

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

21 MAY 2014

### STATEMENT OF SCHOOLS PORTFOLIO HOLDER

#### COUNTY COUNCILLOR ARTHUR BARKER

##### **Medium Term Financial Strategy & 2020 North Yorkshire**

The Children and Young People's Service has continued to meet its savings 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.

Over the four year period 2011-15, the Directorate will have made savings of over £20m. As members will be aware, the Council faces continuing work to deliver a balanced budget over the period 2015-19 and the Directorate's target within the 2020 North Yorkshire programme is a further £16m and proposals have begun to be worked up. Although these proposals will result in a major transformation of delivery arrangements for some of our services, targeting our support on the most vulnerable and those with the greatest level of need, we have recognised the importance of early intervention and of delivering our statutory responsibilities in terms of safeguarding, special educational needs and disabilities and school improvement. Many will of course be subject to public and staff consultation at appropriate stages in their progression.

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 relevant resources.

##### **School Funding**

The Council has recently responded to the latest consultation from the DfE on moving to a national funding formula. This consultation states, in fact, that there will now be no further changes to the way in which local authorities can distribute funding in 2015-16, other than a review of how the sparsity factor operates – which we find helpful as we have some specific concerns about how this factor works in practice. We have responded to ask to be allowed to use a higher funding figure for secondary schools than for primary schools.

As part of the consultation, rather than distribute the funding to LAs for schools (known as the Dedicated Schools Grant) on historic funding levels, the DfE has begun a process for 2015-16 onwards which will allocate a minimum level of the Schools Block of the DSG funding to each local authority area. This formula is not the same as that which is then used to allocate money to schools, although it shares some of the same characteristics (such as basic unit per pupil, deprivation, sparsity, lump sum) but not all (such as mobility funding). An important feature of the most recent announcement is that, as a result of the new minimum levels of funding, the Department intends to allocate an "additional £350m in 2015-16 to increase the per-pupil budgets for the least fairly funded local areas". This means an additional £7.1m for North Yorkshire – equivalent to about 2.2% of the current Schools Block.

##### **School Improvement**

Ofsted data of 29 April 2014 showed that 79% of primary schools and 66% of secondary schools in North Yorkshire are good or outstanding with 74% of both primary and secondary pupils attending good or better schools in North Yorkshire (unchanged from September 2013). This compares with national averages of 80% for primary schools and 71% for secondary schools being good or outstanding with 77% of all pupils in schools which are good or better, 80% of primary pupils and

73% of secondary pupils in schools which are good or outstanding. 93% of all private, voluntary and independent settings across North Yorkshire are now judged to be good or outstanding.

Selby High School was inspected in the Spring Term 2014 and was judged to be good (previously satisfactory). The inspection report for Brayton High was published on 30 April showing that the school has moved from requiring improvement to good (moving our overall percentage of good or better schools to 68%). Sherburn High recently had an English subject inspection in which provision was judged to be good, and we are confident that the school will be judged as good overall when next inspected. It should be noted that, although secondary provision in the Selby area has been a cause for concern in the past, only one of the six secondary schools in the area is now judged to require improvement.

Eleven secondary schools currently are judged to require improvement. HMI are satisfied with progress in all but one of those schools. Three secondary schools are currently judged to be inadequate. Filey School continues to make effective progress and is likely to be re-inspected over the next few months. Aireville School will become a sponsored academy under the sponsorship of Craven College in September 2014. Graham School was placed in special measures in December 2013. The school has already been judged by HMI to be making very effective progress under the leadership of the new headteacher, who took up post in January 2014.

Brotherton and Byram Community Primary School has been judged to be good at its latest inspection having previously been inadequate 11 months earlier. An Academy order for the school has been recently signed by the DfE. Four primary schools (Skipton Ings, Braeburn Junior, Barrowcliff Junior and Skipton St Stephen's RC) are currently judged to be inadequate. We are awaiting the publication of two further reports for a school which has been judged inadequate and secondly for a school that has moved from requires improvement to good. Thirty three primary schools are currently judged to require improvement and are working with HMIs. In all of these schools HMIs are satisfied with the progress being made

### **Closing the Gap**

The LA has recently launched a 'Closing the Gap innovation programme'. The programme is being supported by significant funding from the Wrea Head Trust to stimulate collaboration and innovation on this key strategic priority. Groups of schools have been invited to submit innovative proposals which will seek to quickly close attainment gaps for the most disadvantaged pupils across the schools concerned, based on current research into the most effective strategies that have been proven to be successful nationally. In this first year of what will be a three year programme, 10 bids have been approved by the programme board involving 87 schools in total. £242K has been made available to support these projects. Each project will be robustly evaluated in order to provide clear evidence of the strategies that have most impact and the value for money that has been achieved.

### **Richmond School**

As Members may be aware it has been a difficult few weeks for Richmond School with significant media and local interest in the school following the serving of a warning notice to the governing body and their subsequent resignation. Significant officer time has been spent responding to requests for information and correspondence on this issue. I can assure Members that the serving of the notice did not relate to concerns about safeguarding issues nor about the financial probity of the school. The resignation of the governing body was neither sought nor anticipated by the Local Authority but was an event we needed to respond to by putting in place an Interim Executive Board. Despite the sudden resignation of the original Chair of the IEB, I am confident the IEB, under its new Chair Colonel Stephen Padgett OBE, will provide the strong interim governance required as a stepping stone towards the establishment of a new governing body in the relatively near future. The Board's priority will be to re-establish trust and clear channels of communication between governors, the school and its community. They have already engaged in dialogue with local Elected Members and with representatives of the previous governing body.

## **Schools Organisation update**

A number of school organisation proposals are under consideration or have recently been determined. It was decided by the Executive on 25 February that Hirst Courtney and Temple Hirst Community Primary School should close with effect from Easter 2014. That decision has now been implemented. Statutory proposals have been published for the closure of Richard Thornton's CE VA Primary School, Burton in Lonsdale with effect from August 2014. A decision will be made by the Executive on 27 May 2014. Both proposals relate to very low and declining pupil numbers in small primary schools. Proposals are also being considered for the amalgamation of schools. In Scarborough, statutory proposals have been published for the amalgamation of three pairs of infant and junior schools at Gladstone Road, Barrowcliff and Braeburn to create single primary schools. Final decisions on all three proposals are anticipated in June 2014 for implementation from September. Proposals have also been published for the amalgamation of Caedmon School and Whitby Community College to create a single 11-18 secondary school with effect from September. A final decision will also be made on this in June.

Consultation has been undertaken on a proposal to procure a private sector partner to take over the running of Foremost School from October 2014. A decision on whether to publish statutory proposals to cease maintaining the school will be made once the evaluation of a bid from a potential provider is concluded in May 2014.

## **Capital Programme**

On 8 April the Executive approved a £2.4m capital programme to increase primary school places for September 2015. It also approved a £12.5m programme of capital investment in Local Authority school buildings and endorsed a further £1.7m of investment in North Yorkshire Voluntary Aided Schools. It includes £6.5m of investment in structural improvements, window replacements, roof replacements, electrical/mechanical upgrades and compliance works and £4.2m of investment in suitability related improvements such as science laboratory and design technology upgrades and schemes to reconfigure accommodation to support school amalgamations. The majority of this investment will be undertaken during Summer 2015.

A further £39.2m has been allocated to North Yorkshire for the provision of additional school places up to September 2017 and a programme of school expansion schemes is expected to be agreed in September 2014. This will include the development of a number of new school sites expected to arise from major housing schemes. This is a most welcome and significant increase to the capital available for school places. We will however, still need to be both careful in its use and inventive in terms of seeking additional funding, since the allocation still falls short by approximately £15 million of the anticipated costs of needing to provide school places.

## **Universal Free School Meals**

From September 2014 all infant pupils will be entitled to a healthy free school meal. £1.4m has been allocated to North Yorkshire to meet the capital costs of upgrading school kitchen and dining facilities to meet this entitlement and in addition schools with fewer than 150 pupils have been allocated a minimum of £3000 to ensure their facilities are adequate. Officers are working with Dioceses to determine capital priorities in respect of Voluntary Aided Schools. A small number of schools which do not currently have their own production kitchens have been identified and feasibility work is being undertaken to establish the cost of addressing this. The County Catering Service are working with schools which receive their service to ensure they will be able to meet the demand, using reserves from the traded service to provide additional equipment. Officers are also liaising with schools which have their catering service provided from elsewhere to ensure they can provide all the meals required.

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