

North Yorkshire County Council**18 May 2016****Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee****Chairman's Statement**

1. My statement for this full Council summarises the main topics considered at our Committee meeting on 18 April 2016.

Reconfiguration of the Library Service

2. We heard that under the Red, Amber, or Green (RAG) ratings good progress has been toward establishing the planned 21 community managed libraries.
3. Since my last statement to Council in February when I reported that that there were 7 rated Amber I am pleased to report there are now only 2 – Bentham and Thirsk.
4. We noted that 18 were assessed as Green, including Pateley Bridge which has already transferred to community management and is now operated by Nidderdale Plus, in their new premises with the support of volunteers and some dedicated library staffing.
5. The only library assessed as Red was Stokesley. Further engagement work and options appraisals are being prioritised in order to achieve a successful outcome in the form of an outline Expression of Interest.
6. Whilst priority has been given to the community libraries as these are a full transfer of service delivery, work has also progressed with the hybrid libraries, currently assessed as Amber. Meetings have taken place with potential management group members in Filey, Knaresborough, Pickering, Ripon and Whitby and follow up meetings are already planned. These groups will work towards becoming formalised over the coming weeks and once established, will be requested to complete a Community Proposal form clarifying their capacity to work with the Council in delivering the service.
7. We look forward continued involvement and we are very optimistic that the reconfiguration will be fully implemented by 1 April 2017.

Equality

8. We received a comprehensive report which summarised the Council's work under 4 broad headings:
 - a) Progress on equal pay
 - b) Monitoring of workforce data
 - c) Member training on equality issues
 - d) Refreshed equality objectives.
9. In terms of Equal Pay we heard that there is much, to be positive about, for instance, the latest audit had identified that the progression of male employees and female employees is equal through the grades and changes to the increments policy have offered greater protection staff with a disability who may need to be absent from work.
10. The Council monitors information on age, gender, ethnicity and disability.

11. With regards to Member training we felt that all Councillors should receive more training on equality issues and we should all complete the e-learning package on the Council's Learning Zone as is the case for all staff.
12. We noted that equality objectives are being refreshed and we look forward to more information on that work in due course.

Workforce

13. We heard that the County Council's workforce (non schools) continues to reduce at a relatively steady place as below:

| | Headcount | FTE |
|------------|-----------|-------|
| Q2 2012/13 | 8,580 | 5,810 |
| Q2 2013/14 | 7,716 | 5,659 |
| Q2 2014/15 | 7,663 | 5,668 |

14. The 15/16 end of year outturn had yet to be finalised on 18 April but was reported as 5,632 FTE.
15. Since April 2014 the impact of the 2020 organisational restructurings has been significant, for instance over 2,000 staff have been involved in redundancy consultations and 50 restructurings have been completed.
16. Sickness levels reached a record low of 6.21 days lost per employee for 2014/15. The staff survey showed that morale is holding up well.
17. In terms of taking forward the Workforce Strategy we heard that key issues include:
 - The need to continue to engage with the workforce in times of constant change as part of measures to provide the necessary support.
 - The need to develop talent
 - Coming to terms with new national requirements for apprenticeships;
 - Improving recruitment and retention of social care staff.
18. We look forward to continued involvement in workforce issues.

County Councillor Derek Bastiman
Chairman - Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 County Hall, Northallerton

May 2016