

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**10 OCTOBER 2012**

**STATEMENT OF SCHOOLS PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR ARTHUR BARKER**

**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 Directorate exceeded its target of £9.150m by over £2.6m.

The target for 2012-13 is £2.8m and we are on course to achieve this. This is part of a 5-year total of £23.2m, of which over 80% was achieved in the first two years, 2010-12.

The Directorate is facing a number of cost pressures over the next few years, principally arising from external changes in policy and legislation (e.g. troubled families, costs of secure remand and the transfer of responsibilities from the Young People's Learning Agency) and is committed to meeting these pressures from within its own resources

A specific MTFs reserve for the Directorate has been set up 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 our joint responsibility for all the relevant resources.

**School Funding Reform**

Following the government's final decision on changes to school funding from April 2013, officers have been working with the Schools Forum to model the implications for schools. Our concern about the move to a nationalised formula, which we first expressed last year, continues as we now see the impact on school budgets. Our "least worst" option is still unacceptable, with over 100 schools losing out – some significantly – and this is a view shared by the Schools Forum.

For that reason we have written to the County's MPs asking for their support in persuading ministers to allow some minor technical modifications to the proposals. I am certain that the impact on our schools is an unintended consequence of the proposals and that there is no intention to adversely affect the choice for parents in North Yorkshire nor to impact on our high attainment levels. That is why we are asking the government to allow some small elements of flexibility within their overall proposals to ensure that this does not happen.

I am also aware that a number of schools will be writing to local councillors and MPs to that effect.

**School performance 2012**

On the early indication provided by schools GCSE results seem to have continued the strong improvements seen in recent years and should maintain the position of North Yorkshire in the top 25 local authorities. National data, which would allow comparison with other LAs across all subjects, has not yet been released. Schools have provided an early indication of their headline performance figures as below. These do not include the outcomes of any re-marks or other corrections.

	% 5+ A*-C			% 5+ A*-C Inc English and Maths			% A*-C English			% A*-C Maths		
	2010	2011	2012	2010	2011	2012	2010	2011	2012	2010	2011	2012
National	76.2	78.8		55.3	57.9		64.7	63.4		58.4	57.9	
North Yorkshire <b>not inc</b> Academies	78.9	80.3	82.9	59.1	61.3	62.7	68.9	71.2	69.8	67.2	69.1	73.6
North Yorkshire <b>inc</b> Academies	82.2	84.5	85.7	62.0	63.8	65.2	71.6	73.9	71.7	69.4	71.0	76.1

The GCSE results are however over shadowed by the national furore over – initially – the grading of GCSE English. Nationally the percentage of pupils gaining A\*-C has declined for the first time in many subjects - e.g. in English by 1.3%, maths by 0.5%, science by 2.3%. However the impact on some schools appears to be much greater than that and particularly schools using the AQA exam board – the vast majority of North Yorkshire schools – and those which entered pupils early for some components. Around a quarter of North Yorkshire schools have seen their English fall by 10% or more. Results and information from other LAs in Yorkshire and the Humber suggest that the picture is similar in those authorities. OfQUAL is undertaking a review of the grading of English.

Early indications from schools on their post-16 performance do not yet provide a complete picture of the performance across the LA. Those early indications which are available show an increase in the LA figure for the average points per entry, continuing an upward trend.

#### **Alverton Infant & Nursery and Bullamoor Community Junior Schools**

We have been consulting on a proposal to make a technical closure of Bullamoor Junior School in Northallerton and to enlarge its partner school, Alverton Infant and Nursery School to become an all age primary school. Following initial positive consultations with the two schools and the local community the Executive determined to publish statutory notices to that effect. These were published on 7 September and will run to 19 October. After that, the final decision will be taken by the Executive, or by myself as Executive Member for Schools if there have been no objections.

**County Councillor Arthur Barker**  
**Executive Member for Schools**