

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****23 JULY 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 a detailed programme will be implemented over that timeframe – one of the first projects to get underway was the review of Preventative Services. 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 Performance**

Ofsted data on 1 July 2014 showed that 80% of primary schools and 68% of secondary schools in North Yorkshire are good or outstanding with 76% of both primary and secondary pupils attending good or better schools in North Yorkshire. The proportion of pupils attending good or better schools has improved by 2% since April 2014 at both primary and secondary, whilst the national averages are little changed. This compares with national averages for the percentage of schools being good or outstanding at 81% for primary and 71% for secondary. Nationally, 80% of primary pupils and 74% of secondary pupils attend schools which are good or outstanding. 89% of all private, voluntary and independent settings across North Yorkshire are now judged to be good or outstanding.

Both Barlby Bridge Community Primary School and Barlby (Hilltop) CP School have been judged to be good at their latest inspections having previously been requires improvement. The LA had provided intensive support to Barlby CP School but this is now light touch in recognition that the school has improved significantly and continues to do so. Five primary schools (Skipton Ings, Braeburn Junior, Barrowcliff Junior, Farnley C.E. and Skipton St Stephen's RC) are currently judged to be inadequate. Threshfield Primary has moved from good to requires improvement (leadership and management were judged as good with the LA providing good support which is helping the school to improve). Thirsk CP School has had its judgement moved from requires improvement to good by HMI after the school accessed the Ofsted appeals procedure. Wavell Community Junior School at Catterick Garrison has been judged as good maintaining its previous inspection judgement. Ruswarp CE has been judged as good having previously been outstanding whilst Seamer and Irton CP has maintained its good judgement at its latest inspection. Thirty three primary schools are currently judged to require improvement and are working with HMIs. In all of

these schools HMIs continue to be satisfied with the progress being made as recent monitoring visits evidence. There has only been one inspection of North Yorkshire secondary schools over the past two months. Filey School was inspected at the beginning of June, only 14 months after their previous inspection, and the outcome has not yet been published. 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. Aireville School's latest published monitoring letter shows that the school is taking effective action to improve provision and plans are in place for the school to become a sponsored academy under the sponsorship of Craven College in September 2014. Graham School has had a recent second monitoring visit, following a very successful first visit, but the monitoring letter has not yet been published

The Council's 'Closing the Gap innovation programme' is about to enter its second year. In the first year of what will be a three year programme, 10 projects, involving just under 100 schools, have been supported with around £240K funding from the Wrea Head Trust to stimulate collaboration and innovation on this key strategic priority. The approved projects contain 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. Projects are just getting under way and 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. Groups of schools are currently preparing project proposals for the second year of the programme, which will begin in September. At the end of June, a very successful Closing the Gap Conference was held for North Yorkshire schools at which the key note speaker was Sir John Dunford, national Pupil Premium Champion, who passionately endorsed the current ambition of the LA to quickly close the attainment gaps that exist within the county. Work is also beginning to develop a strategy for closing gaps in the Early Years, which the Closing the Gap Programme Board will be considering later this month.

### **School Funding**

The Council has recently responded to the latest consultation from the Department for Education 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. For example, 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.

We are expecting a response from DfE in the next few weeks, but would be surprised if there was a change to their direction of travel on this.

### **Schools Organisation**

A number of school organisation proposals are currently being progressed. On 27 May 2014 a decision was taken by the Executive that Richard Thornton's CE VA Primary School in Burton in Lonsdale will close with effect from 31 August 2014. In Scarborough three pairs of infant and

primary schools have been consulting on amalgamation from September 2014. On 17 June the Executive Member for Schools decided that Gladstone Road Junior School would close and Gladstone Road Infant School would expand to create a single 4-11 primary school. It was also agreed that Barrowcliff Nursery and Infant School would be amalgamated with Barrowcliff Junior School, with which it was already federated, through the closure of the Junior School and expansion of the infants. Also in Scarborough a consultation has been carried out on a proposal to amalgamate Braeburn Infant and Nursery School with Braeburn Junior School through the closure of the Junior School and expansion of the infants. A final decision will be taken on 8 July 2014.

In Whitby it has been agreed that Whitby Community College and Caedmon School will amalgamate on 31 August 2014 through the closure of Caedmon School and enlargement of Whitby Community College to create an 11-18 school operating across two sites. Discussions are continuing with Eskdale School following the DfE's refusal to allow their conversion to Academy status earlier in the year.

Planning has started on the development of a new primary school to serve the Staynor Hall development in Selby town. Following consultation last year it has been agreed that the additional places will be provided through the opening of a new one form entry (plus nursery) primary academy from September 2016. Expressions of interest have been sought from potential academy sponsors and an evaluation of bids has commenced. A recommendation will be made to the DfE which will take the final decision on the sponsor in the autumn term. Feasibility work has been undertaken in parallel to develop a design for the new school.

Consultation opened in June 2014 on the provision of additional primary school places to serve the Sowerby Gateway development in Thirsk. A decision will be taken early in the Autumn term on whether this should be through the expansion of existing schools or the development of a new primary academy. The places will be needed by September 2017.

### **Universal Free School Meals initiative**

From September 2014 all infant school pupils will be entitled to a free school meal. An evaluation has been undertaken of the readiness of the 309 affected schools to meet the new entitlement. The County Catering Service which supplies meals to the majority of schools is investing £664,300 from its reserves to provide additional equipment in order to ensure it can provide the additional meals to the schools it supplies. It is also recruiting additional staff. Small schools will receive a minimum of £3000 to help them plan for the implementation with their catering providers.

North Yorkshire County Council will receive £1,269,049 (plus a further £184,466 for Voluntary Aided schools) in capital funding for 2014/15 to assist with the implementation of this new policy. A small number of schools have been identified where building work is required in order to deliver the entitlement. Feasibility studies are currently being carried out at these schools. It is estimated that 90% of schools will be fully ready to meet the entitlement in September with the remainder able to do so shortly thereafter. Interim arrangements may be needed in some schools (such as transporting meals from other schools) until the improvements to building and equipment are completed.

### **Foremost School**

The procurement exercise to establish a contract with a third party provider resulted in only a single tender being received. The evaluation process concluded that the bid would not deliver the quality of service required and that a contract could not be entered into. It has been agreed that the school should remain open as a local authority maintained school until a decision is reached about its future. An options appraisal is being carried out to inform decision making.

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