

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Corporate and Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on 3 October 2016 at 10.30 am.

### Present:-

County Councillor Derek Bastiman in the Chair.

County Councillors Val Arnold, John Blackburn, Jean Butterfield, Andrew Goss, Cliff Lunn, Steve Shaw-Wright and Tim Swales.

### Also in Attendance

Officers: Robert Ling, Assistant Director (Technology & Change Management), Jenny Baynes, Senior Project Manager (Technology & Change Management), Neil Irving, Assistant Director (Policy and Partnerships), Jonathan Spencer, Corporate Development Officer (Policy and Partnerships), Robert Beane, Information Governance Manager (Veritau) and Daniel Harry, Scrutiny Team Leader.

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Sam Cross, Bryn Griffiths, and Tony Randerson

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

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### 93. Minutes

#### Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2016, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### 94. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to note.

### 95. Public Questions or Statements

There were no public questions or statements

### 96. Executive Member Update

There was no update

### 97. New ways of Working - Rollout of Modern Council (including new IT equipment for Elected Members and Paperless Office)

Considered -

The presentation by the Assistant Director (Technology and Change), Robert Ling.

Robert Ling outlined the three areas of work that were being undertaken: a

refresh of technology; more efficient use of property; and cultural change within the organisation. There followed an in-depth discussion about the technological aspects of the Modern Council programme.

In response to a number of specific, technical questions about IT equipment issued to County Councillors and Officers, Robert Ling highlighted that often the issue was not the new technology itself but a failure to review the current processes that were being undertaken. An example that was discussed, related to completion and signing of forms that had been saved in a pdf format. Robert Ling highlighted that an alternative would be to send the form in another format and/or review whether a form was needed at all.

Robert Ling acknowledged that the move to a digital work style for the council necessitated cultural change. Whilst every effort was made to provide an equitable service across all areas of the county for members and officers, there would be instances where some IT services, such as WiFi internet access, would not be always be available at the point of need. In those cases, people would be expected to go to the nearest County Council property, such as a library, to connect to the internet.

Robert Ling urged committee members and others to report any difficulties that they were having so that they could be logged, analysed and addressed. He recognised that, in some cases, further support and training could be offered to help people use the new equipment more effectively.

Cllr Derek Bastiman asked for further training sessions to be made available to County Councillors.

Robert Ling then went on to give an overview of the changes to the way in which Council buildings are used and moves at some sites, as appropriate and following staff engagement, to agile working practices based upon a 0.7 or 0.5 occupancy ratio (7 or 5 desks respectively allocated to each 10 full time members of staff).

Cllr Derek Bastiman queried whether changes to the work environment resulted in any costs savings, as often offices needed refitting to accommodate increased numbers of staff. In response, Robert Ling stated that the financial savings were difficult to account for but that there were significant time savings and increased productivity.

**Resolved -**

- a) That the presentation be noted
- b) Robert Ling to review what training is in place for County Councillors and determine what further sessions could be put in place
- c) Robert Ling provide a further update for the committee on the roll out of the Modern Council in 6 months' time.

**98. North Yorkshire Syrian Refugee Settlement Programme - Update on Progress**

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Director (Policy and Partnerships) providing an overview of the North Yorkshire Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme.

Neil Irving introduced the report and gave an overview of the programme. Across North Yorkshire it has been agreed, with the Home Office, to resettle 197

Syrian refugees. At present, three of the district councils are directly involved, with the other four becoming involved at a later date as the programme is rolled out across the county from west to east.

Neil Irving confirmed that 7 families have been resettled to date and that refugees come to the region on flights every quarter. The people are selected for resettlement in the UK according to need. The Home Office works with the UNHCR to ensure that all refugees are vetted. Neil Irving confirmed that the national policy is to grant a five year 'right to remain' and then consider whether it is appropriate to grant full UK citizenship.

Neil Irving outlined how lessons had been learned from the resettlement of the first families and that it was anticipated that programme would become easier to manage as it become embedded and expertise and experience was built.

A number of committee members questioned what process was in place to make County Councillors aware of where Syrian refugees were being resettled. In response, Jonathan Spencer confirmed that the County Councillor in whose ward a family was being resettled was made aware. Neil Irving added that the Home Office has requested a high level of confidentiality be maintained and that details were not routinely made public knowledge.

Cllr Jean Butterfield asked whether the resettled refugees had the right to work. Neil Irving confirmed that they did and that every effort was being made to support them into employment. He added that many of the refugees were qualified in a range of professions and occupations but that often the qualifications that they held were not readily transferable to the UK jobs market.

Neil Irving outlined that the role of the Refugee Council in providing support to newly arrived refugees, in particular the use of a caseworker to act as a single point of contact for each family.

Cllr Derek Bastiman emphasised that the families being resettled needed to be supported and protected and queried whether there had been any negative reactions to their arrival.

In response, Jonathan Spencer stated that there had been some negative comments to a County Council press release. These comments had been reviewed and the Constabulary informed, as appropriate.

#### **Resolved -**

- a) That the progress to date be noted and supported.
- b) Neil Irving to provide a further update for the committee once the remaining 4 district councils have taken part in the resettlement programme, in approximately 6 months' time.

#### **99. Veritau - Information Sharing Protocol - Update on Progress**

Considered -

The presentation by the Information Governance Manager, Robert Beane on the multi-agency information sharing protocol.

Robert Beane gave an outline of the overarching protocol that had been signed up to by 21 public sector organisations in North Yorkshire.

Cllr Derek Bastiman queried whether there were additional costs associated with the negotiation of information sharing protocols. In response, Robert Beane

stated that there was a notional saving from having an agreed, standard protocol and not having to start from scratch each time data needed to be shared.

Elaborating further, Robert Beane highlighted the need for 'Annex J' arrangements to enable specific data sharing to happen. The Annex J arrangements are time consuming and are proving to be slow to put in place, slower than anticipated. To date the only Annex J arrangement that is in place is that supporting the North Yorkshire Syrian Refugee Settlement Programme.

A number of committee members queried how effectively personal information was being managed both across the Council and through the multi-agency information sharing protocol.

In response, Cllr Derek Bastiman requested Robert Beane to provide further information on information governance and how North Yorkshire County Council performs when compared to other, similar local authorities.

Cllr Derek Bastiman followed the discussion with a question about how information sharing in support of child protection was managed. Robert Beane outlined some of the basic principles but suggested that a more detailed description of what was currently in place and what the key issues are could be provided by colleagues in Children and Young People's Services.

In response, Cllr Derek Bastiman requested Robert Beane liaise with Children and Young People's Services and provide further information to the committee.

**Resolved -**

- a) That the presentation be noted
- b) Robert Beane to attend the Mid Cycle Briefing on 5 December 2016 to outline the Council's performance against key indicators for information governance and how this compares to other, similar local authorities
- c) Robert Beane to attend the Mid Cycle Briefing on 5 December 2016 to update on information sharing processes and practices that enable effective child protection.

**100. 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, subject to inclusion of the additional elements identified in discussions around preceding agenda items.

The meeting concluded at 12.30pm

DH