

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

20 FEBRUARY 2013

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 – in fact we again expect to make savings earlier than anticipated in some cases. 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 (eg 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 my last briefing on school funding we are pleased to note that the government has now invited North Yorkshire County Council to participate as a case study in their review of the school funding changes. A first meeting has taken place between DfE officials and representatives from the Council and schools, where we set out our concerns about the arrangements. We therefore eagerly await the outcome of the review.

Officers have, as promised, worked hard within the rules and regulations set out by the Department for Education to minimise the pain for schools during the first year (when the review will take place) and final figures should be issued within the next few days.

GCSE and A-level performance tables

The DfE published the GCSE and A-level performance tables on 24 January 2013. The tables include all schools in the Local Authority including independent and special schools. The ranking of the LA at both GCSE and A-level continues to improve.

At GCSE North Yorkshire ranks 13th out of 150 authorities nationally for its schools' GCSE 5 A*-C results including English and Maths – with over 65% of pupils reaching that level, well above the national rate of 59.4% and improving at a faster rate. North Yorkshire ranks first of the LAs in the Yorkshire and Humberside region.

North Yorkshire also ranks first in the Yorkshire and Humber region and 20th nationally for achievement in the English Baccalaureate, awarded to pupils who achieve at least a C grade in

five specific GCSE subjects - English, maths, a humanity, a language and two sciences. Over 22% of pupils across the county gained the English Baccalaureate compared to 18.3% nationally.

For post-16 students North Yorkshire ranks 15th out of 150 authorities based on average points per A-level entry and 17th in the country for the percentage of students gaining at least three A*-A grades at A level.

OfSTED inspection of schools

A revised OfSTED framework for the inspection of schools was introduced in September 2012. Significant changes from the previous framework included changes from the previous judgements of "satisfactory" to "requires improvement" and from "notice to improve" to "serious weaknesses". The framework also places a greater emphasis on performance "over time".

Between September and December 2012 there were 37 inspections of all schools in North Yorkshire. This is a higher proportion than in the same period in 2011 and the increased rate of inspection seems to be continuing in the New Year.

Of 31 primary inspections, 18 schools improved their overall effectiveness judgement so that 78% of North Yorkshire's primary schools are now judged to be good or outstanding compared to 69% nationally. Two schools were judged to require special measures.

Of 5 secondary inspections, two schools improved their overall effectiveness judgements. This included the only LA secondary school in an OfSTED category being removed from that category. 64% of secondary schools are judged good or outstanding compared to 66% nationally. In his annual report Her Majesty's Chief Inspector introduced a new measure to judge the effectiveness of Local Authorities – the proportion of pupils in good or outstanding schools. On this basis the proportion of primary and secondary pupils in those schools in North Yorkshire places the authority in the 3rd or middle quintile of authorities nationally.

Adult Learning and Skills Service

The Adult Learning and Skills Service are expecting an Ofsted inspection in the next few months. There will be a two day notice period and the full service will be inspected. The service is actively preparing for the inspection and staff teams are being made aware of the inspection framework and expectations.

The priority areas of delivery for the Adult Learning and Skills Service are employability skills and apprenticeships and this work is targeted at the long term unemployed and young people. The service is actively strengthening partnerships within the Council (for example Workforce Development, Youth Support Service and Children's Centres) to improve engagement and delivery. The service is also developing closer working links with the LEP to support the North Yorkshire business and skills agendas. The Principal Officer chairs an active Community Learning Partnership which includes four local FE colleges and the voluntary sector and the aim of this is to develop a more consistent offer of non-accredited learning across the County for health, leisure and employment benefits.

Children's Centre inspections

From April 2012, 12 North Yorkshire children's centres have been inspected with seven judged "good" and five "satisfactory" (this compares to one centre being judged "good" out of six inspections in the previous 12 months). This is pleasing and further evidence of the improving quality of our children's centre services across the County.

County Councillor Arthur Barker
Executive Member for Schools