people and to give them good prospects for the future. It is based on substantial assessment of need and extensive consultation with children, young people and parents. The priorities proposed reflect North Yorkshire issues and ambitions as well as any significant national requirements. The Plan takes full account of savings requirements, local and national policy changes, in order to target improvement in a sustainable way. It will be monitored by the Directorate, the Children's Trust and by Members to ensure it makes the intended impact.

Children's Social Care Transformation

The consultation period for Children's Social Care Restructure commenced on 5th September. There were 12 consultation events held around the county. Feedback overall has been very positive about the new model proposed for responding more rapidly to families and about the plans to reduce looked after children numbers by improving the impact of work with families. The consultation ends after 60 days on 3 November 2011 with a proposed implementation date of 1st March 2012.

National data published by the Department for Education recently confirmed that although the numbers of Looked After Children have increased in North Yorkshire over the last three years, the increase is only in line with national trends and the numbers per 10,000 (the national measure) in the County remain comparatively low. The DfE data also confirmed the improvement in performance on the completion of Initial and Core Assessments. These show that North Yorkshire was above the national average for the former and in line with the national average for the latter. These are significant improvements.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Consultation on a new SEND strategy has begun. Meetings for parents and carers have been arranged across the county between September and mid November. There will also be consultation with partners, agencies, schools and settings. The draft strategy, which will be reported to the full Council early in the New Year, aims to improve assessment, decision taking and service planning through greater integration. It will also deliver the MTFS target savings figure of £525k by 2015.

Staff consultation has begun on a proposal to integrate the disabled children's teams with the SEN assessment and outreach services. The new service, to be operational from next March 2012, will be more efficient and better able help parents to navigate their way round complex systems to get the support which they need.

Consultation is also underway on a **Short Breaks statement**. A short break is an opportunity for parents and carers of a disabled child to have a break from their caring arrangements and for their disabled child or young person to have a positive, enjoyable experience in their free time. The statement sets out the range of short breaks services available to parents and carers, the criteria by which eligibility for services will be assessed and how the range of services is designed to meet the needs of families. The consultation ends in mid December.

County Councillor Carl Les
Executive Member for Children's Services