

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**24 JULY 2013****STATEMENT OF SCHOOLS PORTFOLIO HOLDER****COUNTY COUNCILLOR ARTHUR BARKER****Medium Term Financial Strategy**

The Children and Young People's Service has continued to meet its savings targets and again in 2012-13 exceeded those targets. The scale of budget cuts required – and achieved to date, whilst maintaining service levels – has been a significant challenge. The objective has been to protect front-line services as much as possible, thus enabling a restructured Directorate to operate effectively across its universal, preventative, targeted and acute service responsibilities, in line with legislation.

Revised targets, including those most recent ones mean that the Directorate's target for the four year period 2011-15 will increase to over £20m.

While the original target was very much front-loaded into years 1 and 2, the revised targets have meant that some additional savings are required in years 3 and 4. Nevertheless, this still means that nearly 75% of the revised target has been met by March 2013. CYPS will seek to ensure that the impact of the cuts is not felt on the frontline where that is possible.

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. Nevertheless, the Children and Young People's Service is on track to realise the savings requirement both for this financial year and the next.

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

The Department for Education (DfE) has now released detail of possible changes to school funding for 2014-15 following its review of the new arrangements which were implemented only this April. Members will recall our concern about the new arrangements and we ensured we worked with the Schools Forum, and many schools in the County, to play a full part in that review.

The changes now proposed by DfE do seem to have taken account of at least some of our concerns. We lobbied hard to allow additional funds to be allocated to small schools in sparse areas, to apply a different lump sum to primary and secondary schools, and to be able to target funding at schools with significant pupil mobility, especially schools with service children. All three of these points have been accepted and we will be able to allocate funding more equitably. However, as ever, the details of how we are able to apply these new factors are very important and inevitably this will still mean some tough changes and decisions for schools and the Council. It is clear that the DfE sees these changes as part of how a National Funding Formula might work sometime after 2015 and therefore they give a picture – which is certainly much better for many schools in North Yorkshire than what might have been – of the future funding for schools.

Officers are working with school representatives to model the arrangements for 2014-15 and following the Schools Forum meeting in September, there will be a full consultation with all schools on the changes. This is required in order to meet the DfE's deadline of 31 October.

Meanwhile, this Council is working with others to advise the DfE in its development of a National Funding Formula. If the Government is determined to pursue this policy, we will do all we can to ensure that it works for schools in North Yorkshire.

North Yorkshire Commission for School Improvement

I have recently approved the establishment of a North Yorkshire Commission for School Improvement which will look into the most effective model for achieving the highest standards of education through collaborative working.

Although North Yorkshire is among the top 10% of authorities nationally for GCSE and A-level performance, our ambition is for all of our schools to be classed as good or outstanding and for every child and young person, regardless of their background, to achieve to the best of their ability. The Commission will explore options for a new local model which builds on what already works effectively in North Yorkshire, including new opportunities for collaborative working and new partnerships to create a highly flexible but effective school and local authority-led structure for school improvement.

The North Yorkshire Commission will bring together a group of around 20 school leaders in the County to conduct a “rapid, evidence-informed enquiry into models of school-led improvement “. Their task will be to gather evidence of good practice nationally and locally and explore what systems work best. The commission might include visits to other schools and authorities, input from leading practitioners as well as a review of available research.

The Commission is expected to complete its work and share its recommendations with all headteachers by the end of the autumn term 2013.

OfSTED inspection of schools

The overall outcomes of OfSTED inspections continue to improve. In primary the proportion of schools with good or outstanding overall judgements has improved to 81% from 73% at the beginning of the academic year. OfSTED monitoring visits to school in categories have reported at least satisfactory progress in all schools in OfSTED categories. St George’s RC Primary School, Scarborough has been removed from “Special Measures” and Starbeck Community Primary School, Harrogate has moved from “Notice to Improve” to good.

In secondary, 72% of schools are good or outstanding. Three secondary schools are in categories – Norton Academy, Aireville and Filey. The recent monitoring visit to Filey confirmed rapid progress with Her Majesty’s Inspector concluding that further monitoring visits would not be required. Discussions are being held with appropriate partners to agree future support for Aireville school.

Foremost Special School has also had a positive OfSTED monitoring visit which described good progress in addressing the issues identified and confirming that residential provision is improving rapidly.

Hinderwell Community Primary School, Scarborough

An Interim Executive Board (IEB) has been established to replace the governing body of Hinderwell School to drive rapid school improvement and to oversee the conversion to a sponsored academy with the David Ross Education Trust. OfSTED has monitored the progress in the school and has fed back that the IEB is highly effective in supporting the school.

County Councillor Arthur Barker
Executive Member for Schools