

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

19 DECEMBER 2012

**STATEMENT OF THE CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER
(Corporate Affairs, Performance Management)**

COUNTY COUNCILLOR CARL LES

Apprenticeship Provision – Executive Funding

The £400k allocated by the Executive to create additional apprenticeships in North Yorkshire is having an impact. A variety of jobs have been created across a range of roles and occupations including electrical, joinery and bricklaying, care and horticulture. To date 35 appointments have been made with more progressing bringing the total number of apprenticeships provided through the Executive Funding to 53 so far.

Feedback from employers on these apprentices is that they are progressing well. Some of the Apprentices have also provided feedback that they are benefitting from the opportunity by learning new skills and developing confidence.

Newspaper Partnerships

The council's newspaper partnership with Johnston Press in six local newspapers, has been running since January 2012. This arrangement was due to come to an end in December, however, given the need to communicate important information on budget and services to residents, I have taken the decision to extend this partnership for a further six months. In the absence of a cost-effective alternative, the partnership will enable us to reach a large number of our residents with important information. Overview and Scrutiny have been kept up to date with this partnership and the extension will enable a full evaluation by the new council on any future arrangement.

One Council' Organisational Change Programme

The One Council Programme is due to deliver £7.6m savings in 2013/14 and 2014/15. It is currently forecast that savings of £1.3m will be delivered in this year (i.e. ahead of schedule) and savings for next year have largely been secured. This area remains challenging given the nature of cross-council working but it is still anticipated that the full savings target of £7.6 will be met. There have been several notable achievements, examples include:

- Embedding a culture of team performance through the implementation of a new Performance Management Framework which recognises the importance of understanding team performance across the Council. Performance plans have been produced in draft by each team and officers across the council are participating in peer reviews to support each other in refining team plans.

- The new arrangement for Training and Learning enables the Council to have greater understanding of learning and development needs across all directorates which ensures effective allocation of resources to meet these needs required to deliver the council's vision and priorities.
- The administration of Payroll, HR Systems, Health and Wellbeing, Training, Recruitment, Pay & Reward and Schools HR have now been transferred to a new Employment Support Shared Service.
- All business support roles across the Council are now managed within a new Business Support Service which will result in streamlining management structures and will enable business support staff to work together as part of a shared service team.
- The number of IT systems used across the council have been dramatically reduced from around 1600 to approximately 400.

Further information is contained within the 'One Council' Organisational Change Programme progress report which is contained in the 18th December 2012 report to the Executive.

Social Fund: transfer of responsibility from the DWP

From April 2013 the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) will cease to make discretionary Social Fund payments (Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans) to people in need. Instead, a reduced and capped budget is to be provided to upper-tier local authorities; for North Yorkshire County Council this will be a little under £800k per year for two years.

While there is no requirement to replicate the Social Fund or provide loans, there is an expectation that the funding will be used to support the needs of local vulnerable people, in particular concentrating on those facing greatest difficulty in managing their income. We are currently concluding a procurement exercise to secure the expertise needed to deliver the new service. North Yorkshire's scheme will, as far as possible, make awards in kind rather than cash.

Given the limitations of the funding, the number of applications and awards will have to be less than those managed by the DWP scheme. It is anticipated that there will be a transition period when a number of people who would have been eligible under the DWP's scheme will be disappointed to find they are not under North Yorkshire's. There will also be some turmoil in the short term caused by introducing a new fund with different application arrangements. This will have to be dealt with at the Council's customer contact points and at Job Centre Plus and will require planned responses at both to signpost people to be clear about the rules of the new scheme and to signpost them to other forms of support where appropriate.

Superfast North Yorkshire

Progress continues on planning for the roll out of SFNY. Further details can be found in County Councillor John Watson's statement as Chairman of NYNet.