

**North Yorkshire County Council**  
**Corporate and Partnership Overview and Scrutiny**  
**Committee**

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on 20 June 2016 at 10.30 am.

**Present:-**

County Councillor Derek Bastiman in the Chair.

County Councillors Margaret Atkinson (substitute for Cllr Blackburn), Val Arnold, Bernard Bateman MBE, Andrew Goss, Bryn Griffiths, Andrew Lee, Cliff Lunn, Tony Randerson, Steve Shaw-Wright and Tim Swales.

**Also in Attendance**

County Councillors Carl Les, David Chance and Mike Jordan.

Officers: Justine Brooksbank, Neil Irving, Julie Blaisdale, Michael Leah, Sarah Foley, Deborah Hugill and Bryon Hunter

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor John Blackburn, Jean Butterfield and Sam Cross.

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

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**85. Minutes**

**Resolved –**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2016, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**86. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest to note.

**87. Public Questions or Statements**

There were no questions from the public.

**88. Interim Evaluation of County Councillor Locality Budgets**

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Director (Policy and Partnerships) reviewing the first year's operation of County Councillor Locality Budgets.

County Councillor David Chance opened discussion on the report and highlighted that every County Councillor made at least one recommendation; the largest number of recommendations made by a County Councillor was eleven. He commented that 356 projects and activities had been supported in total. This is slightly less than the number of approved recommendations because the scheme allows more than one

County Councillor to support a project or activity provided that the total funding allocated to it does not exceed £5,000.

Councillor Chance also advised Members that funding committed in year one was £349,996 (97.2% of total budget). The average recommendation was £931, the lowest £300 (the minimum allowed) and the maximum was £5,000 (the maximum allowed).

Neil Irving highlighted that every County Councillor had submitted at least one project and that there has been a very broad spread in the type of projects. The scheme has been met enthusiastically as it helped Councillors to target support to specific local initiatives.

Neil Irving highlighted how projects cannot be funded retrospectively. If a project had already got underway it could still be eligible for funding, but not if it has been completed.

The importance of submitting bids to Councillor Chance in a timely way was acknowledged by all Members.

Members commented that the beauty of the scheme was in its simplicity and how it gave them discretion to fund and support projects which would have broad economic, social and environmental benefits. They felt the scheme had been a great success and congratulated Councillor Chance.

Members queried whether or not certain types of project were within the intended spirit of the scheme – such as funding the repair of potholes. They also discussed whether or not it is appropriate to directly fund projects being delivered by parish/town councils as they are precepting authorities in their own right. Members also queried whether or not funds allocated to parish/town councils should take into account the budget situation of these councils or their ability to pay for the project themselves. It was acknowledged that in some cases the parish/town councils may be acting as the accountable body for certain projects rather than directly receiving the funding themselves.

It was also felt that locality budgets should, in essence, be “pump priming” money which alongside additional/match funding would help local initiatives to be more sustainable in the long term.

It was acknowledged that such issues should be considered and regulated by Councillors themselves when deciding how to allocate their Locality Budget.

**Resolved -**

That the note be reported.

That the success of Locality Grants be acknowledged and Councillor Chance be congratulated for sponsoring the scheme.

That the Committee supports a provision being made in the Medium Term Financial Strategy when it is being formulated in February 2017 so that the scheme can be continued beyond March 2017.

That the guidance provided to Councillors be discussed by group spokespersons at the mid cycle briefing on 5 September 2016 with a view to exploring whether or not that guidance should be improved taking into account the need to retain the simplicity of the scheme and also the need to make sure that all projects are in the spirit for which the Committee feels the scheme was intended.

## **89. Equality Objectives 2016-2020**

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Director (Policy and Partnerships) consulting the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on proposed equality objectives for the County Council for the period 2016-2020.

Neil Irving introduced the report by highlighting that the Council is required by legislation to prepare and publish at least one equality objective every four years. He also commented that objectives need to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time Related).

With reference to Objective 3 Members commented that there must be equity in the funding of schools and how funding should be focused on need. Similar views were expressed in relation to the Pupil Referral Service and its role in helping taking forward this objective.

In respect of Objectives 6 and 7 Members commented that rather than just “take opportunities” the Council should be more proactive and work with partners and stakeholders to “generate opportunities”.

Members fully supported the need to identify SMART targets and that they should be reported on quarterly and annually as part of the regular Q-Reports to the Executive.

In terms of adopting objectives and the trade off with cost, resource commitment and complying with legislation Members supported the principle of proportionality.

**Resolved -**

- (a) The work of the Corporate Equalities Group and Management Board be supported and the objectives in the report are recommended for adoption by the County Council for the next four years.
- (b) the Committee supports the agreed objectives being signed off as an executive decision by the relevant Executive Member, County Councillor David Chance.

## **90. LGA Corporate Peer Challenge**

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Director (Strategic Resources) briefing the Committee on the finding of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge.

Michael Leah highlighted that the headline statement from the Peer Review was that “North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) is a very good council – its services are highly regarded and the peer review team witnessed areas of excellence.”

Members' attention was drawn to the original scope question being asked ("preparedness for meeting the demands of the year 2020"), the Review team concluded NYCC was in a good position compared to other local authorities. However they were keen to explore what the future for North Yorkshire looked like *beyond 2020* by asking the following questions:

- What kind of Council are you going to be?
- How are you going to be different?
- How are you going to maintain excellent service delivery?

The Committee was invited to offer comments and advice on:

- How should the Council form a view on the three questions posed by the LGA?
- In which ways can a Corporate Performance function ensure NYCC are achieving the priorities laid out in the Council Plan (see Annex B)?
- Are there any additional mechanisms Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee would like to see put in place with regards to how performance is managed and improved corporately?

Members noted the Peer Review's favorable comments on how the Council is working with Selby District Council. They added that "better together" is not just about funding and reducing costs it is also about bringing the County Council close to local areas. They commented the same approach should be extended into other borough/districts whilst accepting that relationships between the County Council and the other councils are not as positive as is the case with Selby.

Members commented that the County Council should concentrate on what it is good at. Taking this a step further Members commented that the County Council should be more explicit about what will and won't do whilst at the same time being innovative and willing to work with other stakeholders. In a similar vein Members commented that the Council should demonstrate its willingness to learn from partners and not assume it can do everything.

**Resolved -**

- (a) That the report and findings of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge be noted.
- (b) That the points raised by Members be taken into account as part of work to take forward the areas for consideration presented by the LGA and to inform the review of the Performance Monitoring Framework.

**91. Corporate Risk Register (2015/16)**

Considered -

The report of the Corporate Director - Strategic Resources updating the Committee on the Corporate Risk Register.

Fiona Sowerby guided Members through the Corporate Risk Register

Members noted that Funding Challenges, Economic Issues in the Care Market and Partnership and Integration with the NHS remain classified as "RED" even after risk mitigations have been put in place.

**Resolved -**

That the updated Corporate Risk Register be noted.

## **92. Customer Strategy**

Considered -

The presentation by the Assistant Director (Libraries and Customer Services).

Councillor Steve Shaw-Wright commented that whilst he could see the pros and cons of customers having to set up an account including them not having to input their details more than once and being able to track how their enquiry was being processed more easily, he felt that some people could be less inclined to use portals etc. due to a feeling they were too formal.

Member commented that the Strategy must recognise the demography of the County and how older people may not have the confidence to go on-line or they may not have a computer or access to one nearby.

Julie Blaisdale commented that she recognised these difficulties and advised Members that the Strategy will ensure customers have a range of options through which they can contact the Council.

Members were advised that a new portal for reporting potholes will be going live soon.

Members supported the work taking place on the Customer Strategy.

**Resolved -**

That the presentation be noted.

## **93. Work Programme**

Considered -

The report of the Scrutiny Team Leader inviting comments from Members on the content of the Committee's programme of work scheduled for future meetings.

**Resolved -**

That the content of the Work Programme report and schedule be agreed.

The meeting concluded at 12.40pm

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