

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

15 FEBRUARY 2012

STATEMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND CORPORATE 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 is becoming clear through as part of the Q3 monitoring, it is likely that savings will be accelerated by approximately £2.4m from later years, giving a cash benefit although the overall 4-year target does not change.

The Directorate has set aside a specific MTFS reserve to ensure that cash savings are achieved over the next 4 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.

The Directorate is committed to seeking to fund additional pressures which arise from within its own resources and in addition to the MTFS targets.

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.

Short Breaks

Local authorities are required to develop, consult upon and publish a Short Breaks Statement which sets out the range of short breaks available to parents and carers of children with disabilities, the criteria for accessing them and how these services will meet their need for a break from their normal caring responsibilities.

Consultation on a draft Statement has been undertaken. Parents' comments will be incorporated when the Statement is revised and republished next month.

Consultation on the Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy 2011-14

Consultation took place during the Autumn term including 15 public meetings for parents/carers across the County. The revised draft, together with commentary and issues raised during the consultation was considered by the Council's Executive on 31 January 2012, and will be considered by the full Council today.

The strategy sets out North Yorkshire's local strategic response to the significant developments in the national policy context in the Green Paper 'Support and Aspiration' - A new approach to special educational needs and disability'. It is fresh thinking, optimistic and forward looking but is also realistic in acknowledging that it will be delivered against a background of budget reduction for local authorities and budget reductions for schools, in real terms.

Many of the improvements which the strategy will deliver will be achieved through integration – of assessments, services and approaches in the making provision.

The main focus areas for improvement work are:-

- Integrated assessment and decision making
- Giving parents greater control
- Enhancing local provision
- Preparing for adulthood
- Integration – working better together

Work to deliver the strategy will be taken forward through the Children's Trust Board's SEN Change and Integration Programme. There will be regular reports to the Trust as part of the Accountability and Performance Framework which is set out in the strategy.

Working with Troubled Families

The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Troubled Families programme was announced in December and the details are still emerging. Responsibility will rest with local authorities working with partners to target work with identified families. The scheme will require local authorities, and partners, to achieve concentrated activity in order to produce measurable improvements as reflected in daily school attendance, worklessness, and involvement with public agencies (possibly especially the police). In the event of sufficient progress being achieved, 40% of the costs of interventions may be paid as a variant on Performance Reward Grant. There is, nonetheless, the challenge of achieving an intensification of resource for the interventions up-front if that is needed to enable the required improvement to be achieved in the time allowed under the scheme.

The Children and Young People's Service will co-ordinate the Troubled Families work in North Yorkshire. In the first instance three pieces of work are underway:

- i) to refine the needs analysis for identifying relevant families
- ii) to select and determine which practice models will give the best prospects of progress for families, and
- iii) to develop a model for costing intensive interventions so that sensible judgements can be made about how much work can be undertaken.

Baliol/Foremost School

The County Council has been adapting the former Royal Navy training base at Forest Moor, Darley near Harrogate to provide new accommodation for Baliol School, which is currently located in Sedbergh, providing for both residential and day pupils. I am now pleased to inform Member colleagues that the new Foremost School will open with effect

from Monday 27 February 2012 and will provide significantly improved facilities for both pupils and staff.

Equalities Information

One of the requirements laid upon the County Council by the Public Sector Equality Duty is that we must publish information which shows how we are meeting our General Equality Duty (GED).

The GED says that we must, in carrying out our functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The first part of the duty (i.e. “eliminate unlawful discrimination”) also covers marriage and civil partnerships.

As the council employs more than 150 people, we also have to publish equality information about our staff. All of the information has to be published by 31 January 2012 and updated at least annually.

We have now published information to meet this requirement on our website at www.northyorks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3131.

Redeployment and Redundancies

The overall workforce continues to reduce with the FTE numbers at the end of Q3 at 5959(non Schools) and 14417 (all authority), which is a reduction of some 8% over the last 18 months. As a result of completed and ongoing restructurings over 400 posts have been removed and in other areas vacancies have been removed and fixed term contracts not renewed in order to reduce spend. There have been 166 redundancies so far, but this includes some who worked a couple of hours a week and over 60 who did not seek redeployed. We continue to work hard at finding and moving staff into alternative posts to assist them and minimise the redundancy costs for NYCC.

Terms and Conditions Update

The final changes to staff terms and conditions come into effect on the 1st April. These changes together with those that have already taken affect in the current financial year save £2 million. The changes due to take affect include;

- 2 days unpaid leave (equivalent to 0.7% pay reduction).
- The removal of overtime pay

- The removal of increments from staff who are the top of their pay band if they do not meet the performance criteria which includes a limit on sickness absence, no conduct or performance issues, and a satisfactory appraisal for the previous 10 months.

There was a Christmas closure for non service buildings over the Christmas and New Year break which compelled staff to take 2 days leave so that buildings could be closed. This is the first time the County Council has done this and it went well with no issues reported and a saving of approximately £10k on building running costs, albeit it was mild weather.

Current position on Local Government pension Scheme - A New Scheme by 2014

Following the announcement just before Christmas of broad agreement on the principles of a new LGPS by 2014, the Local Government Employers Association has put together a useful update incorporating frequently asked questions.

As yet, no further details are available - particularly as to how protections will effect existing members and national negotiations continue into February. The update from the national negotiators makes specific note that all parties are committed to ensuring the LGPS remains a good schemes for local government.

Senior Managers Pay – Transparency and Accountability

The County Council continues to fully publish details of senior managers pay and is now required under the Localism Act to report to Full Council annually on the details of senior managers pay. This take place for the first time at this Full Council as part of the Budget Report and will be repeated annually from now on.

‘One Council’ Organisational Change Programme

On 29 November 2011 the Executive noted progress on the ‘One Council’ Change Programme and agreed to the next steps. The nine workstreams, within the programme, are currently preparing Implementation Plans for submission at the end of February 2012 and following this an overall Programme Plan will be produced. A further update will be brought to the Executive early in the new financial year as the Programme enters the “implementation” stage.

Connecting North Yorkshire – Broadband

As regards Broadband, these are exciting times for NYCC and we are, at last, beginning to see the rewards for all the patient and unheralded work that has brought us to the Next Generation Access (NGA) threshold that we stand on today.

As Members who have attended recent Seminars etc will be aware we are currently involved with the procurement of the Next Generation Broadband network for North Yorkshire. NYnet are leading on the procurement for the project and the procurement is progressing well as are discussions with the primary funders (i.e. BDUK and ERDF).

In addition to this ‘Big Train Set’, there is also significant progress being made in getting rural communities connected. Schemes in Rosedale, Ouseburn and Marton, Darley /

Appletreewick have received recent publicity, and we are also working hard to create a joined up scheme in Upper Wharfedale. More schemes will follow in the future.

Members may also have their attention drawn in the near future by something called the GoOn campaign. This is a Government initiative that the County Council is piloting to promote use of the internet by both businesses and residents in rural areas. It is therefore entirely consistent with what the County Council is doing to create the connectivity that enables people to access the internet.

County Councillor Carl Les
Executive Member for Children's Services