

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

13 NOVEMBER 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. The scale of budget reductions 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 saving proposals, mean that the Directorate's target for the four year period 2011-15 will increase to over £20m. The Directorate will seek wherever possible, to ensure that the full impact of the savings is not felt on frontline service delivery where that is possible.

The Directorate operates within the context of changing national policy, changing local demographic, enhanced public expectations and increased regulatory challenges. 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

In a separate item on the agenda of November's Full Council you are asked to ratify proposals relating to school funding. This follows a significant consultation on the DfE's proposals for school funding changes held with all schools in North Yorkshire. One of the DfE's stated intentions is that although the NFF will include arrangements which will "avoid necessary small schools becoming unviable... the sparsity factor will not address the needs of small schools which are not in rural areas". The proposals for North Yorkshire are consistent with that expectation. Schools which could be adversely are afforded interim protection to allow for longer-term options to be explored.

OfSTED inspection of schools

Further changes have been made to the OfSTED framework for school inspections which continue to increase the challenge to schools. From September there has been increased focus on the progress of groups of pupils, particularly those for whom the school receives Pupil Premium (those receiving Free School Meals, Looked after Children and Service Children). There is also an increasing focus on the role of governors: their effectiveness in holding headteachers to account and their understanding of the impact of Pupil Premium funding in particular.

Inspection outcomes for North Yorkshire schools continue to collectively improve with 82% of primary schools judged to be good or outstanding. Eight of the 11 primary schools, which were in Ofsted categories in January 2013, have made sufficient progress to be removed however two further schools have been placed in a category. Sixty-one primary schools are judged as "requiring improvement" and may receive monitoring visits from Her Majesty's Inspectors. All but two of these visits have reported that the schools are taking appropriate actions. Seventy-five per cent of secondary schools are currently judged to be good or outstanding with two schools in OfSTED categories. Filey School continues to make good progress. The local authority has brokered support for Aireville from South Craven school though challenges remain.

The local authority is working closely with the DfE Academy Broker in four schools which will become sponsored academies – Aireville, Hinderwell CP, Brotherton and Byram CP and Ripon Cathedral CE Schools – to ensure as far as possible that the option of local sponsors are created and that there is a smooth transition to the benefit of pupils.

The local authority review of teaching and learning at Foremost School in October saw some improvement in the quality of teaching and, as a result, students are making better progress. Figures also show improvement in the number of challenges by young people to staff. However concerns remain and there is certainly no complacency, further progress is still needed and further monitoring visits from Ofsted will follow.

Pupil Performance Outcomes

Overall outcomes for pupils at the end of their schooling in North Yorkshire continue to place schools in the top authorities nationally. The results for A-levels and equivalent qualifications in 2013 maintained the position in the top 10% of all local authorities. North Yorkshire ranked 11th on the key measures of average points per student and 16th on the average points per entry.

At GCSE, results in a number of North Yorkshire schools were affected by the continued turbulence around GCSE English with Risedale, Aireville and Graham schools being particularly affected. In spite of the impact on the overall outcomes North Yorkshire remains in the top 20% of authorities: 65% of pupils achieved 5 GCSE A*-C grades including English and Maths placing North Yorkshire 29th of 150 local authorities. The progress and achievement of Free School Meals pupils and those with Special Educational Needs remain a challenge.

Key Stage 2 outcomes for pupils at end of primary education are extremely disappointing. On the key indicator of attainment in Reading, Writing and Maths, and on those for progress in those three subjects,. These results are far from the aspirations of schools and the local authority. Detailed analysis of the results at area, school and pupil level shows a complex picture with no single, simple explanation for the relative decline in outcomes. However the progress of pupils with low prior attainment from Key Stage 1 and progress for those pupils in vulnerable groups is well below that achieved nationally.

Steps have already been taken to ensure that work with schools is more sharply focussed and appropriately challenging. Headteachers have been briefed through the termly School Improvement Networks, the monitoring visits by advisers have been refocused and the categories of support to schools revised. Schools will also be providing additional progress monitoring information for pupils in the current year 5 and year 6.

The Directorate has already initiated a "Closing the Gap" Innovation Project which has been established to support schools in developing and sharing best practice in closing attainment gaps.

Commission for School Improvement

As you will recall we have established a North Yorkshire Commission for School Improvement charged with answering the question: "How can we develop a collaborative system for effective school improvement which ensures that every school in North Yorkshire is good or outstanding?"

The Commission, made up of a representative group of school leaders plus senior LA colleagues, has now held two very positive meetings and has taken evidence from several key external witnesses including:

- Professor David Hargreaves, who discussed his work on "self-improving school systems".
- Vicky Beer, a National Leader of Education (NLE) who leads a school collaboration working across ten local authorities in Greater Manchester.
- Nick Weller, Executive Principal of the Dixons Academies Group who leads the Bradford Partnership - a collaborative of 30 secondary schools.

- Pat Smart, an Executive Headteacher who is involved in developing school partnerships in Birmingham, the biggest local authority in the country.
- Nick Hudson, Regional Director of Ofsted

The final two sessions of the Commission will take place on 20 and 21 November after which the Commission will make its recommendations in relation to delivery models for school improvement to enable us to achieve our ambition of every school in North Yorkshire being good or outstanding.

School Organisation Update

A number of school organisation proposals are currently under consideration. Following local consultations, formal proposals have been published to establish a nursery class at New Park Community Primary School from 1 January 2014, and a final decision is likely to be taken on 3 December. It has also been agreed to publish statutory proposals for the development of Thirsk Community Primary School as an enhanced school for children with behavioural, emotional and social needs. This is the final such provision arising from the review of Special Educational Needs and Behaviour.

On 17 September I gave approval to consult on the closure of Hirst Courtney and Temple Hirst Community Primary School at Easter 2014 following rapidly declining pupil numbers. The consultation closed on 11 November and the Executive will then consider whether to publish statutory proposals, with a final decision to be taken in February 2014.

Also agreed on 17 September was the initiation of consultation with parents, schools and other stakeholders in Selby town on additional pupil places which will be needed to serve the new Staynor Hall housing development. We will consider the responses to this consultation in December. The outcome could either be the expansion of existing provision or the development of a new school to provide the necessary places by September 2016. This will be the first major enlargement or new school arising out of pupil growth for many years. Several more such developments are likely as numbers of primary age pupils increase and as a council we will need to consider the capital investment implications, which will be considerable over the next 5-10 years.

County Councillor Arthur Barker
Executive Member for Schools