

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Corporate and Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on 21 July 2014 at 10.30 am.

### Present:-

County Councillor Steve Shaw-Wright in the Chair.

County Councillors Val Arnold, Jean Butterfield, Sam Cross, John Ennis, Andrew Lee, Stuart Parsons, Tony Randerson, Elizabeth Shields and Tim Swales.

### Also in Attendance

County Councillor Carl Les (Executive Member)

### Officers:

Gary Fielding Corporate Director Strategic Resources, Helen Edwards Head of Communications,  
Jon Holden, Investments and Delivery Manager,  
Roger Fairholm Corporate Asset Manager,  
Bryon Hunter, Scrutiny Team Leader

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Derek Bastiman and John Blackburn

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**Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book**

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### 24. Minutes

#### Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2014, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### 25. Exclusion of the Public

#### Resolved -

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of item 7 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

### 26. Public Questions or Statements

There were no public questions or statements

## **27. Executive Member Update**

Considered -

The report of Executive Member County Councillor Les highlighting some of the recent items considered by the Executive since the last meeting of the Committee and identifying some of the key priorities for the coming months. The report also asked for questions, comments and views from Members of the Committee on the content of the report and any other issue which he would be pleased to respond and note.

In response to a question from Councillor Cross, Councillor Les advised the Committee that the cost of the contract with Johnston press is £2,250/month.

**Resolved -**

That the report be noted.

## **28. Update on the Police and Crime Plan**

Considered -

The oral report of Ms Julia Mulligan, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for North Yorkshire.

Ms Mulligan described the process that will be followed to update the Police and Crime Plan. The first version was published in November 2012. The Police and Crime Plan is the strategic blue print for the Chief Constable and delivery of the Plan is the mechanism by which the Police and Crime Commissioner holds the Chief Constable to account.

As part of work to prepare a draft Plan Ms Mulligan commented that consultants had been appointed to:

- Review existing documentation and evidence, such as the Joint Strategic Intelligence Assessment. This is the desk research phase.
- Carry out qualitative research with key groups, including, older people, young people, and people with learning disabilities. The Victims Needs Assessment will also inform that work.
- Carry out a telephone survey. A survey of more than 1,000 people reflecting the demography of the County and approximately 50/50 split in terms of users/non-users of Police services.

Ms. Mulligan commented that the following themes were emerging:

- There is a strong correlation between the strength and vitality of the local community and the extent to which people feel safe. It is more complicated than just whether or not there is a police presence locally.
- People feel more unsafe after dark
- There are high levels of satisfaction with the Police
- In Scarborough and York the biggest drivers of crime are drugs and the night time economy respectively.
- There are issues for people with learning disability, for instance, their concerns using public transport.
- The need to engage more with young people.
- Drugs and alcohol

Members were advised that as North Yorkshire, is surrounded by 7 other Police Forces the need for coordinated cross boundary work, is significant.

A formal consultation on a draft Plan is being prepared and Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be included as consultees. It is proposed that a final draft Plan will be considered by the Police and Crime Panel in October 2014.

Members were advised that the PCC is intending to withdraw from the Yorkshire and Humber Victim Support Services which is based on a call centre in Wakefield. A service specific to North Yorkshire and York will be commissioned to replace it.

Members raised a number of issues including:

- serious concerns over the "101" service
- use of "legal highs" amongst young people
- sexual abuse of children
- greater engagement and consultation with young people
- Potential to use community grants to address local priorities.
- The Police have a very good reputation and they are trusted by the public.
- Drop-in sessions and local surgeries held by the Police should be held in venues which are accessible, ensure privacy, have sound loops etc. An appointments system might work more effectively.
- The difficulties the Police face in being unable to go on to school premises unless they are invited to do so by the Head teacher.
- Selby District Council have paid for number plate recognition systems as a way of identifying and targeting drug dealers,
- Councils need to do more to evict known drug dealers
- The need to tackle on-line exploitation and abuse of young people

In response and as part of wider discussion Ms. Mulligan commented:

- That she shared Members' concerns over 101 Service and commented that it was a national model which had faced a significant increase in calls in recent months. Staffing and telephone issues are being addressed. This would include £10m investment in telephony as part of a transition to a digital system. She commented that frequently the problem was not actually contacting the 101 Service but rather what happens as a result of the call – the front of office and back office linkages.
- the cost of consultant involved in refreshing the Police and Crime Plan was between £40K and £50K. The consultants were being employed to provide around statistical evidence base.
- She shared Members' concerns about the use of legal highs and that the term itself raised her concerns as it gave totally the wrong impression. Members could be assured that the Police would close premises down if there was evidence of criminal activity. Frequently it is the "cutting substance" that causes the harm. The Police are working closely with Accident and Emergency Departments to address the problem.
- Tenancy Agreements and Community Remedies could provide a route for the Police to solve local issues.
- Approximately £250K has been distributed through community grants but the fund cannot be used to fund other statutory services.

Ms. Mulligan undertook to provide more information to Cllr Stuart Parsons on the rights of the Police to go on to a school site.

**Resolved -**

That the oral report be noted.

## 29. Property Disposals

Considered -

The report of the Corporate Director - Strategic Resources informing the Committee of the County Council's approach to property disposals and providing a comprehensive overview of the Council's approach to property disposals.

To summarise the main issue in the above report Jon Holden guided Members through a presentation which covered:

- Reasons for disposals
- Main types of disposal
- Sales in 2013/14
- Basic disposal process
- Current issues around disposals

Mr Holden advised Members that his report summarised the process under which buildings would be released – the “how” decisions. Decisions about “why” the building is being released and “which” building is released are taken by the relevant service.

Members raised a number of issues including:

- The need for more information on plans for community libraries.
- The need for more discussion with local members and information to be made available on the future of a building which has been declared surplus to requirements
- Buildings which are surplus to County Council usage should be retained as a community asset rather than just being sold off. A Councillor enquired about the sale and future use of a property in Scarborough
- Instances where the community/voluntary sector had not expressed an interest in purchasing a surplus property because of the Council's valuation. But the actual receipts from the sales were at levels the sector would have been able to pay.

Gary Fielding commented that decisions around the sale of surplus buildings, and use of a capital receipts or retaining them as a community asset had to be taken against a background of a county wide plan which includes extra-care housing initiatives and the development of new style libraries.

County Councillor Carl Les and Gary Fielding acknowledged the need to provide more information to local Members on these issues.

**Resolved -**

- a) That the report be noted.
- b) That a definitive list of properties be provided for the Committee members relevant to their own Division.
- c) That the arrangements for the Executive Member – Central Services to share officer decisions and his proposed decisions about disposals with local members in advance of implementation should continue. Officers should inform the local member if a property is to be sold by auction and seek to provide any additional information to local members where that is possible and practicable

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**The following item was considered in private session  
and the public have no right of access the report**

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**30. Strategy for the Future Arrangements of Property and BES Engineering Services from April 2016**

Considered -

The report of the Corporate Director - Strategic Resources updating the Committee on the future procurement of property consultancy and Business and Environmental Services engineering consultancy prior to its consideration by the Executive.

**Resolved –**

That the Committee supports the Recommendations set out in paragraphs 13.1 to 13.3 of the report to the Executive on 29 July 2014.

**31. Work Programme**

The future work programme of the Committee was discussed and the items listed within it agreed without amendment. The Committee agreed to a workshop with officers to consider the criteria used to categorise libraries.

**Resolved –**

- a) Note the information in the report and accept the work programme unchanged.
- b) Note that a workshop for the Committee on criteria for categorising libraries will take place on 1 September 2014.

The meeting concluded at 12:10pm